

What Saith the Scripture?

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Unbelief- No. 1

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from "The Oberlin Evangelist" Publication of Oberlin College

Lecture X
May 6, 1840

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Text.--Heb. 3:19: "So we see they could not enter in because of unbelief." --Mark 16:16: "He that believeth not, shall be damned."

In this discussion of this subject I desire to show:

I. What unbelief is.

II. Some of its developments and manifestations.

III. Its unreasonableness.

IV. Its causes or occasions.

V. Its wickedness.

I. What is unbelief?

It is the absence, or perhaps I should say, the opposite of faith. Faith is a felt, conscious, practical confidence in the character, providence, and word of God; and conscious assurance that what God has said shall come to pass; such an inward and felt assurance, and hearty and joyful embracing of the truth, as to produce corresponding feeling and action, and to exclude doubt. Unbelief then is a real withholding of this inward, felt, conscious assurance or confidence--a state of mind that leaves the conduct uninfluenced by the truths of God--such a withholding of confidence as to leave both body and soul under the influence of error, to pursue a course as if the truths of God were not true.

II. Some of the manifestations of unbelief.

- 1. One of its manifestations is, stupidity on religious subjects. It is not in the nature of a moral being to be stupid upon religious subjects upon any other principle than that of unbelief. The

infinitely great and weighty truths of religion make an impression as a thing of course upon a moral being, in proportion to the fulness with which they are apprehended and believed.

- 2. Another of its developments is worldly mindedness. It is impossible that a human being should give himself up to the pursuit of worldly goods upon any other principle than that of unbelief. Let him but possess that inward, felt assurance that the infinitely great truths of religion are realities, and the world will at once dwindle to insignificance in his estimation. It will appear to be a very small thing whether he does or does not possess the wealth, the honors, the friendship, or wisdom of this world. And to spend his time and give up his thoughts to accumulating any thing that this world can give to take away, is entirely unnatural to a mind that believes in eternal realities.
- 3. Another development of unbelief is, a spirit of carefulness, or corroding and peace-destroying anxiety upon any subject. Can a man who has the conscious and felt assurance that the infinitely faithful God is pledged for the supply of all his temporal, and spiritual, and eternal wants, experience the carefulness and anxiety of one who has no such belief?
- 4. Worldly conversation is another development of unbelief. Can the infinitely interesting things of religion be felt, conscious realities to the mind whose conversation is worldly? Impossible. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." For a man to converse upon that which does not occupy his thoughts is impossible. And if eternal things are felt realities, and realities too in which the heart takes the deepest and most joyful interest, it is impossible that the conversation should not correspond with this state of mind.
- 5. Insensibility to the state of the Church and of the world, is another manifestation of unbelief. A man can no more avoid being excited by the religious state of the Church and the world, if religious truth be a reality to the mind, than he could avoid excitement, if the house or town in which he lived was all in flames.
- 6. Insensibility to the abuse which is every where heaped upon God, is a manifestation of unbelief. If the existence, character, and omnipresence of God, with their kindred truths, be realities, it would give the man who realized this, unutterable pain to witness the abuse which is heaped upon God by His creatures. Could you see your father, or mother, or wife, or husband, or governor, or king, or dearest earthly friend, abused, and experience no agony? Impossible.
- 7. Apathy in regard to spreading the gospel, proves that you do not believe it. What an excitement there was in this country a few years since, about the famine in the Cape de Verd Islands; and upon the subject of the oppression of the Greeks. What a public interest was awakened, and what pains were taken to send them relief. Should a famine pervade Europe or America, what a universal sympathy would be awakened, and how the excited population would bestir themselves with their thousands of tons of provisions to supply their wants. This is natural, reasonable, right, and according to the laws of our being. But how shall we account for the apathy of the Church, in reference to starving souls going down to hell without the gospel? Why, only upon the principle that almost nobody believes it. It is impossible to account for it upon any other supposition.

- 8. Neglect of the Bible is another development of unbelief. What is the Bible? What are its claims? What does it profess to reveal to mankind? Why, it claims to be a revelation from God to men, a history of their past lives, and a revelation of their future destiny. In every point of view it is infinitely the most interesting book that ever existed. And yet, almost all men, even in Christian lands, are in a great measure unacquainted with its truths, and manifestly care but little about them. Now it is impossible that they should be so upon any other principle than that of unbelief. Did men believe the Bible, they would search after its meaning as they would search for hidden treasures. They would not, could not, rest satisfied, until they possessed themselves of every practical truth contained in it.
- 9. Unbelief often manifests itself in the interpretation of the Bible. Unitarians can see no sufficient evidence of the divinity of Jesus Christ. And why? Because of unbelief. It is remarkable to see to what an extent unbelief is the grand rule of biblical interpretation in the Church. Take for example, 2 Cor. 6:16-18: "And what agreement hath the temple of the living God; as God has said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Now what an infinitely different inference the Apostle drew from these promises from what is generally drawn: (2 Cor. 7:1:) "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Here Paul saw in these promises such a fulness of meaning, as to infer at once from them, even if there were no other kindred promises in the Bible, the practicability of attaining a state of entire sanctification or holiness in this life. Mark the strength of his language. He exhorts them to "cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God." How easy it is to see that his faith apprehended an infinitely greater fulness in the meaning of these promises than is seen by the heart of unbelief. And why should he not make the inference he does?--for he says: "Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Certainly the inference which the Apostle draws in the first verse of the next chapter, or rather the exhortation or command, as it may be regarded, to avail ourselves of the provisions, and "perfect holiness in the fear of God;" is eminently reasonable. And yet unbelief sees no satisfactory reason, either in these or in all the promises of the Bible, to warrant the conclusion, that as a matter of fact any such state is attainable in this life.

Hear that spiritual minded woman converse with her minister, of the great fulness there is in Christ. While she speaks in general terms he consents to all she says, that there is indeed unspeakable and infinite fulness in Christ. But where does she see this fulness? Why, in the scripture declarations and promises of God's word. Now let her begin to quote them one after another as she understands them, and he will probably demur to her views of every one of them, and consider her notions as utterly extravagant, and perhaps fanatical. He consents in general to the fulness that is in Christ, but explains away in the detail, all the evidence of that fulness as apprehended by a spiritual mind. The truth is,

that a spiritual mind, and a spiritual mind only, understands the real meaning of the Bible. And nothing is more common than for persons in a state of unbelief to read again and again, any and every passage in the Bible, without apprehending the real meaning of the Holy Spirit. And a man in this state of mind has, as a matter of fact, never begun to understand the fulness there is in Jesus Christ, nor the depth and extent of meaning in the declarations and promises of the Bible.

- 10. Stumbling at difficulties, is another manifestation of unbelief. There is a large class of minds that seem not to be under the influence of evidence, especially upon those subjects that in any way clash with their own interests. However weighty the evidence may be, the suggestion of the least difficulty is to them an insurmountable stumbling-block, and the shadow of an objection seems to bring them to a dead stand in regard to all progress in reform, and to give them right over to the dominion of appetite, lust, and every form of selfishness. They are eagle-eyed in discovering an objection, and seem not to have the faculty at all to answer and remove objections. A slight objection or difficulty is a sufficient reason even for their resisting the evidence of miracles. Even demonstration itself, does not in such cases seem to move their hearts. If an answer to their difficulty be suggested to them, they heed it not but for a moment, for perhaps the next hour, or the next day, you will find them still hanging up their doubts, upon their old and perhaps often answered objections, and going stubbornly on in their sins. This is a most guilty and abominable state of mind. With what odiousness did it manifest itself among the Jews, when neither the life, nor the doctrine, nor the miracles, nor the death, nor the resurrection of Christ, could convince them. Certain preconceived notions of what Christ would be--certain false and absurd interpretations of prophecy in regard to Him, were sufficient objections in their minds to break the power of all the evidence with which Christ brought forth the demonstration of His Messiahship.

It is often amazing and distressing to see how unbelief will paralyze the power of testimony in favor of truth, insomuch that no weight or accumulation of evidence can gain ascendancy over the intellect and the heart in the presence of objections oftentimes the most ridiculous.

Now with this state of mind, contrast the conduct of Abraham, the "father of the faithful." God had promised to make him "a father of many nations." But the fulfillment was delayed until both himself and wife were at such an age, that but for the promise of God, it was utterly unreasonable to expect that Sarah would have an heir. Rom. 4:19-21: "And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about a hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded, that what He had promised, He was able to perform." The fact that himself and Sarah were nearly a hundred years old, was not a sufficient objection to set aside the testimony of God with his mind. And he remained firm in the opinion that His promise would be performed.

Witness his conduct also in offering up Isaac as a burnt sacrifice. Here is another beautiful illustration of the power of faith as contrasted with unbelief. After a long time his beloved Isaac was born, who also was to be the father of many nations, through whom

the promised Messiah was to come. But previously to his being the father of any offspring, God commanded Abraham to offer him as a burnt sacrifice. Now so unshaken was his confidence, that he appears not to have felt the least uneasiness about the event. Feeling probably that it might stagger Sarah's faith, he appears not to have communicated it to her, but rose up calmly in the morning, after the command was given, and proceeded to the spot, with the wood and necessary implements, manifestly expecting really to offer him according to the command of God. And in fact, as far as the mental act was concerned, he really did offer him, and is so represented in the Bible: "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure."

Observe also the conduct of Abraham in regard to the promised land. God had promised to give him that land, and to his "seed for a thousand generations." Now Abraham lived in this country as a stranger: "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise." When his beloved Sarah died he bought the cave of Macpelah for a burying place, in which cave he was afterwards buried himself; and his seed did not inherit the land for more than four hundred years; which shows that Abraham understood the promise, as to be fulfilled to his descendants, and remained "strong in faith, giving glory to God."

Now how vastly different was the state of Abraham's mind from that to which I have before alluded, where a trifling objection can stumble a mind and paralyze and overthrow all confidence in the testimony of God.

- 11. Confiding more in men than in God, is another development of unbelief. How common it is for even professed Christians to have more confidence in the prayers of some mere man, than in the intercession of Christ; and to place more reliance upon the word of man than upon the word of God, and as a matter of fact, to be more influenced by the opinions, or the mere say so of men, than by the testimony and even the oath of God. Should you ask them if they had more confidence in man than in God, they would say no. But, as a matter of fact, they have, whether they are aware of it or not. Their conduct proves to a demonstration, that their faith is not in God, but in man. As an illustration of this, witness the anxieties, and carefulness of multitudes of God's professed children, on the subject of temporal provision for their families. Now if some wealthy man would give them a bond and mortgage, a check upon some bank, or even a promissory note, for ten or twenty thousand dollars, they would feel perfectly at rest in regard to the supply of their temporal wants. Their faith or confidence in this security would have its practical influence. It would allay all their fears, silence all their carefulness in the hearts of God's professed people. "Trust in the Lord and do good, and thou shalt dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." Now this, and multitudes of kindred promises, are infinitely higher and better security than can be given by the wealthiest men on earth. They are the bond, and mortgage, and promissory note, and oath of Jehovah, who cannot lie, and who has the resources of the Universe at His command. Now let me ask you, what state of mind is that which does not repose practically as a matter of fact, as much confidence in these promises, as in human

obligations and securities? What do you mean? Why do you not rest? What higher possible security can you have? What shocking unbelief, and how infinitely provoking to God! that the promise of mortal man is so much more confidence in than the promise and oath of God!

- 12. Murmuring at the providence of God, is another of the developments of unbelief. Some persons are almost always in trouble, lest things should not go right under the providence of God; full of fearfulness, and trembling, and anxiety, lest the winds, and the weather, and the seasons, and millions of other things, should not be exactly agreeable to their wish; and continually murmuring at what is daily coming to pass; manifesting in the most absolute manner, either that they are entirely opposed to God, or that they are infidels, and have no belief in his providence. They manifest an utter want of confidence in His existence, and wisdom, and providence; and would fain have almost every thing in the government of the material Universe different from what it is. To-day, you are sorry that it rains--tonight you fear there will be frost--to-morrow you fear there will be a high wind--in the summer, that there will be drought--and in the winter, that there will be too much or too little snow. Indeed the unbelief of many persons keeps them in a state of almost perpetual and God-dishonoring anxiety. And is it not astonishing that this state of mind is so seldom regarded as being the very essence of all that is criminal and abominable in the sight of God?
- 13. The absence of a joyful acquiescence in the whole will of God, as expressed either in His works, or providence, or word, is also a development of unbelief. If a man has entire confidence in God in all things, he will have a supreme complacency in the will of God. He will not merely submit without rebellion, but will be joyfully acquiescent in all the works, and ways, and will of God. Whatever the weather is; whatever the seasons are; whatever God does or permits to be done, is, so far as God is concerned, most sweetly acquiesced in, by a soul in the exercise of faith.
- 14. Maintaining a false hope, is another of the developments of unbelief. God has said, "If any man hath this hope in him, (i.e. the true Christians hope,) he purifieth himself even as Christ is pure." Now how many thousands of professors of religion are there, whose hope as a matter of fact, does not manifest itself in a holy life. Of this they are just as certain as that they exist, and yet they hold on to their hope and seem determined to venture their eternal destiny upon it. Now what is this but virtually staking their eternal salvation, that this express declaration of God is not true. It is not only calling this and multitudes of kindred passages in question--it is not merely denying them--it is not merely making God a liar--but it is virtually saying, "I stake my eternal salvation, that these declarations of God are not true." Upon what other conceivable or possible ground can they hold fast to their false hope? They seem to be entirely ignorant, that their hope is the result of sheer infidelity. They have not so much as a conviction that the Bible is true. If they had, their hope would perish like the moth in a moment. How many thousand cases are there, in which professors of religion as soon as they become convicted, and have a realizing sense of the truth of the Bible, yield up their false hopes, and seem never to have known, that the fact that they ever had a hope was attributable entirely to their unbelief.
- 15. A present refusal to enter into the rest of faith, is another of the developments of unbelief. God has said, "thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he

trusteth in thee." What multitudes there are, who are continually disquieting themselves, not only about their temporal but about their spiritual state, simply because they refuse to believe that in Christ they are complete; that in Him all fulness dwells; that in Him every demand of their nature, every thing that they can need for time and eternity, is made secure by the promise and oath of God. A state of unbelief is very like a mind in the midst of some agonizing dream,

" _____ where the wreck'd desponding thought,

From wave to wave of fancied misery

At random drives, her helm of reason lost."

How often a man in some distressing dream, imagines himself poor--perhaps himself and family destitute and in want of all things--perhaps in debt, and in prison, and no means of payment, surrounded with the darkest and most forbidding prospects on every side, and on every subject; no friends, no home, no employment, no confidence in himself or in any body else. The consummation of wretchedness and despair has overwhelmed him, until some dire catastrophe breaks up his slumbers, and behold, he is at home, in bed, in health, and the reverse of all his crazy dreams is true. I thank God, he exclaims, that all this is but a dream. I thought I had no home, no friends, no health, was in debt, persecuted, imprisoned; saw no help, for time or eternity, but all this was a dream. I am now awake, and blessed be God the reality all the reverse of my vain imaginings.

Just so faith breaks up the spell that binds the mind in all its doubts, perplexities, and anxieties, and introduces it into a state of perfect rest in Christ. O the wretched unbeliever felt condemned, owed ten thousand talents to divine justice, and had nothing to pay, struggled, agonized, prayed, read, searched, looked every way, saw neither help nor hope; the remembrance of the past filled the soul with shame, and was agonizing beyond expression, present circumstances are discouraging and fill the mind with forebodings of future wrath. The future as dark as midnight; there seems to be "no eye to pity, and no arm can save." It would seem as if the aggregate of all conceivable woes, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, were in reserve for him. But, ah! He apprehends Christ, and how instantaneously the whole scene is changed. Can it be possible? he exclaims. Oh what a wretched, horrible pit of miry clay, is that from which my feet are taken. This is indeed everlasting rock. My "goings are [indeed] established." I see an ample provision, not only for the forgiveness of all my past sins, but for all my present, future, utmost, conceivable or possible wants. While the provision is absolutely boundless, and made sure by the promise of Him who cannot lie. "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with thee." Is it so indeed? Have I such a Savior, in whom all fulness dwells? Am I complete in Him? Is He my wisdom, my righteousness, my sanctification, and my redemption? It is surely so. It is certain as my existence. O, I feel as if my soul were in an ocean of sweet and boundless rest and peace, and my God hath said, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee." Now any refusal or neglect to enter at once into this state of mind is unbelief. And, dearly beloved, if this is so, let me inquire, was not that a most pertinent question of Christ, "When I come, shall I find faith on the earth?"

- 16. Another development of unbelief is, a want of an inward assurance and felt confidence that God's promises will be fulfilled. Take for instance, James 1:5-7: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord." Now who will pretend to call this truth in question? And yet, who believes it? Who has the inward assurance that is essential to faith, that he shall be taught of God? Who comes to Him with the same assurance that he will be taught, with which a student goes to his professor upon some question with which he knows him to be familiar? Why, the student goes to his teacher, with the felt and conscious expectation--with as much inward assurance as he has of his existence, that he shall be instructed. He does not go in a mere negative state of mind; but he knows that his teacher is himself informed upon the subject of his inquiry, and that he will at once lead him to an understanding of it. Now why does he expect this? Because this is the business of his teacher, and because he has pledged himself to instruct his pupils. So has God pledged Himself, in the strongest and most solemn manner, and have we not a right, nay, are we not bound to come to God for instruction, with as much felt assurance as we would exercise in going to a human teacher?

Take also, 1 Thess. 5:23, 24: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved BLAMELESS unto the coming of OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it." Now here the Apostle prays for the entire sanctification of spirit, soul, and body, and that our whole being may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; and then pledges the faithfulness of God: "Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it." Now have we not a right; nay, are we not bound to exercise the utmost confidence, and to have a felt and strong assurance of mind, that what is here promised shall come to pass? Now whatever is short of this is unbelief.

See also the case of Paul, 2 Cor. 12:9: "And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." God had given him "a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure." But Paul, fearing that it would injure his influence, besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from him. But Christ replied, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my grace is made perfect in weakness." Now this entirely satisfied the mind of Paul, and he immediately subjoins, "Most gladly therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." It appears that he, at once, felt an inward, conscious assurance, that allayed all his fears in regard to the influence of this thorn in the flesh, and enabled him to say, "Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities." Now I suppose this to be as true of every man as of Paul, that Christ's grace is sufficient for him, in any circumstances in which the providence of God can place him; and that nothing but unbelief, prevents any Christian from experiencing the utmost confidence, and the inward unwavering assurance of mind, that Christ's grace is sufficient for him.

- 17. All asking God for an inward assurance of what He has promised, is another of the developments of unbelief. Suppose you had promised your little son, something that he knew

you were abundantly able to give, but your promise did not satisfy him. He is uneasy and continues to ask, whether you will certainly do it. And notwithstanding your most solemn assurances, he should come to you and say, "Father, I want you to do something that will give me an inward assurance that you will fulfill your promise. I feel very unhappy about it. I don't realize in my mind, that you will do it. I want to feel in my heart, that I shall have it. I want that inward assurance, without which I cannot rest." Now would you not consider this a downright insult to you? Suppose you had not only repeatedly given him your word, but had confirmed it by an oath; and yet he had no felt confidence in your veracity. All asking for any additional assurances, would be regarded by you with grief and indignation. You would consider it a virtual charging you with false hood and perjury; and you would consider it an act of vast condescension in yourself to listen to such a request, and to furnish farther assurances, even were it in your power. Now let me ask, is it considered by Christians, that all asking for an inward felt assurance for that strong confidence that quiets the mind, is but an instance of shocking unbelief? Why do you not feel that assurance already? Cannot the promise and oath of God convince, persuade, and assure you, that what He has said shall come to pass? You ought to know, that the absence of this felt assurance, is a virtual charging Him with falsehood and perjury.

- 18. All pleading the promises of God without this inward, felt, unwavering assurance of mind, where the promise is plain and the application just, is an instance of unbelief. When Paul prayed against the thorn in the flesh, he had no express promise that that thorn should be removed. He was not therefore bound to believe that it would be. So Christ had no express promise that His agony in the garden should be removed. In neither of these cases did perfect faith in God, imply the belief that the particular things requested would be granted. But had there been an express promise in either or both of these cases, they both would have had the right, and been under an obligation to exercise the most unwavering assurance, that the specific blessing promised should be granted. It should be understood, therefore, that in pleading the promises of God, with a just apprehension and understanding of them, every state of mind is unbelief that falls short of the most unwavering assurance, that the thing promised shall be granted, according to the true tenor and meaning of the promise. All uneasiness of mind in regard to the event--all unhappiness through fear, that it will not be granted--every thing short of the utmost repose of mind in the veracity of God, is God-dishonoring unbelief. Suppose a student should receive letters from his father, containing the strongest assurances, that he would supply all his wants, giving him the fullest liberty to draw on him at any time for any amount he needed; and suppose it were well known that his father's fortune was very ample, and there could be no doubt of his ability to fulfill his promises; and suppose that his father's promises were backed up by oaths and the most abundant assurances that could be expressed in words: and now suppose this student is seen to be full of anxiety and carefulness about his support; laying his plans and making arrangements to help himself, entirely independent of his father's aid. It would be manifest at once, that he had no confidence in his father's assurances. Every body would infer at once, that however rich his father might be, no confidence could be placed in his veracity. Every one might say, "You see how it is. This young man is acquainted with his father. We have seen his letters. We know what abundant promises he has given, and yet as a matter of fact, his son has not a particle of confidence in these assurances." The inference of a want of integrity in his father would be natural and certain.

Now, Christian, did you ever consider how horrible your conduct is in the eyes of an unbelieving world. They know what promises your Father has made, and they see by your anxiety and worldly-mindedness how little confidence you have in these promises. They witness your carefulness and worldly spirit, and think in their hearts, these Christians know that God is not to be trusted, for as a matter of fact they have no confidence in His promises. Now how can you in any way more deeply wound religion, than in this--more awfully and horribly dishonor God? It is a most shameful publishing, in the most impressive manner possible, that you believe God to be a liar!

- 19. Not realizing that Christ died for you in particular, is another development of unbelief. The Apostle says, that "Christ tasted death for every man." Now what state of mind is that which does not realize and feel assured, that He died for you? There is a great deal of complaining in the Church, that individuals cannot feel as if Christ died for them in particular. If He died for every man, He died for you as an individual, and every want of realizing and feeling the inward assurance of this is unbelief. It is the mind's hiding itself in the darkness of its own selfishness. You believe that he died for all men--that "He tasted death for every man;" but cannot make it seem as if He died for you. Thus you parry obligation, and hide away from realizing that your sins nailed him to the cross, and that your soul is guilty of His death, and that his love has rolled a mountain weight of responsibility upon you. It is time for you to realize that this is nothing but unbelief, and a virtual contradiction of the truth that "Christ tasted death for every man." No wonder your heart is not subdued. No wonder you are in bondage to your sins. No wonder your lusts and appetites have dominion over you, while you are so unbelieving as not to realize that what God has said is true.
- 20. All want of appropriating the truth, and promises, and warning of God, to yourself, is unbelief. There is a wonderful disposition in most professors of religion to mingle with the crowd, and to mix up their own sins, and wants, and every thing that regards themselves individually with the sins and wants of the Church at large. Now truth does no good in the world, only as it has its individual application. It sanctifies only when it is appropriated, taken home, and applied to the individual conscience and heart. Not to appropriate it to yourself, is like an individual invited to a feast with many others; but does not go himself, because the promise is general; or when he is there, does not eat himself, because the provision was made for all the guests. The grand reason why he should go as an individual, why he should partake personally without hesitation, is because the provision is general, and every one has a right and is expected to partake of course. How shocking it is that so many professors of religion let the provisions of the gospel lie before them, and all the promises of the Bible cluster around them, and yet because the provisions are so ample, and the promise is to everyone who will partake, they stand and look on, in their unbelief, and starve to death.

But I must defer the remaining heads of this discourse, till my next.

GLOSSARY

of easily misunderstood terms as defined by Mr. Finney himself.

Compiled by Katie Stewart

1. **Complacency, or Esteem:** "Complacency, as a state of will or heart, is only benevolence

modified by the consideration or relation of right character in the object of it. God, prophets, apostles, martyrs, and saints, in all ages, are as virtuous in their self-denying and untiring labours to save the wicked, as they are in their complacent love to the saints." *Systematic Theology (LECTURE VII)*. Also, "approbation of the character of its object. Complacency is due only to the good and holy." *Lectures to Professing Christians (LECTURE XII)*.

2. **Disinterested Benevolence:** "By disinterested benevolence I do not mean, that a person who is disinterested feels no interest in his object of pursuit, but that he seeks the happiness of others for its own sake, and not for the sake of its reaction on himself, in promoting his own happiness. He chooses to do good because he rejoices in the happiness of others, and desires their happiness for its own sake. God is purely and disinterestedly benevolent. He does not make His creatures happy for the sake of thereby promoting His own happiness, but because He loves their happiness and chooses it for its own sake. Not that He does not feel happy in promoting the happiness of His creatures, but that He does not do it for the sake of His own gratification." *Lectures to Professing Christians (LECTURE I)*.
3. **Divine Sovereignty:** "The sovereignty of God consists in the independence of his will, in consulting his own intelligence and discretion, in the selection of his end, and the means of accomplishing it. In other words, the sovereignty of God is nothing else than infinite benevolence directed by infinite knowledge." *Systematic Theology (LECTURE LXXVI)*.
4. **Election:** "That all of Adam's race, who are or ever will be saved, were from eternity chosen by God to eternal salvation, through the sanctification of their hearts by faith in Christ. In other words, they are chosen to salvation by means of sanctification. Their salvation is the end- their sanctification is a means. Both the end and the means are elected, appointed, chosen; the means as really as the end, and for the sake of the end." *Systematic Theology (LECTURE LXXIV)*.
5. **Entire Sanctification:** "Sanctification may be entire in two senses: (1.) In the sense of present, full obedience, or entire consecration to God; and, (2.) In the sense of continued, abiding consecration or obedience to God. Entire sanctification, when the terms are used in this sense, consists in being established, confirmed, preserved, continued in a state of sanctification or of entire consecration to God." *Systematic Theology (LECTURE LVIII)*.
6. **Moral Agency:** "Moral agency is universally a condition of moral obligation. The attributes of moral agency are intellect, sensibility, and free will." *Systematic Theology (LECTURE III)*.
7. **Moral Depravity:** "Moral depravity is the depravity of free-will, not of the faculty itself, but of its free action. It consists in a violation of moral law. Depravity of the will, as a faculty, is, or would be, physical, and not moral depravity. It would be depravity of substance, and not of free, responsible choice. Moral depravity is depravity of choice. It is a choice at variance with moral law, moral right. It is synonymous with sin or sinfulness. It is moral depravity, because it consists in a violation of moral law, and because it has moral character." *Systematic Theology (LECTURE XXXVIII)*.
8. **Human Reason:** "the intuitive faculty or function of the intellect... it is the faculty that intuits

moral relations and affirms moral obligation to act in conformity with perceived moral relations." *Systematic Theology (LECTURE III)*.

9. **Retributive Justice:** "Retributive justice consists in treating every subject of government according to his character. It respects the intrinsic merit or demerit of each individual, and deals with him accordingly." *Systematic Theology (LECTURE XXXIV)*.
10. **Total Depravity:** "Moral depravity of the unregenerate is without any mixture of moral goodness or virtue, that while they remain unregenerate, they never in any instance, nor in any degree, exercise true love to God and to man." *Systematic Theology (LECTURE XXXVIII)*.
11. **Unbelief:** "the soul's withholding confidence from truth and the God of truth. The heart's rejection of evidence, and refusal to be influenced by it. The will in the attitude of opposition to truth perceived, or evidence presented." *Systematic Theology (LECTURE LV)*.