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STUDIES
IN THE
SCRIPTURES

“Search the Scriptures” John 5:39

EDITOR: Arthur W. Pink (1886-1952)

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Studies in the Scriptures appeared without interruption from 1922 to 1953, each issue including six to eight articles addressing a different topic in a series. While virtually unknown to the Christian world when he died, his writings continue to grow in their influence upon God's people around the world, through their clarity, careful exposition, and Christ-centeredness.

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STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES

“Search the Scriptures” John 5:39

EDITOR: Arthur W. Pink

THE BOUNTIES OF GOD

“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1Co 2:9). How often this passage is quoted only as far as we have now quoted it. How rarely are the following words added, “But God *hath* revealed them unto us by his Spirit” (1Co 2:10). Why is this? Is it because so few of God’s people search out and live in the enjoyment of what the Spirit has revealed in the Word concerning those things which God has prepared for them that love Him? If we were more occupied with God’s riches than with our poverty, Christ’s fullness than our emptiness, the divine bounties than our leanness, on what a different plane of experience should we live!

Of late, we have been much impressed by noting some of “the *riches* of his grace” (Eph 1:7). It is indeed striking to note that our Christian life starts at a marriage feast (Luk 14:16-23; Mat 22:1-14), just as Christ’s first miracle was wrought at one (Joh 21-11). The word to us is, “Come, for all things are *now* ready” (Luk 14:17). “Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come unto the marriage” (Mat 22:4). Observe the, “I have *prepared*,” agreeing with “the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” in 1 Corinthians 2:9. Notice the “*are* ready,” confirming the, “God *hath* revealed them unto us” of 1 Corinthians 2:10. Mark the, “my dinner, my oxen and my fatlings,” for “all things are of God” (2Co 5:18). The creature contributes nothing, all is provided for him. Finally, weigh the, “Come unto *the marriage*.” The figure is very blessed. It speaks of joy, festivity, feasting.

*He spread the banquet, made me eat,
Bid all my fears remove,*

*Yea, o'er my guilty, rebel head
He placed His banner—Love.*

Practically the same figure is employed by Christ again in Luke 15. There He pictures the penitent prodigal welcomed home by the Father. No sooner is he clothed and fitted for the "house" than the words go forth, "Bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and *be merry*" (Luk 15:23), and we are told, "They began to be merry." Since, in the parable, that merriment met with no reverse, since it is portrayed without a break and without a bound, then assuredly, we may conclude that this new-born joy ought to go on characterizing all who know that they are within this festive scene—as truly so now, as soon it will be in the glory.

A beautiful type of the lavish manner in which God bestows His bounties upon His people is found in Genesis 9:3, "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you *all* things." This was JEHOVAH'S response to the "sweet savour" which He had just smelled. It is most important that we should note the connection, and perceive the ground on which God so freely bestowed "all things" upon the patriarch. At the close of Genesis 8, we see Noah building an altar unto the Lord, and presenting burnt offerings thereon. Here at the beginning of Genesis 9, we learn God's answer thereto.

What has just been before us blessedly foreshadowed the unmeasured portion bestowed upon the new creation, the members of which have been "blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ" (Eph 1:3). These "blessings" are based upon God's estimate of the value of Christ's sacrifice of Himself. The abiding worth of that sacrifice is immeasurable and illimitable, as immeasurable as the personal excellency of the Son, as illimitable as the Father's delight in him. How the nature and extent of those blessings, which accrue to God's elect on the ground of Christ and His finished work, are intimated by the substantives and adjectives employed by the Holy Spirit when describing the profuseness of the divine bounties which have already been bestowed upon us, and which we shall enjoy for ever and ever!

Take, first, God's *grace*. Not only are we told of the "riches of his grace" (Eph 1:7), and of the "exceeding riches of his grace" (Eph 2:7), but we read that it has "*abounded* unto many," and that we receive "abundance of grace," yea, that grace has (Greek) "*super-abounded*" (Rom 5:15, 17, 21). It is the limitless wealth of divine grace flowing forth and multiplying itself in its objects. The foundation, or moving cause of this, is made known in John 1. When the only-begotten Son of the Father became flesh and tabernacled here for a season, it was as One who was "*full* of grace and truth," and because we have been made joint heirs with Him, it is written, "And of his *fulness* have all we received and grace upon grace" (Joh 1:16).

Take again God's *love*. There has been neither reserve nor restraint in the outflow of His love to its loveless and unlovely objects. He has loved His people with an everlasting love (Jer 31:3), and wondrously has He manifested it. For when the fullness of time was come, He sent forth His Son, born of a woman, yea, He did so love the world as to give His only-begotten Son, "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Joh 3:15). And therefore do we read of His "*great* love wherewith he loved us" (Eph 2:4). The Greek word which is there translated, "great," is rendered,

“plenteous,” in Matthew 9:37 and “abundant” in 1 Peter 1:3. Love unmeasured, that passes knowledge, filling our lives with its unceasing ministrations, ever active in priesthood and advocacy on high, how truly is it, “Love abundant”!

Our present theme is inexhaustible. Our blessed Lord came here that His people “might have *life*, and that they might have it more *abundantly*” (Joh 10:10). This was first made good when Christ, as the Head of the new creation, the “beginning of the creation of God” (Rev 3:14), breathed on His disciples and said, “Receive ye the Holy Spirit” (Joh 20:22). It was the risen Saviour communicating His resurrection-life to His own (compare Gen 2:7 for the beginning of the old creation). So too, when that same blessed One, who down here received the Spirit without measure (Joh 3:34), ascended on high as the glorified Man, He baptized His people in the Holy Spirit (Act 2:1-4), which as the apostle Paul assures Gentile saints, “He shed on us *abundantly*” (Ti 3:6). Here, once more, is emphasized the profuseness of God’s bounties.

Consider now His *confidences*. Said the Lord Jesus to His disciples, “Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for *all* things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you” (Joh 15:15). There are things which the angels “desire to look into” (1Pe 1:12), yet have they been made known to us by God’s Spirit. What a word is that in Ephesians 1:8-9, “Wherein he hath *abounded* toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will”! This may be termed the abundance of His counsels.

Once more, take the exercise and display of His *power*. The apostle prayed that we might know, “What is the *exceeding greatness* of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places” (Eph 1:19-20). Here was the might of God working transcendently in an objective way. Its correlative is recoded in Ephesians 3:20, “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh *in* us”—clearly this is the highest forth-putting of energy, working subjectively.

In such lavish measure, then, has God blessed His people. As the apostle wrote to the Colossians concerning Him who is our life, “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And *ye* are complete [filled full] in him” (2:9-10). But it is one thing to know, intellectually, of these bounties of God, it is quite another, by faith, to make them our own. It is one thing to be familiar with the letter of them. It is another to live in the power of and be the personal expression of them.

What shall be our response to such divine munificence? Surely it is that “The abundant grace might through the *thanksgiving* of many redound to the glory of God” (2Co 4:15). Surely it is that *we* should “*abound in hope*, through the power of the Spirit” (Rom 15:13), for it is only here that hope finds its sphere of exercise, as it is only in the saints that it will receive full fruition. If God speaks thus uniformly of the varied character of our blessing—whether it be His grace, His love, His life imparted to us, His confidences, His power, His mercy (1Pe 1:3, etc.)—as being so “abundant,” it must be because He would impress our hearts with the exuberance of the bounties He has bestowed upon us. And the practical effect of this on our souls should be to cause us to, “*Joy in God* through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 5:11), to draw out all that is within us in true worship, to fit us for closer and

deeper fellowship with Himself. “And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, *may abound* to every good work” (2Co 9:8). May it be so, for His name’s sake.

THE HOLY SPIRIT’S WORK

2. *In the Saved*

“The transcendent grace of God is the glorious subject of the everlasting Gospel. It is revealed in it, proclaimed by the preaching of it, in its meridian splendour, in its utmost perfection, and with the utmost plainness and freeness *to sinners as sinners*. The Gospel of salvation is accompanied by the Holy Spirit with life and light to elect sinners, and made the power of God unto their salvation. By it, they hear Christ’s voice, see His glory, behold how He loved them, receive Him into their hearts, live by faith on the Son of God, and find and enjoy every blessing of the Father’s everlasting love and boundless mercies, flowing into their souls through the most precious blood-shedding and inestimable value and everlastingly efficacious sacrifice of the worthy Lamb—all which give us a grand display of the exceeding riches of grace. So saith the apostle, ‘But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)’” (Eph 2:4-5).

“The Holy Spirit having, as the Spirit of life, quickened the elect with spiritual life in their souls, gives them to see, know, and understand the fountain from which all flows. He opens, explains, and applies with divine power to the mind, what Paul, speaking of himself and Timothy, hath declared, ‘Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began’” (2Ti 1:9).

“The Holy Spirit, agreeably to His office in the covenant of grace, is pleased to take of the things of Christ and to ‘shew’ or make them manifest. He leads poor awakened sinners to behold the Lamb of God, and in a sight of Him as set forth in the Word, and testified of by the Spirit therein, they see salvation. On which they cannot forbear individually breaking out, saying, ‘Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation’” (Isa 12:2). Perceiving how exactly suited Christ is to them, and how exactly suited they are for Him to glorify Himself in their eternal redemption, they cannot but prize and esteem Him as the Author and Finisher of their salvation.

“This knowledge concerning Christ they receive from the everlasting Gospel, which is made effectual to them, as accompanied with the divine energy of His Spirit. In it they find Christ, and know that His love passeth knowledge, that His mercy endureth for ever, that His bloody sweat is their everlasting purification, His wounds and bruises received in the day of the Lord’s fierce anger, their everlasting healing, His soul travail, their peace, and His obedience unto death, even the death of the cross, their everlasting righteousness and

perfection. This gladdens their hearts, and fills their minds with peace, so that in believing the everlasting worth, virtue, and efficacy of His blood and righteousness, they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (S. E. Pierce, 1746-1829).

Before the Lord Jesus left His disciples, He declared, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever" (Joh 14:16). That "Comforter" was henceforth to be the Teacher of God's saints, giving to them the Holy Scriptures, opening them to their understandings, applying them to their hearts, supplying all their spiritual need. Yet how little do God's people realize the exceeding preciousness of this gift! How faintly do they apprehend how much they owe, how deeply they are indebted, to the gracious operations of the third Person of the blessed Trinity! How rarely are their hearts engaged and their thoughts occupied with the divine "Comforter"! How scant is the honour, praise, and worship given Him!

The mission of the Spirit in the earth is to bring and apply to the souls of God's elect that great and glorious redemption which was wrought out and purchased for them by the incarnate Son. "Salvation is of the LORD" (Jon 2:9), entirely so from the beginning to end. The Father purposed, planned, and provided it. The Son procured and secured it. The Spirit imparts it. Faith perceives, understands, and enjoys it. But faith is neither a faculty nor an act of the natural man. It is the result of "the operation of God" (Col 2:12), namely, the inward, imperceptible, invincible workings of the Holy Spirit. Faith is one of the *senses* of the "new man." As the physical body has five senses—sight, hearing, etc.—so has the "new man" his senses. That new man which is "created" (Eph 2:10) by the Spirit is "spirit" (Joh 3:6). The "new man" has *eyes* to see that which the natural man cannot (1Co 2:14). He has *ears* to hear that which the unregenerate are totally deaf to (Psa 58:4-5), and so on. But before there can be spiritual eyes and ears, there must be a "spiritual man" to see and hear.

A "new creature" (2Co 5:17)—not the old one changed or renovated—has to be brought into existence. This is the product of the Spirit's creative work. He is here to give new and spiritual being to each of God's elect, who are, by natural birth, "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph 2:1). This is the Holy Spirit's work *in salvation*. The Holy Spirit is as truly the Saviour of God's people as Christ is. It is written, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he *saved* us, *by* the washing of regeneration, and renewing of *the Holy Spirit*" (Ti 3:5). And again, "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2Th 2:13). As hell had been our eternal portion, but for the work of Christ, so heaven could never be our dwelling-place, but for the work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit not only shows the elect sinner his need *of* Christ, but "reveals" Him *in* him (Gal 1:16). Christ is the "true light" (Joh 1:9), but the unregenerate love "darkness rather than light" (Joh 3:19). Therefore, they will never, of themselves, come to the light. No, the light has to be brought to them. As it is written, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2Co 4:6).

It is not till the sinner has been brought "out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1Pe 2:9) that he comes to Christ. Comes to Him with his *mind* (Isa 26:3), the spiritual "understanding" which has been "given" him (1Jo 5:20). His spiritual "affections" being

drawn out to Him (1Pe 1:22), comes to Him with his *will* (Phi 2:13), the new man surrendering completely to His lordship. "Coming to Christ" is *not* an outward, but an inward act. It is not the act of the "natural man" (Joh 6:44), but of the new man (Joh 6:40)—"see" spiritually before "believe." And this new and spiritual man is the product of the sovereign and supernatural operations of the Spirit, to which *we* contribute nothing, and in which *we* have no part whatever.

The instrument which the Holy Spirit employs, "the seed" which He uses, is the written Word of God. As long as the Word is only presented to us objectively, it makes no spiritual impression upon us. Not until the Holy Spirit implants *within* the soul, subjectively, does the Word *become to us* "quick and powerful" (Heb 4:12). True, that Word is, in itself, the "Word of life" (Phi 2:16), as the germ of life is in the living grain before it is sown in the ground. But it only *becomes* the "Word of life" *in* the individual when the Holy Spirit imparts it to the soul itself. When He does so, that individual enters into a "saving knowledge of the truth." God's great salvation is no longer a beautiful theory, but an experimental fact to the consciousness. Then it is that the Spirit takes of the things of Christ and *shows* them unto me—having previously given *eyes* to see. Then it is that, under the Spirit's *application* of the Scriptures to my understanding and heart, I gradually discover more and more what a vile and totally depraved sinner I am in myself. And then it is, and thus, I am brought to realize, by the Spirit, how well suited is Christ, the Saviour of *sinners*, to me.

The "new man," having been formed in the Christian, his new "senses" and faculties need training and developing, as our natural ones did when we were little children. For this, too, the Christian is entirely dependent upon the power and operations of the third Person of the Godhead. He is in constant need of being "strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man" (Eph 3:16). For this he should pray indefinitely each day. In everything and for everything the Christian is absolutely dependent upon the Holy Spirit. In the remainder of this article, we shall consider some of the works of the blessed Comforter in the soul.

I. He sheds abroad God's love in the heart

"The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us" (Rom 5:5). The epistle to the Romans contains a full unfolding and exposition of the Gospel of God (Rom 1:1). The verse we have quoted gives the first mention of the Spirit in it (except Rom 1:4). Therefore, this is the logical place to start in our consideration of the Spirit's work in the Christian. He it is who communicates to the heart of the elect sinner that wondrous love which has dwelt in the heart of God toward him from all eternity (Jer 31:3). It is by the Spirit that a discovery is made to us of God's love.

No sinner has any real sense of the eternal and redeeming love of God for himself till it is actually communicated by the Spirit. To the unregenerate, Christ said, "But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you" (Joh 5:42). In his unconverted state, the Christian dreaded God, feeling that He was *against* him. Yea, all men naturally hate God (Rom 8:7). It is only when we see His love to us in Christ, by the Comforter, that we repent and love

Him—"We love him, because he first loved us" (1Jo 4:19). "The LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, *to* love the LORD thy God" (Deu 30:6). "Though sinners should hear ten thousand times of the love of God in the gift of His Son, they are never properly affected by it, till the Holy Spirit enters their hearts, and till the love to Him is produced by the truth through the Spirit" (Robert Haldane, 1764-1842)—see 1 Corinthians 2:10.

II. He assures us that the Word is God's

"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might *know* the things that are freely given to us of God" (1Co 2:12). In verse 4, the apostle reminded the Corinthians that when he first preached to them, it was "not with enticing words of man's wisdom"—vain philosophy—but "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power," i.e. with a God-given message. And this was "that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God" (1Co 2:5). That which Paul had preached was the "wisdom of God in a mystery," i.e. a divine secret, but now disclosed, namely, "the hidden wisdom [counsels of grace], which God *ordained* before the world unto our glory" (1 Cor 2:7). These counsels of grace, this electing love, which was to be accomplished through redemption, "none of the princes of this world knew" (1Co 2:8). That the whole of this passage concerns the predestinating grace of God towards His elect is clear from, "God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1Co 2:10), i.e. He is thoroughly cognizant of and conversant with the secret counsels of the eternal Three in the everlasting covenant.

In 1 Corinthians 2:11, the apostle points out that the human spirit is only capable of understanding human things, so divine things are known only by the divine Spirit. And we Christians have received "not the spirit of the world," i.e. a mere reasoning faculty, but "the Spirit which is of God," the Comforter given to us, dwelling in us, and this that, "We might know the things that are freely given to us of God"—given to us now in the written Word for faith's instruction and encouragement. It is the Holy Spirit who works in the soul of the Christian a firm persuasion, an unshakable assurance, that the Scriptures are the Word of God. It is not only through the testimony and authority of "the church" that he receives them as divine. Godly men may present convincing arguments for their inspiration, and those arguments may win an intellectual assent, but they neither search the conscience nor beget in the soul a spiritual faith in them. The same Spirit who moved holy men of old to write them must work in the heart a consciousness that they are *God's* Word. It is by the Spirit that we are "established" in the faith (2Co 1:21).

III. He directs our walk

This is the fulfilment of one of the many promises which God has given to His people, "And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them" (Eze 36:27). Even after God has imparted His Spirit to an elect soul, he has to be *caused* to "walk in God's statutes." As Jeremiah declared, "O

LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer 10:23). Looked at according to the flesh, the old man, the Christian is not only ignorant of those paths pleasing to God, but he is averse to them. Looked at according to the spirit, the new man, the Christian is but a “babe” in Christ and needs a Guide and Supporter. Of old, the Psalmist confessed, “He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake” (Psa 23:3). This is the acknowledgment of every true Christian.

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Rom 8:14). This is the chief and distinguishing mark of a true Christian. He is *always* “led by the Spirit,” for He never releases His hold of us. He leads first to Christ, then to the throne of grace, and then to practical godliness, ultimately to the glory. He “leads” by enlightening the desires of the new man, by inclining the will. It is the Spirit of God who keeps us in the narrow way, and delivers from the destructive snares of Satan.

IV. He prompts all true obedience

Christians have no more vital godliness than what the Holy Spirit has wrought in them. Some who would assent to this bare statement would probably dissent did they pause to analyse it. We have no more faith than what the Holy Spirit has imparted to us, no more knowledge of God, no more hope or love, than what He has given. This is a very humbling confession to make, and proud flesh resents it. Yet the teaching of Holy Writ makes it unmistakably clear that the Author of all true godliness is the divine Comforter. “By the grace of God I am what I am” (1Co 15:10)—namely, by what the Spirit of God has imparted to me, wrought in me, produced through me, “Without the Lord I can do *nothing*” (Joh 15:5).

In the new nature, given at the new birth, there is a fitness and a readiness unto godly obedience, but *no power*. It has been well said, “We are not in this world intrusted with any spiritual ability from God, as without farther actual assistance and aid to do anything that is good” (Dr. John Owen, 1616-1683). Thus, the Christian stands in daily need and constant need of the Spirit’s gracious operations. “Our sufficiency is of God” (2Co 3:5), and He works in us not only to will, but also to “*do* of his good pleasure” (Phi 2:13). Therefore, we find the apostle praying that He would “make you perfect in every good work to do his will.” How? By “working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight” (Heb 13:21). And thus do the godly own, “For thou also hast wrought all our works in us” (Isa 26:12).

V. He produces all spiritual fruit

Of old, God said, “From *me* is thy fruit found” (Hos 14:8). Spiritual fruit is neither produced by nor does it issue from the natural man. It is produced by the Holy Spirit, and issues from the new man, “Which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph 4:24). All that God works in and through His people is by the Spirit. For the Philippians, Paul prayed that they might be “filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God” (Phi 1:11)—inasmuch as the Holy

Spirit is the Executive of the Godhead, *He* is to be understood as the producer, they are “by Jesus Christ” as their meritorious cause.

The leading passage on fruit-bearing is found in John 15:1-8. There the Lord Jesus, under the figure of a vine and its branches, teaches us that “fruit” is the consequent and outcome of “abiding” in Him, which is one of the New Testament terms for intimate communion. But communion with Christ is produced and sustained by the Holy Spirit, who is here to glorify Christ. Yet faith has to be in exercise. There must be definite dependence on the Spirit for this. The result of such communion and faith is “fruit,” i.e. “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, faith, meekness, temperance,” and in Galatians 5:22, these are expressly called, “the fruit *of the Spirit.*”

VI. He conforms us to Christ

To this every believer has been predestinated (Rom 8:29), and the decree of God is made good by the workings of His Spirit. Here again the only instrument which He uses is the written Word. He takes of the things of Christ, and shows them unto the Christian (Joh 16:13, 15). That is, He opens to our understandings and hearts the glories of Him who is altogether lovely. He shines upon the sacred page so that in His light we see light (Psa 36:9). As our thoughts are occupied with Christ, as our hearts are engaged with Him, the features of His likeness are stamped upon us. This is the meaning of 11 Corinthians 3:18, “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

VII. He inspires all true prayer

A great deal of what passes for “prayer” today is nothing but the religiousness of the flesh. The Pharisees made long prayers, the Mohammedans and Papists do the same. Nor is Protestantism free from this plague. Again, much of our supposed praying is only the distress of the natural man finding utterance. The most ungodly will cry unto the Lord in moments of real peril and acute pain. But this is nothing better than the cries which animals make when in distress. Thus did God complain about Israel of old, “They have not cried unto me *with their heart*, when they *howled* upon their beds” (Hos 7:14), which plainly intimates that they *had* “cried unto him” with the outward voice, yet was it a cry which was no more effectual than the “howling” of the wild beasts.

Of old, the disciples of the Lord besought Him, “Teach us *to pray*” (Luk 11:1). This needs to be our daily request, for of ourselves we know neither *how* to pray nor *what* to pray for. But thank God, the Spirit is given to Christians “to help their infirmities” (Rom 8:26). This He does by granting them the “spirit of grace and supplication” (Zec 12:10), by showing them from the Scriptures how to present their petitions so as to gain the ear of God. This is “praying in the Holy Spirit” (Jude 1:20). The Spirit is both the inspirer and inditer of all prayer. But His aid must be sought, His guidance importuned.

VIII. *He preserves the Christian*

This He does by “renewing” him in the inner man “day by day” (2Co 4:16), strengthening us with His might (Eph 3:16 and cf. 3:20). It is by the Spirit that we are kept from soul-destroying error, and preserved from making shipwreck of the faith. We are “kept by the power of God through faith” (1Pe 1:5), that is by the effectual operations of His Spirit maintaining and sustaining our faith. Thus, it is by the Spirit that we are “*sealed* unto the day of redemption” (Eph 4:30).

Ere closing this article, which makes no pretensions to having presented anything like a *complete* outline of this important subject, perhaps some of our readers will welcome a few lines on what is termed the “endowment of the Holy Spirit.” Many of God’s people have been sorely perplexed and harassed (Eze 13:22) by the deceptions of some who have asserted that Christians should seek from God a second work of grace, variously designated by them as the “baptism of the Spirit,” “filling of the Spirit,” etc. They have affirmed that the Holy Spirit is willing to come upon us in mighty power if we will fulfil the conditions specified by these men, some of whom have been looked up to as eminent Bible teachers, and who claim that *they* have been thus endued by the Spirit. We have met, personally, numbers of God’s people who have earnestly sought this blessing, who have done everything their teachers bade them do, only to find the desired “blessing” eludes them. Instead of blaming their teachers, they have blamed themselves. Instead of searching the Scriptures, they have sought to search their own hearts, with the result that some known to us have ended in mental homes, others in a suicides’ grave.

Of course, appeal is made by these men to the Word of God, yet it does not support their error. Let any exercised soul read carefully through the book of Acts, and he will not there find a single passage which tells of any of the apostles urging Christians to *seek* an endowment of the Spirit, still less are there any inspired directions as to how such an endowment may be obtained. This of itself is quite sufficient to expose the unscripturalness of these troublers of the saints. Neither their method nor their message is apostolic. True, we do read in Acts of the *Apostles* being filled with the Spirit, speaking in tongues, working signs and wonders, but that was *before* the New Testament was written and completed. Those divine gifts were the authentication of their mission. But those abnormal gifts were withdrawn before the last of the apostles passed from this scene.

Again, in the New Testament, there are twenty-one epistles, and with one seeming exception (Eph 5:18), none of them contains any exhortations for God’s people to *seek* any further “anointing” or “endowment” other than what they already received when they were born again. Still less are there any rules and regulations laid down for the obtaining of any “second blessing.” Nor need Ephesians 5:18 occasion the slightest difficulty. If verses 18 and 19 be read together, it is obvious that the simple meaning of this passage is, “Let not Christians find their joy and delight in carnal intoxicants (such as the worldlings do), but in spiritual enjoyments and employments.” The definite article is not found here in the Greek, and “be filled with the Spirit” is interpreted for us in the parallel passage in Colossians 3:16, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,” etc.

The responsibility of the Christian is to recognize that he *is* indwelt by the Spirit (Rom 8:9), that his body is “the temple of the Spirit” (1Co 6:19). It is to seek help from God daily that he may be kept from “grieving” the Spirit (Eph 4:30). It is to honour the Spirit by owning that *all* his springs are in Him, that He is the Author and Producer of all spiritual fruit in him. It is to render prayer, praise and worship to the Spirit, equally as to the Father and the Son. May the Lord the Spirit graciously add His blessing to what has been written, and cause the reader to “prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1Th 5:21).

THE EVERLASTING COVENANT ADMINISTERED

Part 2

The salvation of God’s people originated in the covenant acts of the Eternal Three. The Covenant of Grace comprises all the divine designs and transactions respecting the redemption of the elect. In it, we learn the eternal purpose of Father, Son, and Spirit, fixing the manner of redemption and everything relating thereto, and entering into a mutual agreement, in which the part each divine Person should perform, as distinguished from the others, was fixed and voluntarily undertaken. A proper apprehension of these covenant transactions is of vast importance, for when the Holy Spirit reveals to a soul the reality of them, he is at once brought off from all creature-acts, for he then perceives that the salvation of God’s people is the *certain* consequence of that covenant. He now discerns that it was the will of God from all eternity to save His people from all their sins and miseries, and out of the hands of all their enemies, by Jesus Christ alone. He now knows that, in the sight of God, he was saved in Christ and by Christ from all sin.

The God-given blessing of an eye of faith enables the recipient of it to see that his salvation was from eternity wholly dependent upon the responsibility of his Surety, and He being sufficient and all-sufficient for them for whom He engaged, and He having completed the whole of His incarnation, life, and death, has obtained “eternal redemption” (Heb 9:12). He now sees for himself the truth of the apostle’s words that God made Christ to be sin for His people, that they might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2Co 5:21). This causes the Spirit-taught soul to admire and adore the Lord Jesus Christ for His righteousness and sacrifice. He sees such worth, such perfection, such virtue and efficacy in His merits and blood, as causes him to rest his heart with holy contentment and delight thereon. As the Spirit grants him clearer spiritual apprehension of these divine realities, he sees his righteousness in the sight of God as Christ Himself.

The everlasting covenant is *published* in the Gospel of God’s grace. As we read in Romans 16:25-26, “Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.” Notice, first, the Gospel is here said to be a “*revelation*

of the mystery.” This “mystery” had been “kept secret,” not from all men, but from all nations. Second, it was revealed “by the scriptures of the prophets,” but that which had for centuries been known only to Israel was now to be “made known to all nations.” Third, mark the title here given to the Deity, “the *everlasting* God”! This attribute of eternity is hereby ascribed to Him because the “everlasting covenant” is here in view.

Above, we have said that the Gospel is a *revelation* of a divine mystery. Clear proof of this is found in 1 Corinthians 2. There the apostle declared, “But we speak the wisdom of God...ordained before the world unto our glory” (verse 7). The apostle here calls the Gospel (see 1Co 1:17-18 and cf. 2:2-6) the “wisdom of God,” because in it the wondrous wisdom of God is made known. But more, he affirms that the Gospel exhibits a “*hidden wisdom*” (cf. “kept secret”—Rom 16:25), yea, that which God had predestinated to the glory of His people. That the whole of this passage in 1 Corinthians 2 concerns the eternal grace of God toward His elect is clear from “the things which God hath *prepared* for them that love him” (1Co 2:9), which things “God hath revealed unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the *deep* things of God” (1Co 2:10), i.e. the Spirit is thoroughly cognizant of and conversant with the secret counsels of the Eternal Three in the “everlasting covenant.”

The words “kept secret since the world began,” in Romans 16:25, are not to be taken absolutely, as the very next verse clearly shows. This “mystery” or “hidden wisdom” had, to a considerable degree, been made known in the Scriptures of Israel’s prophets, but as 1 Corinthians 2:8 tells us, it was something which “none of the princes of this world knew.” “But now is made manifest” (Rom 16:26) is explained in the last clause of the verse, “made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.” Parallel with this is Ephesians 3:3-9. There, Paul again refers to “the mystery,” the “mystery of Christ” which “in other ages was not made known to *the sons of men*” (though it was to Israel), but now he was to “preach among the *Gentiles* the unsearchable riches of Christ.” So in Colossians 1:25-27, note, “this mystery *among the Gentiles*” (verse 27).

Reverting once more to Romans 16:26, the apostle declares that this mystery, or hidden wisdom, concerning the everlasting covenant had been made manifest by the Scriptures of the prophets. Many are the Old Testament passages which might be cited in illustration of this fact. This covenant is expressly mentioned in Psalm 89:3-4, “I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations.” The direct and local reference is to David and his descendants, but without doubt a greater than David is here in view, viz. his illustrious Son and Lord, who is sometimes called by this very name (see Eze 37:24-25; Hos 3:5), and in whom this promise has been fulfilled (Luk 1:32-33; Act 2:34-38). A careful reading of the whole psalm will show that its language is too sublime, and the things foretold are too great, to admit of being limited to any earthly monarch or succession of monarchs.

In Psalm 119:122, David prays, “Be *surety* for thy servant for good: let not the proud oppress me.” In Isaiah 38:14, Hezekiah supplicates God thus, “O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake [Heb. “be surety”] for me.” When these men prayed thus, to be delivered from their enemies and afflictions, by addressing their Deliverer in *this* particular character, it is evident that they understood He had undertaken to be Surety for His people. The *mediatorial* work and character of Christ was well known to the Old Testament saints.

In Isaiah 49, we have what may be called a *draft* of the covenant, or *deed* of gift, between Christ and His Father for us, wherein Christ first begins and shows His commission as the ground of the treaty between Them, intimating to His Father that He had called Him unto this great work, "Listen, O isles, unto me: and hearken, ye people, from far; the LORD hath called me from the womb: from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name" (Isa 49:1). Then He refers to God's having fitted Him for the work, "And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword: in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me" (Isa 49:2). In what follows, the triune God has condescended to employ expressions taken from a human manner of speaking, that we may the better comprehend this mysterious transaction.

First, the Father offers, as it were, *only "Israel"* as Messiah's portion, "Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified" (Isa 49:3), to which Christ is represented as foreseeing how few of Israel would believe in Him, and that such sparse gleanings would be a poor recompense for all His toil. Yet He is prepared to leave the issue with the Lord, "Then I said, I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the LORD, and my work with my God" (Isa 49:4). God, therefore, answers Him again, and *enlarges the grant*, "And now, saith the LORD, that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him. Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength. (Isa 49:5) And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will *also* give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth....In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee *for a covenant* of the people (Isa 49:6-8). Thus, we see that this covenant which God made with Christ was to save both Jews and Gentiles as the reward for His work.

That by divine agreement and covenant settlement, Christ had been set up as Mediator *before* He entered this world is plainly taught in the New Testament too. In John 6:27, we hear Christ saying, "Labour...for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father *sealed*." So again in John 6:38, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." In John 10:18, He speaks of a "power" or "commandment" which He has received from the Father to lay down His life and take it again, so that He might answer the great end of redemption thereby. In John 10:36, He referred to Himself as Him "whom the Father hath *sanctified* [consecrated to a divine service], and sent into the world"—"sanctified" before "sent"! In Luke 22:29, He declared to His disciples, "I *appoint* unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath *appointed* unto me."

The everlasting covenant of grace was typified, or more correctly speaking, adumbrated (shadowed forth in this lower or visible sphere), in the covenant which the Lord made with Abraham. This will be easier for us to grasp if we bear in mind the fact that the Gospel is a revelation of the Covenant of Grace. Now, in Acts 3:25, we read that Peter said, "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the *covenant* which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed." Now link up this with Galatians 3:8, "And the scripture, foreseeing that God

would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." Note well that what is called, "the covenant" in the former passage is called, "the gospel" in the latter, and that "all kindreds of the earth" in one becomes "all nations" in the other, while the "blessing" mentioned in both is explained to be the justification of the ungodly by faith.

The all-conclusive proof that the Abrahamic covenant shadowed forth in time the Covenant of Grace, which had been made in eternity, is found in Galatians 3:16, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ," not only Christ personal, but "Christ" *mystical*, i.e., the Head and His members. This is clear from Galatians 3:29, "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's *seed*, and heirs according to the promise."

The Abrahamic covenant was followed by the Sinaitic, which was the very antithesis of the other, the former being one of pure grace, the latter one of works. The Abrahamic was one of unconditional promise. The Sinaitic was conditional, blessing being determined by Israel's obedience to the law. Now, as the Abrahamic adumbrated the everlasting covenant, so the Sinaitic exemplified the Adamic. The first man had been constituted by God the federal head of his race, and God entered into a covenant with him (see Hos 6:6), and thus, he was "the figure of him that was to come" (Rom 5:14). That covenant was one of works, blessing for Adam and his posterity being conditioned upon the obedience of the federal head.

It has been well said that, "God deals with men only by covenant. What is a covenant? It is a promise made upon conditions to be fulfilled. This being so, it is clear that there can be only two covenants possible between God and man—a covenant founded on what *man shall do*, and a covenant founded on what *God shall do for him*; in other words, a covenant of works, and one of grace" (Dr. G. S. Bishop). The Covenant of Works was made with Adam, the Covenant of Grace with Christ. Israel, according to the flesh, was under the one, the spiritual "Israel of God" (Gal 6:16) are the beneficiaries of the other. The one was revealed by the Law, the other is made known by the Gospel, as the Law preceded the Gospel, the Covenant of Grace is termed, "the *new* covenant" (Heb 8:8), not because it is "new" in its constitution, but because it is new in its *manifestation* and *proclamation* abroad.

Coming now to the *administration* of the covenant, we would observe, first, that the blessings of it are committed into the hands of the Saviour, that He may distribute them according to His own will, which in this, as in everything else, harmonizes perfectly with the will of the Father. This high honour has been conferred upon the Mediator that the blessings which were purchased, with His infinitely perfect satisfaction, should be at His own disposal, and that hell-deserving sinners should be reminded of their incalculable obligations to Him, by receiving every blessing immediately from His hands. His fulfilment of the conditions which the everlasting covenant had required of Him gave Him a right to the promises and the possession of their inestimable treasures. The scriptural proofs for these assertions are clear and convincing.

After His resurrection, the triumphant Surety declared to His disciples, "All power [authority] is given unto me in heaven and earth" (Mat 28:18), evidently meaning that such right of administration was bestowed upon Him in consequence of His obedience unto

death. Centuries before, the Psalmist, moved by the spirit of prophecy, said, "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men: yea, for the rebellious also" (Psa 68:18). Those words of David's were explained by Peter to the Jews, who were amazed at the miracles of Pentecost, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the *promise* of the Holy Spirit, *he* hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear" (Act 2:32-33). Three things are observable in these words. First, the gift of the Spirit to Christ was the performance of a "promise" that had been made to Him by the Father. Second, the Spirit was given to Christ that He might pour Him out upon men, like the refreshing rains which fall upon the earth. Third, the subjection of the Spirit to the Mediator in the economy of grace (Mar 1:8) demonstrates that "all authority" is Christ's *in heaven* as well as upon earth (Mat 28:18).

Anticipating His resurrection, our great High Priest declared to His disciples on the eve of His death, "As thou hast given him power [authority] over all flesh" (Joh 17:2). And for what purpose was that grant made unto Him? The same verse tells us, "that he should give eternal life to as many as thou *hast* given him." That was the equivalent of saying that He would administer the promised blessings of the Covenant of Grace to those for whom He had covenanted, whose Surety and Mediator He was. Again, in Matthew 11:27, He declared, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father." Now upon this donation or gift to Him (as Mediator) is founded the whole dispensation of grace, which was established by His authority and will be continued until the end. Hence, immediately after, comes the gracious promise of the Gospel, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Mat 11:28). This important truth is more fully expressed in Ephesians 4:8, 11-16.

Now the administration of the covenant has taken the form of a will or "testament," or deed, by which a person bequeaths his property to his heirs, to be enjoyed by them after his decease. Thus, the blessings of the covenant are conveyed to its beneficiaries in a testamentary form. The Greek word, *diatheks*, occurs forty times in the Authorized Version. It has been rendered "covenant" twenty times and "testament" twenty times. The Greek word has this double meaning, yet it is of great importance to distinguish between its two significations in order to a right understanding of each passage in which it is found. Unfortunately, our English translators have not always succeeded in doing this. For example, in Hebrews 7:22, Jesus is termed, "a surety of a better testament," or "will," which is a quite meaningless expression. It should have been, "surety of a better covenant," the more so as it is there contrasted with the Sinaitic covenant, which certainly was not a "testament." So again, "The mediator of the new testament" (Heb 9:15) conveys no intelligible concept. "Covenant" is the proper word there.

But in Hebrews 9:16-17, it should be observed that "testament" is the proper rendition, "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth." This idea of a "testament" naturally follows after mention of the "eternal inheritance" in the previous verse. "As an inheritance is conveyed from one person to another by testament, this designation may be given to the Covenant of Grace, because it conveys to us the inheritance of eternal life, and conveys it in virtue of the death of the

Surety. It was with the Covenant of Grace as it was with a testament. As the death of the testator is necessary to render a testament valid, so the death of Christ was necessary to ratify the covenant, and to make its promises sure to His spiritual seed. It is the necessity of the death of Christ which the apostle intended to establish, and the notice of a testament is incidentally introduced, solely for the purpose of illustrating this death, as an inheritance comes to the legatee through the death of a testator" (Dr. John Dick, 1764-1833).

In treating of the *administration* of the Covenant of Grace, it is essential that we should consider it, severally, under *two distinct economies*, of which the one preceded, the other succeeded, the coming of Christ in the flesh. That there *was* a dispensation of grace prior to the divine incarnation should be evident to every careful reader of the Old Testament. It commenced immediately after the fall, when the first intimation of mercy was made (Gen 3:15), and it continued till the death of the Saviour, when it was formally abolished. That it was virtually and vitally the same with the present dispensation, and differed from it only in form, may be proved from a number of considerations. Abel's offering of a bleeding lamb "by faith" (Heb 11:4), which necessarily presupposes a revelation of the divine will (Rom 10:17), evidences that the Gospel of divine grace was made known at a very early date. The same blessed evangel was preached to the patriarchs, and later to Israel, by their typical institutions and the voices of their prophets. Therefore is the mission of Christ said to be the fulfilment of the ancient predictions, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel: for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David: *as* he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began" (Luk 1:68-70).

When before Agrippa, Paul declared, "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying *none other* things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles" (Act 26:22-23). To the Hebrews, he declared that the Gospel had been preached to Israel in the wilderness (Heb 4:2). To the Galatians, he insisted (when rebutting the errors of Judaizers) that the Gospel he proclaimed had, long before, been preached to Abraham, and that those who believed it were admitted to a participation in the same privileges with the patriarchs, "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed *with* faithful Abraham" (Gal 3:8-9).

There are at least two passages in the New Testament which expressly affirm that the dispensation of grace, under which the Old Testament saints lived, was founded upon that atonement of Christ by which the covenant was ratified. First, Romans 3:25, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." Note carefully the expression "for the remission of sins that are past." Here, the apostle is obviously referring to the sins of the Old Testament saints, which God had remitted prior to the manifestation of Christ. But how had it been consistent with His justice to do so, seeing that no expiatory sacrifice of efficacy had been offered for them? The answer is—the satisfaction of the Redeemer was of such infinite value that its virtue reaches back to the beginning of time,

as well as forward to the end of it. God acted like a creditor who lets his debtor go free, although the payment had not been made by the surety, because he has full confidence in him that he *will* fulfil his engagement.

The second passage is in Hebrews 9:15, "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new covenant, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." The "transgressions which were under the first covenant" has reference to the sins of God's (spiritual) elect who lived, dispensationally, under the Sinaitic covenant, the typical sacrifices for which were then offered up, delivering *only* from the *temporal* penalties of the law. Yet some of them obtained the full and eternal forgiveness of their sins, namely, the "called" of Israel; and that, too, was on the ground of the great sacrifice which was to be offered in the fullness of time. Christ was the Mediator of the new covenant for the redemption of *their* sins, as well as for the sins of His saints who have lived since the cross. Thus, we see that the elect of God who lived under the Law of Moses were saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, as they who are saved under the Gospel.

Christ, in fact, sustained the office and performed the duties of Mediator *before* His incarnation. "It was not a vain opinion of the Jews that it was the second Person of the Trinity who gave the promise of mercy to our first parents in paradise, appeared to the patriarchs, published the Law from Sinai, conducted the church in the wilderness, and managed its affairs during the ages which followed. It is certain that a divine Person *did* often appear under the ancient economy, and as there is no reason to think it was the Father, whom no man has seen, we conclude it was the Son, who assumed the form of that nature in which He was after to sojourn upon earth. He was the Angel of God's presence, and the Angel of the covenant, concerning whom these three particulars are worthy of attention: That He was a divine Person, for the name of God was in Him, and the power of pardoning or not pardoning sin belonged to Him. That He acted in an official capacity, for He was an angel or messenger. And that His office was connected with the gracious dispensation which was then established, for He was the Messenger of the covenant. As far as that dispensation was carried on by the revelation of the divine will, we are expressly assured that it was under His direction and superintendence. It was the Spirit of the Messiah, Peter says, who 'testified beforehand' in the prophets 'the suffering of Christ, and the glory that should follow'—1 Peter 1:11" (Dr. John Dick, 1764-1833).

Concerning the administration of the everlasting covenant *since* the coming of Christ, it is the Gospel which makes known to us the eternal council between the Father and the Son, which displays the richness and freeness of divine grace, which proclaims salvation to all who believe, and comforts its recipients by its promises of present and future refuge. The present dispensation is distinguished from the past by the superior clearness of its manifestation. What was formerly exhibited under the veil of types is now openly revealed, "The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth" (1Jo 2:8). It is distinguished, too, by the more abundant supply of the Spirit.

The great *design* in the administration of the covenant of Grace is to impart its benefits to those for whom they were intended. This is accomplished by the Holy Spirit who works faith in the hearts of those who were chosen in Christ to eternal life. It is only by faith that we can learn our individual interest in that covenant, and that God-given faith causes its

recipient to “take hold of his covenant” (Isa 56:6), yea, to enter into covenant with God. Where God acts, there is a reciprocal action from those in whom He works. Does God love His people? They love Him in return. Has He called them? They too dedicate themselves to a covenant God, with a real sense of their binding obligations to render Him that obedience which they are thereby engaged to.

It concerns each person, therefore, to inquire whether God has made with *him* a covenant, “ordered in all things and sure.” It is an inquiry intimately connected with his eternal welfare, for salvation comes to any sinner only on the basis of this covenant. How then shall the point be ascertained? First, he who has entered into a covenant with God is an awakened and convicted sinner. None others feel their need of God’s great salvation. Peace with God is prized only by those who have been made conscious of death, and of the divine displeasure and vengeance. Careless worldlings are unconcerned about reconciliation with God. The Spirit’s application of the law to the heart and conscience is the first step by which men are led to take hold of God’s covenant and “make peace with God” (Isa 27:5).

Second, he who has entered into this covenant has “fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before him” (Heb 6:18). That “hope” is set before him in the Gospel. The word “refuge” looks back to the cities of refuge in Israel (Num 33; Jos 20), entry into which secured from the avenger of blood. The awakened and convicted sinner, aroused and terrified by his sins and the wrath of God, *flees* for refuge to Christ, and by a God-given faith, lays hold of, believes in, appropriates the Saviour as his.

Third, he who has entered into this covenant rests his hope of salvation upon the righteousness of Christ, by which it was fulfilled, and on that alone. He has no confidence in the flesh. He repudiates his own righteousness as filthy rags. He relies not on any works, performances, or acts of his own. The language of his heart and lips is, “My mouth shall show forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day...I will go in the strength of the LORD God: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of *thine only*” (Psa 71:15-16).

Lastly, he who is in covenant with a holy God is a holy person. God’s promise to Christ concerning His people is, “I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people” (Heb 8:10). The effects of this are clearly and unmistakably manifested in their daily lives. True, while they are left in this world, the flesh is still there, and it annoys and hinders them, so that they are prevented from fully realizing the desires of their hearts. Nevertheless, their faith overcomes the world (1Jo 5:4). The Spirit in them, which is mightier than Satan (1Jo 4:4), subdues the flesh, and produces in and through them *His* “fruit.” They are taught that they have no strength of their own, and so they look to the Lord for enablement. They depend upon His grace, and He works in them (notwithstanding all the opposition of the flesh, which is as nothing to Him) “both to will *and to do* of his good pleasure” (Phi 2:13). Thus, they ascribe *to Him* all the praise of their success.

HEART WORK

Part 5

The heart of man is his worst part before it be regenerate, and his best part afterwards; it is the seat of principles and the source of actions. The eye of God is, and the eye of the Christian ought to be, principally fixed upon it. The great difficulty after conversion is to keep the heart with God. Herein lies the very pinch and stress of religion. Here is that which makes the way to life a narrow way, and the gate of heaven a straight one. To afford some direction and help in this great work, these articles have been presented. We realize their many defects, yet trust that God will be pleased to use them. No other subject can begin to compare with it in practical importance.

The general neglect of the heart is the root cause of the present sad state of Christendom. The remainder of this article might readily be devoted unto the verifying and amplifying of that statement. Instead, we merely point out briefly one or two of the more prominent features. Why is it that so many preachers have withheld from their congregations that which was, so obviously, most needed? Why have they “spoken smooth things” instead of wielding the sword of the Spirit? Because their own hearts were not right with God. *His* holy fear was not upon them. An “honest and good heart” (Luk 8:15) will cause a servant of Christ to preach what he sees to be the most essential and profitable truths of the Word, however displeasing they may be unto many of his people. He will faithfully rebuke, exhort, admonish, correct, and instruct, whether his hearers like it or not.

Why have so many church members departed from the faith and given heed to seducing spirits? Why have multitudes been led away by the error of the wicked, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness? Why have so many others been attracted to companies of notional professors, which, despite their proud boasts of being the only people fathered together in (or unto) the name of Christ, are, for the most part, people who have only an acquaintance with the letter of Scripture and are strangers to practical godliness? Ah, the answer is not far to seek. It was because they had no *heart* acquaintance with the things of God. It is those who are sickly and diseased who fall easy victims unto the quacks. So it is those whose hearts are never rooted and grounded in the truth who are tossed about with every wind and doctrine. The study and guarding of the heart is the best antidote against the infectious errors of the times. And this leads us to point out some of the *advantages* of keeping the heart.

1. The pondering and garrisoning of the heart is a great help to the understanding in the deep things of God. An honest and experienced heart is a wonderful aid to a weak head. Such a heart will serve as a commentary upon a great portion of the Scriptures. When such a one reads the Psalms of David or the epistles of Paul, he will find there many of his own difficulties stated and solved. He will find them speaking the language of his own heart—recounting *his* experiences, expressing *his* sorrows and joys. By a close and regular study

of the heart, he will be far better fitted to understand the things of God than graceless rabbis and inexperienced doctors—not only will they be clearer, but far sweeter unto him. A man may discourse orthodoxly and profoundly of the nature and effects of faith, of the preciousness of Christ, and the sweetness of communion with God, who never felt the impressions or efficacy of them upon his own spirit. But how dull and dry will these *notions* be unto those who have *experienced them*.

Ah, my reader, experience is the great schoolmaster. Much in Job and Lamentations will seem dull and uninteresting until you have had deeper exercises of soul. The seventh chapter of Romans is not likely to appeal much unto you until you make more conscience of indwelling sin. Many of the later Psalms will appear too extravagant in their language until you enjoy closer and sweeter fellowship with God. But the more you endeavour to keep your heart, and bring it into subjection unto God, to keep from it the evil solicitations of Satan, the more *suitied to your own case* will you find many chapters of the Bible. It is not simply that you have to be in the “right mood” to appreciate, but that you have to pass through certain exercises of heart ere you can discover their appropriateness. Then it is that you will have “felt” and “tasted” for yourself the things of which the inspired writers treat. Then it is that you will have the key which unlocks many a verse that is fast closed unto masters of Hebrew and Greek.

2. Care in keeping the heart supplies one of the best evidences of sincerity. There is no external act which distinguishes the sound from the unsound professor, but before this trial, no hypocrite can stand. It is true that when they think death to be very near, many will cry out of the wickedness and fear of their hearts, but that signifies nothing more than does the howling of an animal when it is in distress. But if you are tender of your conscience, watchful of your thoughts, and careful each day of the workings and frames of your heart, this strongly argues the sincerity of it. For what but a real hatred of sin, what but a sense of the divine eye being upon you, could put anyone upon these secret duties which lie out of the observation of all creatures? If, then, it be such a desirable thing to have a fair testimony of your integrity, and to know of a truth that you fear God, then study, watch, keep the heart.

The true comfort of our souls much depends upon this, for he that is negligent in keeping his heart is generally a stranger to spiritual assurance and the sweet comforts flowing from it. God does not usually indulge lazy souls with inward peace, for He will not be the patron of any carelessness. He has united together our diligence and comfort, and they are greatly mistaken who suppose that the beautiful child of assurance can be born without soul pangs. Diligent self-examination is called for—first, the looking into the Word, and then the looking into our hearts, to see how far they correspond. It is true the Holy Spirit indwells the Christian, but He cannot be discerned by His essence. It is His operations that manifest Him, and these are known by the graces He produces in the soul, and those can only be perceived by diligent search and honest scrutiny of the heart. It is in the heart that the Spirit works.

3. Care in keeping the heart makes blessed and fruitful the means of grace and the discharge of our spiritual duties. What precious communion we have with God when He is approached in a right frame of soul. Then we may say with David, “My meditation of him shall be sweet” (Psa 104:34). But when the heart be indisposed, full of the things of this

life, then we miss the comfort and joy which should be ours. The sermons you hear and the articles you read (if by *God's* servants) will appear very different if you bring a *prepared* heart to them! If the heart be right, you will not grow drowsy while hearing or reading of the riches of God's grace, the glories of Christ, the beauty of holiness, or the needs-be for a scripturally ordered walk. It was because the heart was neglected that you got so little from attending to the means of grace!

The same holds good of prayer. What a difference there is between a deeply exercised and spiritually burdened heart pouring out itself before God in fervent supplication and the utterance of verbal petitions by rote? It is the difference between reality and formality. He who is diligent in heart work and perceives the state of his own soul is at no loss in knowing *what* to ask God for. So he who makes it a practice of walking with God, communing with God, meditating upon God, spontaneously worships Him in spirit and in truth. Like David, he will say, "My heart is inditing a good matter" (Psa 45:1). The Hebrew there is very suggestive. Literally it is, "My heart is boiling up a good matter." It is a figurative expression, taken from a living spring, which is bubbling up fresh water. The formalist has to rack his mind, and as it were, laboriously pump up something to say unto God. But he who makes conscience of heart work finds his soul like a bottle full of new wine—ready to burst, giving vent to sorrow or joy, as his case may be.

4. Diligence in keeping the heart will make the soul stable in the hour of temptation. The care or neglect of the conscience largely determines our attitude toward and response unto solicitations of evil. The careless heart falls an easy prey to Satan. His main attacks are made upon the heart, for if he gains *that*, he gains all, for it commands the whole man! Alas, how easy a conquest is an *unguarded* heart. It is no more difficult for the devil to capture it than for a burglar to enter a house whose windows and doors are unfastened. It is the watchful heart that both discovers and suppresses the temptation before it comes in its full strength. It is much like a large stone rolling down a hill—it is easy to stop at first, but very difficult after it has gained full momentum. So, if we cherish the first vain imagination as it enters the mind, it will soon grow into a powerful lust which will not take a nay.

Acts are preceded by desires, and desires by thoughts. A sinful object first presents itself to the imagination, and unless *that* be nipped in the bud, the affections will be stirred and enlisted. If the heart does not repel the evil imagination, if instead, it dwells on it, encourages it, feeds on it, then it will not be long before the consent of the will is obtained. A very large and important part of heart work lies in observing its first motions, and checking sin *there*. The motions of sin are weakest at the first, and a little watchfulness and care then prevents much trouble and mischief later. But if the first movings of sin in the imagination be not observed and resisted, then the careless heart is quickly brought under the full power of temptation, and Satan is victorious.

5. The diligent keeping of the heart is a great aid to the improving of our graces. Grace never thrives in a careless soul, for the roots and habits of grace are planted in the heart, and the deeper they are radicated there the more thriving and flourishing grace is. In Ephesians 3:17, we read of being "rooted and grounded in love." Love in the heart is the spring of every gracious word of the mouth and of every holy act of the hand. But is not *Christ* the "root" of the Christian's graces? Yes, the originating root, but grace is the

derivative root, planted and nourished by Him, and according as *this* thrives under divine influences, so the fruits of grace are more healthy and vigorous. But in a heart which is not kept diligently, those fructifying influences are choked. Just as in an uncared-for garden, the weeds crowd out the flowers, so vain thoughts that are not disallowed, and lusts which are not mortified, devour the strength of the heart. "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and with fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: *when* I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches" (Psa 63:5-6).

6. The diligent care of the heart makes Christian fellowship profitable and precious. Why is it that, when Christians meet together, there are often sad jarrings and contentions? It is because of unmortified passions. Why is their conversation so frothy and worthless? It is because of the vanity and earthiness of their hearts. It is not difficult to discern by the actions and converse of Christians what frames their spirits are under. Take one whose mind is truly stayed upon God; how serious, heavenly, and edifying is his conversation, "The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment: the law of his God *is in his heart*" (Psa 37:30-31). If each of us was humbled every day before God under the evils of his own heart, we should be more pitiful and tender toward others (Gal 6:1).

7. A heart well-kept fits us for any condition God may cast us into, or any service He has to use us in. He who has learnt to keep his heart lowly is fit for prosperity, and he who knows how to apply Scripture promises and supports is fit to pass through any adversity. So he who can deny the pride and selfishness of his heart is fit to be employed in any service for God. Such a man was Paul. He not only ministered to others, but looked well to his own vineyard (see 1Co 9:27). And what an eminent instrument he was for God. He knew how to abound and how to suffer loss. Let the people defy him, it moved him not, except to indignation. Let them stone him, he could bear it.

8. By keeping our hearts diligently, we should the soonest remove the scandals and stumbling-blocks out of the way of the world. How the worthy name of our Lord is blasphemed because of the wicked conduct of many who bear His name. What prejudice has been created against the Gospel by the inconsistent lives of those who preach it. But if we keep *our* hearts, we shall not add to the scandals caused by the ways of loose professors. Nay, those with whom we come in contact will see that we "have been with Jesus." When the majestic beams of holiness shine from a heavenly walk, the world will be awed and respect will again be commanded by the followers of the Lamb.

Though the keeping of the heart entails such hard labour, do not such blessed gains supply a sufficient incentive to engage diligently in the same? Look over the eight special benefits we have named, and weigh them in a just balance. They are not trivial things. Then guard well your heart, and watch closely *its love for God*. Jacob served seven years for Rebekah, and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love that he had unto her. The labour of *love* is always delightful. If God has your heart, the feet will run swiftly in the way of His commandments. Duty will be a delight. Then let us earnestly pray, "So teach us to number our days, that we may *apply our hearts* unto wisdom" (Psa 90:12)—as we "apply" our hands unto manual tasks.

Let me now close the whole of these articles with a word or two of consolation to all serious Christians who have sought to give themselves faithfully and closely to this heart

work, but who are groaning in secret over their apparent lack of success therein, and who are fearful that their experience falls short of a saving one. First, this argues that your heart *is* honest and upright. If you are mourning over heart conditions and sins, that is something no hypocrite does. Many a one is now in hell who had a better head than mine. Many a one now in heaven complained of as bad a heart as thine.

Second, God would never leave you under so many heart burdens and troubles if He intended not your benefit thereby. You say, Lord, why do I go mourning, all the day having sorrow of heart? For long have I been exercised over its hardness, and not yet is it broken. Many years have I been struggling against vain thoughts, and still I am plagued by them. When shall I get a better heart? Ah, God would thereby show you what your heart by nature is, and have you take notice of how much you are beholden to free grace! So, too, He would keep you humble, and not let you fall in love with yourself!

Third, God will shortly put a blessed end to these cares, watchings, and heartaches. The time is coming when your heart shall be as you would have it, when you will be delivered from all fears and sorrows, and never again cry, “O my hard, vain, earthly, filthy heart.” Then shall all darkness be purged from your understanding, all vanity from your affections, all guilt from your conscience, all perversity from your will. Then shall you be everlastingly, delightfully, ravishingly entertained and exercised upon the supreme goodness and infinite excellency of God. Soon shall break that morning without clouds, when all the shadows shall flee away; and then, we “shall be *like him*, for we shall see him as he is” (1Jo 3:2). Hallelujah!

For much in these articles, particularly the fourth and final one, we are indebted to the works of the Puritan, John Flavel (1630-1691).

ANNUAL LETTER

This is the final issue of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES. It began in 1922 as a “labour of love” for the poor and needy seeking water and finding none. Well do we remember the beginning and progress as year after year the little messenger found its way to the ends of the earth, taking words of salvation and comfort in its pages. Being frail, I never thought it would fall to me to finish the work so dear to each of us; but the Most High has shown that His thoughts are not as ours, by causing to come to pass what I never expected. The hidings of His providential dealings are wonderful and fill one with awe as one is brought face to face with the ways of the Mighty One. We could not endure to have revealed to us beforehand what is in the cup given us from our loving Father. In wondrous mercy, He has drawn a veil over all His mysterious providences and lifts it as we are able to bear His unfolding of the path we are to tread. With each revelation, He sweetly ministers grace to endure as we go along the way. What precious words, “What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter” (Joh 13:7).

Many were the difficulties and trials through which STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES came, but the rough places have been made plain, and the crooked straight, as each has been faced, so that it has been a pleasant task, as one would expect a “labour of *love*” to be. All praise to Him who doeth all things well. In looking back over the past, nothing stands out more wonderfully than to recall how that, in all our journeys around the world, not an issue failed to be printed and posted. What can one say of such things, but, “It is the LORD’S doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes” (Psa 118:23)? There are times when nothing but His Word can express our innermost being and tell what the heart feels by His wondrous interventions, so that one must say, “Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks; for that thy name is near thy wondrous works declare” (Psa 75:1).

With gratitude and thankfulness, I would record the faithfulness of my much loved and esteemed friends for having “stood with me in the breach” again, as they did years ago when the Lord used them, and by their noble work, made it possible for STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES to continue. But for their invaluable work of typing articles from old volumes, 1953 would not have been completed—I am now unable to type. What a marvel! They “offered themselves willingly to the work,” and thereby Satan was thwarted of his plan to stop STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES in the beginning. None but Himself could have done and enabled to be done what has been accomplished from beginning to end. Neither man nor Satan can prevent God’s purposes being fulfilled. That is a real comfort for every child of His, for Satan is constantly trying each one of the chosen seed.

I feel sure none ever had a better printer than it has pleased the Lord to favour us with. He has been most kind and considerate in taking over all responsibility in connection with the work of the magazine, and I have been relieved of all anxiety over that which I do not understand. The standard of work throughout has been most excellent, ever since the Lord was pleased to move him to do our printing. “What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits” (Psa 116:12), but thanksgiving unto Him for so ordering our every way?

In the July personal word, reference was made to Mr. Pink’s works which are published in the U.S.A. The dollar-pound problem has curtailed the circulation in Great Britain. I asked the publisher to permit me to supply STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES readers, which he has kindly consented to do. He has sent me prices of all the works available and I will gladly quote you British currency for what you desire. God willing, I purpose taking orders and asking the publisher to post back direct to those requesting them. All readers in the U.S.A. and Canada, please write direct to Mr. I. C. Herendeen, Swengel, Union Co., Pennsylvania.

“In all thy ways acknowledge him” (Pro 3:6) has been in mind as I have attempted to write this piece. I am not qualified for such a task, but since it came upon me, I have sought to carry out my dear late husband’s wishes to the best of my ability, fully realizing that *my* best is far, far below the standard. Looking to Him alone for enablement to perform what I felt I could not do in bringing the magazine to a close, He has not failed me, but has done wonders greater than could have been imagined. But then, is He not a great God, and doeth great things? Should I not expect Him to do great things? I feel we should all be profoundly thankful to the Lord that STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES continued so many years. Truly the Lord was good in providing such ministry, thereby supplying your need in His own most marvellous way.

“In *all* thy ways acknowledge him”—in the hard, equally as in the pleasant. To bow submissively to His most holy will, resting in the thought, “Let him do what seemeth him good” (1Sa 3:18). Unreservedly, to *resign* all into His loving hand—“The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD” (Job 1:21). So having cast his bread upon the water and finished his course on earth in glory, my dear husband, the late Editor, shall find it again. For me, I seek to follow on in weakness in this vale of tears unto that better land where nothing that defileth or maketh a lie cometh. What a prospect! Done with sin for ever! I commend you, my dear friends, whom we sought to serve so long, unto the care of Him who has promised, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Mat 28:20). Remember me at the throne of grace and “to communicate forget not.” By wondrous mercy, VERA E. PINK.

I am pleased to inform you that STUDIES closes with the largest balance of any year. “The LORD of hosts is with us: the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah!” (Psa 46:7).

