

THE TRULY BEWITCHED ONES:

WHO ARE THEY?

*SHOWING THE FULNESS AND PERFECTION
OF SALVATION IN CHRIST:—*

1. BY FAITH.
2. BY SELF-CRUCIFIXION.
3. BY THE PRACTICAL RECEPTION OF CHRIST.

Showing also—

- a THE POWER OF GODLINESS.
- b THE POWER OF SERVICE.

"I travail in birth until Christ be formed in you."

I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.

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THE TRULY BEWITCHED ONES:

WHO ARE THEY?

THE believers at Galatia were bewitched. "Oh foolish Galatians! who hath bewitched you?" writes the Apostle. Paul had preached the gospel of the grace of God, and many of Galatia hearing had believed, and in believing, received life in a risen Christ—eternal life. By faith they had been justified from all things, from which they could not have been justified by the law of Moses. For a time they had gone on well; they had run well, but some troublers of souls had hindered them in pursuing their happy course. The result was fearful. Paul was afraid of them, lest he had preached to them in vain. I am in doubt of you, he says; still in the Lord he had confidence in them. They were doubtless the children of God, though when Paul considered them and their ways, he was doubtful about them, yet when he looked up to the Lord, in Him he had confidence.

These Galatian saints had got away from the simplicity of the gospel of the grace of God, to the law and Moses. "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you by *His grace* to another gospel, which is not another, but there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." (Gal. i. 6, 7.) It must be particularly

noticed that there was no gross immorality amongst them, at least the Apostle does not hint at anything of the kind. At Corinth there was terrible failure as to gross sin, such as drunkenness and fornication, etc., but at Galatia the evil was rather morality and religiousness *without Christ*. They had failed as touching Christ and His blessed work, and hence the fervency of the Apostle in writing this Epistle to them. Well might he be righteously indignant, for it was fearful evil, and its consequences most alarming. These saints had got removed from the gospel of the grace of God. (Gal. i. 6.) Then they were trying to make themselves perfect in the flesh, (Gal. iii. 3); and then, further, they were observing days and months and years. (Gal. iv. 10, 11.) They were also trying to walk by law instead of by faith and the Holy Ghost. (Gal. v. 18.)

Paul was in intense conflict of soul on this account. He says, "My little children, I travail in birth for you again, until Christ be formed in you." (Gal. iv. 19.) Under such a state of things, and in such a condition of spirit and soul, Paul writes to the churches of Galatia, and shows them afresh the true nature of law and grace. How that there can be no union between them—they are totally distinct and separate in every possible respect, the one having been given by Moses, the other having come by Jesus Christ. Law, condemning, killing, and making manifest sin. Grace, giving life and peace and joy, and every spiritual blessing in Christ. Christ came a fountain filled with grace and truth. These saints had known this blessed Person, and had received blessing from Him. They had run well for a time, (Gal. v. 7,) but Satan had been working among them, and had

succeeded in bewitching them from the *enjoyment* of Christ, and those blessings which He came so freely to minister. They had gone back from Christ to Moses, from grace to law, and from the blood of Christ to their own good works. Their danger was therefore most imminent.

There are, alas, now many, yea, it is to be feared, multitudes, who are precisely in the same state as these Galatians, and Paul would, if on earth, be indeed fervent in spirit, travailing in birth, until Christ was formed in them.

Finding, then, these saints in so sad a state, he writes to them his solemn appeal, seeking with the most uncompromising fidelity, to exalt Christ and to put Moses in his proper place. They had been bewitched, and so he maintains the sovereignty of God's grace. He is afraid of them lest he had preached to them in vain, and so travails in birth for them until Christ is formed in them.

Paul commences his letter by at once giving them a short history of himself, stating who he was, as to God and man, and his authority for writing to them. He says he was an Apostle not of men, neither by men, but of Jesus Christ and God the Father. (Gal. i. 1.) He declares that the gospel he had preached was not after man. He did not receive it of man, neither was he taught it, but he received it by revelation of Jesus Christ. (Gal. i. 11, 12.) He had been, in times past, in the Jews' religion, and there he was more exceedingly zealous than any of his equals—zealous of the traditions of the fathers, and had persecuted the Church of God and wasted it. In due time, when in the height of his persecutions, the Lord met with him, and God, who had separated him from his mother's womb, called him by His grace—

revealed His Son in him that he might preach the gospel to the heathen. When God had thus saved him and given him his commission, what did he do? Did he go up to Jerusalem and consult with the Apostles? Oh! no, he says, "I conferred not with flesh and blood, but went to Damascus, and there abode three years," conferring with the Saviour God, learning of Him and waiting to do His Will, and that at His own time and for His glory. After three years he went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and there he abode fifteen days, but saw only, of the Apostles, Peter, besides James, the Lord's brother. After this he went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. Then fourteen years after, he went up to Jerusalem, not by his own will, but by revelation. The Lord having work for him there, shows him His mind, and so he follows on. Paul was thoroughly a servant; he did not make plans for himself, neither did he consult his own pleasure, but he went as he was led by the Lord, and so by revelation he goes up to Jerusalem. Paul communicates the gospel of the grace of God which he preached among the Gentiles, but to those of reputation he spoke privately, lest by any means he should run or had run in vain. There were, however, certain false brethren who had come in privily to spy out the Apostle's liberty which he had in Christ, their object being to bring him back again to bondage. To these Paul would give place by subjection—no, not for an hour. He had his mission direct from God. He was not going therefore to submit to any whose teaching tended to bondage. He could and did, knowing whom he served, speak and act with all authority and power; and he tells all this to the Galatians,

because he is going to deal with them in much faithfulness, and that he is not going in the least degree to yield to them or their false teachers.

Paul, then, being at Antioch, falls in with Peter, who had dissembled and compromised the truth, and rebukes him sharply, for he was to be blamed. Peter had been wanting in faithfulness to Christ and His truth. It mattered not to Paul as to who Peter was. He could allow no compromises between grace and law from any one; even if it were an angel from heaven, let him be accursed.

Having thus told the Galatians of his authority, and how the Lord had led him on, he proceeds to set before them once more the true and only ground of salvation, and how the believer can alone maintain the enjoyment of all the blessings which flow out to him from this salvation. Paul thus states the Gospel of the grace of God. "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners; is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness came by the law, then

Christ is dead in vain." (Gal. i. 16-21.) Nothing, I need scarcely say, could be plainer than this statement of the way of salvation. In the first place, it is not of works; secondly, it is by faith; thirdly, it is by self-crucifixion; and fourthly, it is by the reception of Christ.

By the works of law shall no flesh be justified. It could not possibly be. The law can only condemn, kill, and make one's sins manifest. By the law is the knowledge of sin; and, says the Apostle, I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. How then can that which makes me conscious of sin, justify me? It is impossible, the very reverse is the truth, it condemns. Paul's own experience is very striking as to this. He says, "Sin taking occasion *by the commandment*, worked in me all manner of concupiscence, for *without law sin was dead*. Sin, *by the commandment*, deceived me, and by it, slew me." Is this justification and life? By no means; on the contrary, it is the revival of sin. It is death and condemnation, and this is the effect of the law. Is the law then sin? Oh! dear no, on the contrary, the law is holy and the commandment is holy and just and good. It is I that am sinful, not the law. It is I who am carnal, sold under sin, and if you bring these two things together, a holy thing, and an unholy, the result is, that the sin will be made manifest, and sin by the commandment becomes exceeding sinful. God forbid that we should lower the nature of the law; on the contrary, we would maintain, in the strongest terms, its authority and power, as the Apostle says, "We establish the law" and all its rightful demands. Any one who is honest can easily test the true nature of law, and feel its holiness, its

justice, and goodness. What then are its demands? They are summed up in a few words. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Let any one with all honesty apply this to himself. You, dear reader, for instance, have you done this? To say nothing about the first part, that is your love to God, have you loved your neighbour as yourself? I dare say you will reply without much hesitation, "I cannot say that I have; I have, no doubt, sought my own interests, and doubt not you will say it is but natural that one should do so." I fully grant you that it is quite *natural* that one should think of himself first, indeed, it is a maxim of the world, Charity begins at home. This is all natural, I grant you, but it is not the law of God, which demands that you should love your neighbour as yourself. The same charity you exercise towards yourself, you are to use to your neighbour. Then, again, it is not enough to do this a little, but we must do it *all*, and that *continually*, for it is written—"Cursed is every one who *continueth* not in *all* things, which are written in the book of the law to do them." (Gal. iii. 10.) Thus, then the moment we calmly, and in a practical manner, consider the true nature and demands of the law of God, which is holy, just, and good, admitting, of no compromises, you see, that it is not enough for one to do the best he can. He is under a curse if he does not do it all and continue to do it all, and if he offend in one point, he is guilty of all. If a man is under law, he must come up to its requirements. We cannot, however, do so. We are *carnal, sold under sin* by nature, haters of God; and, therefore, it is absolutely impossible

for us to love God with all our hearts and minds, and strength, and our neighbours as ourselves. All the law can do is to make my sinful condition manifest, condemn and kill me. It will make me feel my utter weakness, and that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing; (Rom. vii. 18), and it will cause me to cry out, "Oh wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from the body of this death!" or like Moses, "I do exceedingly fear and quake." There is no mercy, no love, no grace in law. It is all holy, just, and good, maintaining its demands without the least shade of abatement. But, blessed be God, we have not to come to mount Sinai, a mount attended with cloud and storm and tempest, and all that is terrible.

The sinner must look elsewhere for justification. It is plain he cannot help himself. The God of all grace can alone meet his need, and, blessed be His name, He has come in grace and *provided a way, a perfect way, by which He can be holy and just in justifying the ungodly.* God is love. He is the God of all grace, and has sent His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them who were under law, and that He might preach deliverance to them that were afar off, and to them that were nigh. The Son of God having, by the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself to God without spot, in due time came forth from God as His lamb, as a sacrifice and an offering for sin, of a sweet smelling savour. He came to vindicate God's character as a just and holy God, so that He might pardon and justify the sinner who believed in Jesus. This Jesus did. He died for our sins. He made an atonement to God for them. He paid the debt we poor sinners owed to God

on account of our sins. The cup of wrath He drank up to the very dregs, leaving not a drop for us to drink. God was well pleased with the work of Christ, which He not only commenced, but completed, and God raised Him from the dead, received Him back to heaven, and there crowned him with glory and honour. Christ, by His death, vindicated and glorified God, so that he might be perfectly just and holy in pardoning and in justifying the ungodly, and now the Father has glorified the Son.

The Apostle says that we are not, then, justified by works of law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ. Christ the Son of God—God manifest in the flesh, has done the work for us; and, therefore, there is nothing for us to do but to believe and to accept the payment that He has made for us. A man is not justified by the works of law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ; that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of law, for by the works of law shall no flesh be justified. "But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ, might be given to them that believe." (Gal. iii. 22.) "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. v. 1.) "And by Him, all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." (Acts xiii. 39.)

Thus, those who are trying to get salvation by their own efforts, are bewitched.

Then, in the next place, salvation and justification is by crucifixion—crucifixion of the old Adam nature, self. "I am crucified with Christ," says the Apostle.

The Galatians were trying to reform themselves, to make themselves perfect in the flesh. This is the common thought amongst many, yea, most Christians; but this is all a mistake, and one of the bewitchments of the enemy. The old nature is so bad, that it cannot be made any better; it is at enmity against God, it is dead in trespasses and sins, it is carnal—sold under sin, it is not subject to God, neither *indeed can be*. (Rom. viii. 7.) It has, therefore, been judged in the person of God's Son on the cross. He has not made it any better, but He has put it away, crucified it. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." (Rom. vi. 6.) I am crucified with Christ. The Lord help all to see the true condition and nature of the natural man, that they may give up that most wretched and Christ-dishonouring thought, that we can improve ourselves, or turn over new leaves, and so forth. It is a bewitchment of Satan. God has told us distinctly His thoughts about us. He declares us to be vile, worthless, and beyond improvement; and, therefore, He has crucified us with Christ, and bids us to reckon ourselves dead with Him. (Rom. vi. 6-11.) The Lord help you, dear reader, to say by faith with the Apostle, "I am crucified with Christ." But then, in the third place, I said, we are saved and justified by the *reception* of Christ.

Paul writes to the Galatians, saying, "I travail in birth for you, until Christ be *formed* in you." (Gal. iv. 19.) We are the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus. (Eph. ii. 10.) Christ *liveth in us*. (Gal. ii. 20.) We *must be*

born again. It is no use attempting to reform the old man; we must be made *new* creatures in Christ. (2 Cor. v. 17.) It is life, not reformation that the dead sinner needs. Christ has come full of grace and truth, bringing life and incorruptibility to light, by the Gospel. (2 Tim. i. 10.) He has died for sins, and has, by the power of God, been raised from the grave; and by that same power, God has wrought life in those that believe. He has quickened them together with Christ, the fountain, the source of life, (yea, the life itself,) and of every spiritual blessing. He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life. Thus, then, it is, that I say, salvation consists not merely of the pardon of our sins, and the deliverance from hell; but the reception of Christ. Oh! wondrous fact. It is the *formation* of Christ in us that is salvation. It is union with a risen Christ in heaven. (Eph. ii. 5, 6.) He, by the power of God, is seated in heaven, far above all principalities and powers, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come, the Head of the Church; and those who have believed in Jesus, are united to that Head, seated in Him in the heavenlies. (Eph. ii. 5, 6.) It is inexpressively marvellous, but to faith blessed and true. Reason has nothing to say to it, for it is far above reason, It is supernatural—superhuman, but to simple, child-like faith, is unspeakably precious.

Well, the reader may ask, how am I to get this life and union in a risen Christ? It is by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the sinner's Saviour. "He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from

death unto life." (John v. 24.) As you believe God will work in you; you will become His workmanship, and He will operate in you by His own power. He will create you in Christ Jesus. He will do it all Himself. He is waiting for you to sit still, that He may be gracious unto you. He cannot begin to work until you are quiet, and have done with your own efforts. Sit still then, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved; and he that believeth on the Son of God *hath* everlasting life. God is the God of all grace, and will save only by His grace. (Eph. ii. 8.)

The Galatians had got away from this full and free Gospel of the grace of God. They had begun in the Spirit, and were going on in the flesh, trying to perfect themselves therein. Having begun in the Spirit, will you be made perfect in the flesh; are you so foolish? They were trying to perfect that which God had declared to be beyond even improvement, and had crucified it with His Son. Thus they were bewitched by Satan; and, alas! many, very many, in this day, are bewitched in the same manner. They do not know the true and simple ground of God's salvation by faith through grace, by self-crucifixion, and by the reception and the formation of Christ in them. Such are under the terrible bewitchment of Satan. They must be so, for by their own efforts, they cannot get any blessing; but, by the Gospel of the grace of God, they obtain *all* blessings. (Eph. i. 3.)

But one may ask, are we not to grow better? Does it not say we are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling? True, it does indeed say so; and it is most important. The Spirit of God

does tell us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, but that is not making self better; but it is working out that which God has worked in. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Our God, in the wonders of His grace, has, as we have already seen, worked in us a full, entire, and complete salvation, yea, He has formed Christ in us; and it is for us to work Him out and manifest Him in all our ways and works and words, as Paul himself says, "For me to live is Christ,"—not the flesh, Oh! no; the flesh is crucified with Christ, and Christ is formed in us; and now we are so to be dead as to the flesh, that Christ may be seen in us, and that we might live HIM. Oh! it is death to self; it is Christ, the new creation, that is to be seen and read of all as a living epistle. It is Christ alone, Christ altogether, that is to be lived and manifested; and it is just in proportion as we reckon ourselves dead with Christ, and that the life of Christ will be manifested in our bodies; for we which live Christ the life, are always delivered unto death, that the life or walk also of Christ may be made manifest in our mortal flesh. (2 Cor. iv. 10, 11.) Depend upon it, Satan has bewitched you, if you have any other hope of salvation than that which God has given by His grace, through faith, by the *crucifixion* of self—the old man, and by the *reception* of Christ—the new man.

Dear reader, where are you as to your salvation? Are you under Moses and a law which can only condemn, kill, and make your sins manifest, which can only make you tremble and quake exceedingly; or are you following Christ

who has come out from God, the image of the invisible God, revealing the nature of God, which is love, giving life and peace and joy to all who believe in Jesus?

Satan, having thus bewitched the hearts of the Galatians from Christ and grace to Moses and the law, as a consequence, spoiled them of the enjoyment of the many spiritual blessings which flow out from this blessed truth of death and resurrection with Christ. By faith in Christ Jesus, they had been made the children of God; for we are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. (Gal. iii. 26.) Moreover, the relationship is based on the fact that we have died and that we have been made alive with Christ, and that He has been formed in us; for as many as have been baptised unto Christ, *have put on Christ*. (Gal. iii. 27.) The old man is put off, having been crucified with its affections and lusts; and the new man, with its new hopes and desires, is put on. This blessed relationship is founded on the actual and positive reception of Christ. God is love; and it is His great delight to bless us, yea, to the fullest measure. And thus He has given to His children this largest of blessings—He has taken up his abode in the bodies of those whom he has saved by His grace. He came down to Israel as near as He could; but He was within walls, and a curtain kept Him from them, and them from Him. Sin had not been put away, and so it was not possible for God to have closer communion with His people; but now that sin has been put away, now that the atonement has been accomplished, and peace made, God can, in His grace, have the closest and most intimate communion with His

children. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, has cleansed them from all sin. They are as white as snow—clean every whit; and the Spirit of God, who is a Holy Spirit, can, and does take up his abode in their bodies. God could not give us a fuller blessing, and He would not give us a lesser one; for it is His great delight to bless us, and it is His eternal purpose to reveal Himself according to the fulness and perfection of His own nature, which is love. He is the God of all grace, and as such, He will reveal HIMSELF. Blessed be our God and Father, the communion and the power of the Holy Ghost can only profit us as we live in the practical power of our death and resurrection with Jesus Christ. If we live and walk after a fleshly manner, the Holy Ghost is grieved, and so no blessing is *enjoyed*. The Holy Ghost is the power of all blessing and holiness. He is the abiding power; no longer an *occasional* visitor, as in Old Testament times, but the *abiding* Comforter; and it is He who takes of the things of Jesus, and shows them to us, so that we might become more like Him, yea, live Christ in all our ways and words and actions. Thus it is of the last importance that the children of God allow to the Holy Ghost full and unhindered liberty and authority, so that He may glorify Christ in us, and that we might be changed into the same image, from glory to glory. The Holy Ghost is the power of our peace and joy. The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. We ought to have peace flowing as a river, and our joy should be full, unspeakable, and full of glory. The Holy Ghost, too, is the power whereby we can call God, Abba, Father.

I do not mean merely to say the words, *Abba, Father*, but the actual and practical realization of the fact that God is our Father; and this is a very different thing, indeed, to our just using the words, our Father, as alas! thousands do. Oh, it is a real thing that we are the children of God, but the Holy Ghost is the alone power whereby we may know and enjoy this relationship. If then, I am living after the flesh, then indeed, I am not dying daily. If then, my death and resurrection with Christ is not a real and practical truth with me, the Spirit of God is grieved and hindered; and so, the enjoyment of one's blessings and privileges in Christ are missed. The enjoyment of the blessed liberty of the child of God is missed too. He has full liberty in the Holy Ghost, liberty from sin; for Christ has died to sin, and put it away by the sacrifice of Himself, so that sin shall no longer have dominion over him, for he is not under law, but under grace. Liberty from condemnation, for Christ has borne all the condemnation. The old man has been judged and condemned in Christ on the cross, and he is delivered from the wrath to come. They cannot condemn him, because the law can only have dominion over a man so long as he lives (Rom. vii. 1); but, having died with Christ, they cannot condemn any more. Liberty from the fear of death, for Christ by His death and resurrection has triumphed over the grave, and destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil. Liberty from the power of darkness, for God has delivered us from that, and translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son. Free from the law, for the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath set me free from the law of sin and

death. Free from the world, for we are not of it, even as Christ himself was not of it. Then, this wondrous liberty is, and can only be enjoyed, as the Holy Ghost is ungrieved and unhindered by the flesh. All this liberty is in Christ; we have died with Him, and He has been formed in us. "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." (Gal. v. 1.)

Now the question arises, What is the Believer's rule of life? If he is not under law, he may go and do what he will. The Galatians had got wrong here, they were trying to walk by law, and this was all wrong. It was a bewitchment of Satan. Being made new creatures in Christ, Christ living in us, Christ having been formed in us, it is not laws and rules we need, but power to live and reproduce Christ in all our ways. That power is the Holy Ghost, a power that is positive and active bringing forth fruit. The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, &c., &c. If we are *led by the Spirit* we are *not under law*. (Gal. v. 18.) The Spirit is life and peace and liberty, the law is condemning and killing, bringing into bondage. It is only as we are free from the law that we keep it. It may seem paradoxical and contradictory, but it is nevertheless a fact, that we only keep the law as we are free from it, and the reason is simple enough. They who are led by the Spirit are not under law, they therefore who are under law, and not *dead to it*, are not led by the Spirit. (Rom. vii. 2.)

If then I am free from law, being dead to it by the body of Christ, then the Spirit has unhindered liberty and power to bring forth His fruits, and the very first fruit He does produce is love, which

is the fulfilling of the law. Do we desire to fulfil the law, then we must be dead to it; alive to God in Christ, and the Holy Ghost must have free course to bring forth in me love. Love—the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which has been given to us, so that we might be able to love God with love divine, and that with all our heart and mind and strength, and love our neighbour as ourselves. In the flesh, it is utterly impossible for me to keep the law, I cannot keep the least one, for I am naturally carnal, sold under sin; but let me reckon myself dead with Christ, let me see myself in Christ, and let me live by the Holy Ghost in the power of that new creation, then I shall love God and my neighbour too, not only as myself, but better than myself, yea, even as Christ loved me, and gave Himself for me. But I must repeat, that it can only be accomplished by my death and resurrection being made by me a practical reality. If this be done, then the righteousness of the law will be fulfilled in me, who walk not after the flesh but *after the Spirit*. (Rom viii. 4.) Any other power than the Holy Ghost is perfect weakness, therefore, it is no use attempting to live godly in Christ, but by the power of death and resurrection, and the Holy Ghost.

Then there is one word about Service for the Lord, and the power thereof. Paul writing of himself says, "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." (Gal. i. 15, 16.) This was Paul's power of service, the revelation of Christ the Son of God in him. It is so with

us. Our so called work or service for the Lord is only of value as we work in the power of the fact that we have received Christ—that He has been formed in us. Oh! what a quantity of wood, hay, and stubble, there will be by and bye to be burnt up by our God, who is a consuming fire. The Lord give us, who are actively engaged in His service, ever to remember that we have Christ revealed in us, one purpose of which is, that we might preach the gospel with divine power and unction, and that we might do it to the glory of Him to whom all honour and glory is due, and not to ourselves, to whom no glory or honour is due—but shame and confusion of face.

Well, then, the Lord give us all grace, so that dying daily as to our old creation, we may live Christ and reproduce Him in all our ways, so that, reflecting the Divine glory and shining brightly in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, souls may be led to Jesus, and we may be glorifying Him who is love—the God of all grace.

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THE LEADING SUBJECTS OF SOME OF
PAUL'S EPISTLES.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS shows us how God has settled the question of sin and condemnation. We there see all men everywhere and under all circumstances in the sight of God under wrath, all having sinned and come short of His glory. *There is none righteous, no not one.* (Rom. iii.) Next we see how God in perfect grace, but in strict consistency with Himself as a holy and just God, is enabled to be just in forgiving and justifying all who believe in Jesus. It is through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (v. 24 to 26). Romans also shows that God has not only dealt with man's sins, but also with this sinful nature—that which produced the sinful actions. This is called the "old man," "the flesh." Chapter vi. points out how God has dealt with it. He has crucified it with Christ. "Knowing this that our *old man is crucified with Him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." (v. 6.) Romans vii. shows that the man being thus *dead with Christ*, the Law cannot touch him, because the Law has only dominion over a man so long as he liveth, but when he is dead, he is freed from law. Then Rom. viii. presents man's full deliverance from all condemnation and bondage, whether of sins, the sinful nature, or the Law. "The Law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath set him free from the Law of sin and death." *He is not in the flesh* (v. 9), but in the spirit, and he has perfect liberty and confidence in the presence of God, for he can cry *Abba Father.* (v. 15.) Chapters 9, 10, 11, take up the Jew, and chapters 12 to the end, are exhortations as to the believer's walk.

THE EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS teaches us what the Holy Ghost does with those who have, as it were, passed through the Epistle to the Romans, that is,

after he has come to the cross of Christ, and found peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. He is baptized by the Holy Ghost into the body of Christ—the one church of God. “By one spirit are we all baptized into *one body*, whether we be Jews or Gentiles.” (1 Cor. xii.) Then the Apostle sets forth God’s mind and will about Church government and ecclesiastical arrangements, but of this I say no more.

THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS shows the terrible effect of a child of God getting away from Christ to Moses—from grace to law, from the blood of Christ to works, from walking in the spirit to walking in the flesh, by fixed rules, and, as a consequence, from divine and holy liberty to bondage. The spiritual condition of the Galatians was fearful. The Apostle does not charge them with gross sins and immorality, but with having a religion without Christ. They had run well for a time, but Satan, by means of false teachers, had succeeded in getting their souls away from Christ, and they were going on in the flesh, seeking to make themselves perfect in the flesh (Gal. iii. 1-3), when God had declared it so bad, that it could not be made any better, and the only thing to do, was to put it away, which He in His grace has done by crucifying it with Christ. (Romans vi. and Gal. ii. 20.) Oh it is a fearful thing to get away from Christ. This is what the Apostle means by falling from grace. These very Galatian saints had done so, though they were very strict as to their morality. The Law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. (John i. 17.)

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS sets forth the believer’s true and proper place, and standing as before God in the *heavenly places*. The believer is said to be in Christ, *quickened with Him*, Christ being his life. He is raised up with Him, and he is made to sit *in Christ in the heavenly places*. (Eph. ii. 5-6.) The believer is blessed as is his *present* portion with all spiritual blessings in *heavenly places in Christ*. (Chap. i. 3.) His conflict is against wicked

spirits in the *heavenly places*, and he needs the whole armour of God to maintain his stand *there*. (Chap. vi. 10-13.)

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILLIPIANS shows the Christian walking out his *heavenly standing* in Christ *on the earth*. He is seen here as a heavenly man in the wilderness *living Christ*. (Phil. i. 21.) His desire and aim is to glorify and magnify Christ in his body whether by life or by death (v. 20) in his daily life and conversation. Christ was living in Him (Gal. ii. 20) and he desired to live Him out. God had worked in him a full salvation—created him a new creature in Christ, and now he wished to work out what God had thus worked in. (Phil. ii. 12, 13.) This Epistle is peculiarly blessed as showing what the true communion of saints is. Here you see the most happy fellowship in practical operation, but it all flows out of communion with God. The hearts of the saints are individually right with Christ, and hence the lovely scene which is presented to us in this Epistle. Oh may the Lord help us all, dear brother or sister, to *live Christ*—to reckon ourselves dead with Him on the cross, and alive with Him in the heavenlies, and so have grace to live Christ. “For me to live is *Christ*,” said the Apostle.

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS presents to us Christ as the head of the Church and the source of all blessing. In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, see chaps. i. 19, ii. 9, iii. 11, and you will see how full and perfect He is. *In Him* the believer is *full* and *perfect* and *complete*. (Chap. ii. 10.) All philosophy—doctrines and traditions of men are vain and empty. There is no blessing outside of Christ. There is all blessing to those who are in Him. “Ye are complete *in Him*.” (Chap. ii. 8, 9, 10.)

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS is the hope of the believer's heart. It sets before him the coming of the Lord Jesus to take him to be for ever *with Himself* in glory.