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GLOSSARY

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

On Tenderness of Heart

Lecture I

January 19, 1859

by Charles Grandison Finney

President of Oberlin College

Text.--2 Kings 22:19-20: "Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before Me; I also have heard thee, saith the Lord. Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this

place."

These words are spoken of Josiah, one of the pious kings of Judah. He came to the throne in very early life, yet with a heart tender towards the Lord God of his fathers. It was in an age of abounding iniquity, in which the cup of Judah's transgressions was nearly full. At the time to which our text refers, the copy of the Mosaic law, kept in the archives of the temple, was brought forth, after having been mislaid, or perhaps only long neglected; but be this as it may, the reading of it before the king took hold of his very soul, and enkindled the deepest apprehensions of God's displeasure. Probably the passages read were some of those terrible denunciations against idolatry and against God's own people if they should fall into idolatry. On hearing them, king Josiah said--"Go ye, inquire of the Lord for me and for the people and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book; for great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book to do according to all that is written concerning us."

In reply to this enquiring of the Lord, He said--"Behold, I will bring evil upon this place and upon the inhabitants thereof; because they have forsaken Me and have burnt incense to other god's to provoke Me to anger; therefore My wrath shall be kindled against this place and shall not be quenched."

But to the good king Josiah, the Lord sent a special message, exempting him personally from this fearful scourge, and assuring him that he should go to his grave in peace and that his eyes should not see all this threatened evil.

It is to our purpose now to enquire,

I. Why did the Lord thus exempt Josiah?

II. A tender heart implies a reverential fear of God.

III. All this is true of God as towards His penitent children.

I. Why did the Lord thus exempt Josiah?

- 1. Our text informs us--"Because his heart was tender and he humbled himself before the Lord," because, when he heard this fearful threatening, he rent his clothes and wept before the Lord; therefore did the Lord hear his prayer, and grant him personally an exemption from this terrible infliction. In one word, his tenderness of heart averted this judgment from him.
- 2. The term heart is used in Scripture with some variety of meaning--the special sense being determined by the connection and by the nature of the case. In the present instance, it is manifestly a virtuous state of mind -- such a state as God approves. Hence, it must imply voluntariness. This element may not be the whole of its meaning, but it must be a part -- really included.
- 3. Hardness of heart is a committed, stubborn state of the will; and over against this, a tender heart is a yielding, submissive state of will.

- 4. It is also a state of mind susceptible of deep impressions. We know that sometimes our minds are in such a state that God's word makes deep impressions; every message sinks deep. At other times, it makes none at all; our hearts are hard. This difference is a matter of experience.
- 5. In the case before us, the moment Josiah became apprised of the fearful monitions of God's word against the sins of his nation, his heart trembled; these words took hold with thrilling power. His state of mind gave the truth great force. All of us are conscious at times of this peculiar result when our hearts are tender. Sometimes the mind rules out God's word and allows it no access. But the tender heart is quite the opposite of this; it gives the truth free access and allows it to take strong hold.
- 6. This state of mind often expresses itself in tears. It did so in Josiah's case. This is a common experience when the heart is tender.

II. A tender heart implies a reverential fear of God.

We see this plainly developed in Josiah. It implies also faith, love, and submission. Unbelief, aversion and stubbornness make the spirit hard and dry--with no tenderness--no tears. But this tenderness of mind is best known to us by its manifestations. Among these we notice,

- 1. A disposition to confess, as compared with covering up.
- The man of tender heart chooses to make full confession. He has no wish to avoid it. He will be deeply honest and thorough in his confessions, because this is congenial with his feelings. He will confess not only what is known, and must be confessed, but everything which his conscience condemns.
- 2. It manifests itself also in a readiness to accept evidence against one's self. Such a mind does not resist proof because it bears against its personal interests. On the other hand, such a man will go even farther against himself than the proof compels him to go.
- 3. The man of tender heart cannot endure to make apologies and excuses for sin. He will not make them for himself and will not hear them made for himself by others. He naturally shrinks from them and loathes them. He is amazed that anybody can fear confessing too much.
- 4. He is also ready to recognize his own complicity with others in guilt--ready, I mean, if such be the fact. When the parent's heart is tender, he will readily assume his share of the guilt of his children. Often it seems to him that the great guilt of a child's sin is on his own soul and he is verily guilty of the blood of his offspring if they die in their sins. He feels himself involved in their wrong doing because he might have prevented it.

Persons in this tender state of mind often see that they are chargeable with the death of Christ. This idea does not seem to them like a fiction, or a fancy of the imagination, but like a reality--as it is beautifully expressed in the hymn--

I saw One hanging on a tree,
In agony and blood;
He fixed His languid eyes on me;
As near the cross I stood.

O! never, till my latest breath
Shall I forget that look;
It seemed to charge me with His death,
Though not a word He spoke.

My conscience felt and owned the guilt;
It plunged me in despair.
I saw my sins His blood had spilt,
And helped to nail Him there.

A second look He gave, that said,
"I freely all forgive;
This blood is for thy ransom paid --
I die that thou may'st live."

This feeling makes the idea something more than poetry. It is a deeply solemn reality--and the legitimate fruit of a tender heart. We see that by our sins we brought ourselves into a state in which Christ must needs die for us or we must perish. Then our tender hearts say--I did as truly bear an effective part in bringing Jesus Christ to the cross as any one of the Jews or Romans did. But the hard heart parries off this sense of guilt, and will not take the conviction of it home to self. Such hearts are far from penitence, and of course, far from pardon.

In a similar spirit, we shall unify ourselves with our friends and neighbors, and hold ourselves responsible for their wrong doing in just so far as we have influenced them to it, or might have influenced them from it.

- 5. The tender heart trembles at God's word. You see this in king Josiah. He fully believed God's threatenings and felt their justice. Hence how could he do otherwise than fear and tremble?
- 6. He will also be watchful against all sin; will be exceedingly tender of God's feelings; cannot endure the thought of grieving His heart; fears also to incur His displeasure, but yet more fears to deserve it; has evermore a tender regard to the rights of God, and no sympathy with that recklessness towards His rights that is common with sinners of a hard heart. His fear of God is deep and earnest, but not slavish. I have often been struck with the significance of that Scripture which speaks of God as being the "Fear of Isaac." That good man seems to have had a sweetly solemn, tender frame of mind--in which he walked softly and tenderly before the Lord, a filial fear pervading his mind and controlling his life. So Josiah moved softly and solemnly before

the Lord, jealous lest he should do anything to displease His divine Father.

- 7. Such a mind will be full of prayer; will seek communion with God and will breathe itself out towards God in humble supplication and trust.
- 8. One in this state will be submissive under afflictions and grateful on the other hand, for mercies. He will have no heart to complain of his neighbors, his friends or his enemies even, and least of all, of God, but in the deepest poverty would say with the poor woman asking God's blessing over her bowl of water and crust of bread--"All this, and Jesus too!" Like this I heard one man say--"I have many things to be thankful for, and little to complain of;" yet I have occasion to know that his circumstances were those of very great trial and privation.
- 9. The tender heart will manifest itself in great charity in judging of other's conduct and motives. One in this state of mind will readily suppose there may be good reasons for whatever appears wrong. He will assume that good men apparently in fault, may not be so bad as might be supposed from certain appearances. He is disposed to make apologies, and shrinks from injuring others in their reputation. In a case where several are involved in the same general wrong, the man of tender heart will apologize for the rest and take the blame largely to himself, instead of apologizing only for himself and blaming only his associates. He will say, "I am greatly to blame; if I had done all my duty, they might have done much better than they did."
- 10. This tenderness will manifest itself in making all possible restitution. For, such a mind is sensitive to its own faults, yielding and tender. In this spirit if you have wronged anyone you will hasten to make it right. If you have injured another's feelings, you will seek to heal the wound.
- 11. It is altogether natural to such an one to flood off the heart's sorrows with tears. Confessions for sin bring tears from your eyes in copious measure. The will and the sensibility are in such a state that tears will come. So the Lord said to Josiah--"Because thine heart was tender and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord; and hast rent thy clothes and wept before Me; I have also heard thee, saith the Lord."

A hard-hearted, selfish soul will not understand this tenderness or these tears; will not appreciate or respect it, but there are some who can both appreciate it and respect it. When parents see it in their children, their souls are deeply moved. It is truly affecting to notice how such manifestations touch the hearts of parents. Their anxieties for the wandering one have been, we may suppose, very great; but when they see him returning, and mark the proofs of a tender heart, how their souls yearn to embrace that child in parental love! The father in the parable saw his prodigal son coming while yet he was a great way off, and he could not wait; he ran to meet him, fell on his neck and kissed him.

III. All this is true of God as towards His penitent children.

- 1. Indeed in view of such manifestations, He is as much more affected than earthly parents are as He is greater and better and more loving in heart than they. It is remarkable to notice how often in the Bible God is said to have been affected by the tears of His people. If you were to

turn over your Bibles and to note these passages, you would be surprised at their frequency and no less at their beauty and power. Hagar--out in the desert--her water all spent, cast her only son under one of the shrubs and went and sat down a good way off saying -- "Let me not see him die!" and like a true mother, "she lifted up her voice and wept." But God heard the lad's feeble, moaning cries, and God saw those mother's tears and He opened her eyes to see a well of water for his life.

Hannah, mourning before the temple for her barrenness, wept, and the Lord saw her tears and heard her prayers. Hezekiah wept that he must die so soon and leave so much of the work he sought to do undone; and then God said--"I have seen thy tears; I have heard thy prayer; behold, I will add to thy days fifteen years." Peter, convicted by one look of His Master, "went out and wept bitterly." Nothing more is said of it; but the breach was healed; his penitent soul found pardon.

- 2. Often the historian records that when God's guilty people humbled themselves and wept before Him, God came down to restore and to save. Greatly moved by their tears, He could not bear to see them perish, but hastened down to bring deliverance and to wipe those tears away. Just as the mother hears the first cry of sorrow from her child, and hastens to wipe the tears away and to minister comfort to the broken hearted. Indeed He has said -- "To this man will I look even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and who trembleth at My word."

REMARKS.

1. This tenderness of heart is the condition of enlargement in grace. You will notice that this tenderness and solemnity, in the case of sinners, always precedes peace and enlargement. Who has not seen men in great agony and trouble for their sins? But soon their heart was humbled, subdued, tender, and then came pardon and peace. They were like a weaned child; ready to confess and to take blame to themselves. If you notice humility and tenderness, you expect enlargement to follow.

2. A genuine revival is sure to manifest its power on the heart by many tears. It was noticeable in the last revival in Rochester that men of the highest standing in society, arising to speak in religious meetings, were melted to tears. They could not speak without weeping. This indicates a true revival. Whenever any heart becomes tender, you will see this manifestation. There will be a deep breaking of the sensibilities. This state of mind is an essential condition of prevailing prayer. When you hear persons speak of their great struggles in prayer and the failing of an earnest spirit of supplication upon their souls, they can only speak of tears and overflowing griefs in view of the sin against which they are praying. Then they gain the assurance that God has heard their cries. Ah, that was a solemn hour! When you rose from your knees, you could hardly bear the sound of your own footsteps, so solemn was the place, so tender your spirit and so imbued with the sense of a present God!

3. This state of mind leads one to unify himself with a whole people, as Daniel, praying for his people, confesses the sins of the whole nation; and unites himself not only with the men of that age but of many ages past -- saying, "because for our sins and for the iniquities of our fathers, are Jerusalem and Thy people become a reproach." This readiness to unify one's self with others is altogether natural to a tender heart, because this is a spirit of love. So kind Josiah, filled with astonishment and sorrow that the people of God has so departed from the Lord, unified himself with

the whole nation and wept for their sins. So Jesus Christ blended His sympathies with the world of sinners whom He came to save, and seemed really to be bearing the sins of the whole race. He had no occasion to confess sins of His own; but He did bear the sins of others on His holy soul -- as the prophet said of Him in anticipation -- "He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows."

4. Every real Christian knows what this spirit is -- of deep sympathy with others in view of their sorrows not only, but of their sins. Pastors of churches often feel it for their people. It often seems to them that they must confess their complicity with the sins of the church, partly because the church might have done better if their pastor had; and also because their love and sympathy draw them to confess and to pray for those they love. The same is true of deacons and private members. They have similar reason to take the whole membership on their hearts, crying, "O God, we have broken Thy covenant! Let Thy mercy reach us in the depth of our guilt." How natural it is for those who are in this tender and humble state of mind to shoulder the whole responsibility for the sins of the people with whom they are associated. I pity that professed Christian who does not in his experience know what this feeling is. What would you think of yourself as a parent if their were great sins in your family and you did not confess them? One who has this tenderness of heart has eyes keen to discern his own guilt, and to see in how many respects he has lacked the unction and power which might have saved others from sin. So in the case of husbands and wives. If one is not converted, the other mourns and confesses, and is afraid of becoming in any way the occasion of the other's sin and impenitence. A tender heart can see ten thousand things to confess and to mourn over. If you could hear the secret prayer of some Christians, what do you suppose would be your impressions of them? They might be like those of a servant girl who overheard the broken-hearted confessions of her mistress and her sad complaints of her own sins, and then went away and said, "My mistress is a hypocrite, I know, for she as much as confessed it!" The girl could not comprehend such confessions.

5. Again, with a tender heart, it is easy to forgive. Who can lay up any thing against another, when the heart is tender? It is altogether natural in such a frame of mind to forgive and even to weep over an enemy.

When a whole church are in this tender frame, it is exceedingly easy to settle difficulties and heal up old sores. Then those who should confess will surely do it; and indeed those who have little if any complicity in the wrong things will be ready enough to confess and weep and pray that all may be healed.

Brethren, do we not all need such a revival of tenderness and of humility and of broken and contrite hearts? Do we not need one that shall break up and subdue our pride and our hardness of heart? Beloved, do you know what this is--this readiness to confess and to make restitution? Have you ever felt this? How long since you have felt the power of such a revival? How long since your soul has been melted to tears for your own sins first and then also for the sins of others? How long is it since you and I have known what it is to tremble before the word of the Lord? This, surely, is what we all need.

6. Sometimes a tender spirit of confession is checked. Someone suggests that you are going too far, confessing too much. He is afraid that some advantage will be taken of it; and so he holds himself and his brethren back, and by consequence his heart becomes hard and he hardens the hearts of his

brethren as well. Some years since Josiah Bissel of Rochester--a man quite prominent as a reformer--was greatly moved with the spirit of tenderness and confession. It so happened that his earnestness in reforms had made him some enemies, and there were those who suggested to him to be sparing of his confessions lest they should take undue advantages. "No," aid he, "I will not be kept back by any such fear; I must confess according to the movings of my own soul. Let no man hinder me! My heart must be right with God, whatever becomes of my reputation. I love to confess my sins and nothing shall hinder me. My enemies are not likely to charge upon me more than I am guilty of. They may charge me with other things; scarcely can they with more!"

So this noble hearted man said and felt. The people were wondering at such a manifestation of humility and tenderness; but it soon appeared that God was preparing him to die. A few months only and the Lord gave him a place among those who wear white robes, being washed from their sins in Jesus' own blood! Brethren, do not fail to pray for a tender and humble heart.

The One Thing Needful

Lecture II

February 2, 1859

by Charles Grandison Finney
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Text.--Luke 10:41-42: "Jesus answered, and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her."

This text is introduced in the sacred narration, thus --

"Now it came to pass, as they went, that He entered into a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha received Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to Him, and said, 'Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore, that she help me.'"

Thus it appears that on this memorable visit made by Jesus to this family, Mary gave herself up immediately to be instructed. She sat down at once at His feet to hear His words. "But Martha was cumbered about much serving," and was almost ready to complain of Christ that He would let Mary neglect the work and throw it upon her. Martha was the housekeeper and made herself a good deal of trouble in the matter of extra entertainment of guests. Jesus replied to her, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things." She was full of anxiety -- not about one thing only, but

many; her mind was taken up and divided, anxious, in a state of great perturbation. This thing and that thing must be attended to. But Christ does not care for the "many things." In His view the many things were of small value; and only the one thing had a value supreme and immeasurable. This one thing He puts in opposition to the many things chosen by Martha. Mary had discriminated and chosen wisely, and had therefore taken the right thing for her portion. You, said He to Martha, have many things in your heart; Mary has seized upon the one thing, the good part, which she shall never lose.

The very emphatic manner in which Christ speaks of this one thing, might imply that but one thing is of any use; or it might mean that but one thing is indispensable -- all the rest being naturally inferior and such as one may afford to forego.

I. What is this one thing needful?

II. Why is but one thing needful?

III. The thing the sinner needs is escape from their consequences. What are these consequences?

IV. By a saving knowledge of Jesus, one gets rid also of despair.

I. What is this one thing needful?

- 1. Evidently it is a saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. To this Mary gave her earnest attention. Jesus had come to her house; immediately she gave herself up to sit at His feet and to hear His words. Christ was not displeased with her seeming inattention to His earthly wants. It did not offend Him that she should be so entirely engrossed with her own salvation. He noticed her fixed attention, her tearful eye and her trembling voice, and He would not have her diverted to anything else.
- 2. On the other hand, Martha was careful to entertain Him well, and doubtless had a high regard for Him as a friend. But she had not well understood His mission and her own need to know it. Mary did understand these things and Jesus rejoiced to see that she did.
- 3. The words of Jesus show that in His view there is no comparison between the one thing and the many things. They may be contrasted; they cannot be compared. The many things are mere trifles, finite, and of small account; but the one thing is infinite. The many are temporary, for a moment only; the one is perpetual. The finite and infinite can never be compared; they may naturally be contrasted. Christ did not intend to say that these many things had no value; but did intend to say that the one thing is not merely a good, but an indispensable good. As to those other things -- the many -- for which Martha was so careful, if He had no supper, no matter. He could not forgive Martha for not giving herself up to what both she and Mary needed so much. It was a natural necessity that Martha should have Christ for her Savior. Nothing else can suffice, or can supply the want of this.

II. Why is but one thing needful?

Because if we have this one thing, we shall escape all that we need to fear as the consequence of our sins. Let us consider what this is and must be from its own nature.

III. The thing the sinner needs is escape from their consequences. What are these consequences?

- 1. I often trace the different steps in the experience of different persons. Some seem to have always regarded God as their Father, but to have not seen Christ. I mean, have not seen Christ in the sense of the hymn,

I saw One hanging on a tree,

In agony and blood;

It is one thing to estimate God as a Father, and another to see Christ. Seeing Christ in this sense is the natural result of being deeply convicted and of feeling frequent remorse for sin. This remorse for sin seems to be the indispensable condition of seeing and appreciating Christ as a Savior. It is remarkable that remorse for sin always ceases with the exercise of true faith in Christ. It is worthy of enquiry -- Why is it that a saving knowledge of Christ not only gives the sense of pardon, but wipes out the dreadful remorse? So removes it that it is gone and cannot be found? Yet such is the fact. No one who has had this experience could ever afterwards doubt the reality of justification by faith -- so great is the power of believing on Christ on one's own state of mind. Remorse -- that most horrible condition of mind -- can never be expelled permanently, save by faith in the Lord Jesus. With this faith there comes into the soul a blessed sense of peace and pardon. This expels remorse; nothing else can.

- 2. Under this remorse, we are so displeased with ourselves that we cannot help feeling that God is angry against us -- not with malicious anger, but yet with such anger as crushed the spirit down -- a sense of God's infinite displeasure against sin. Put a man in heaven, he could not be happy there without this deliverance from remorse.

IV. By a saving knowledge of Jesus, one gets rid also of despair.

- 1. Think what despair is; estimate its unutterable agony, and then add to it this horrible, remorseful state of mind, and you have the consummation of sorrow and wretchedness.
- 2. I have seen persons in despair who yet seemed not to be remorseful. They could not believe that God could forgive them; yet the keen gnawings of remorse were not there. But sometimes I have seen both these things together; and there was perfect misery! How awful! How horrible!

Those of you who have felt this have said -- I cannot live so five minutes; I cannot endure this crushing weight of woe! Sometimes the sense of one sin is enough to cut down and crush out all our life. How dreadful then it must be when sin after sin comes rushing down upon us with unendurable self-reproach and condemnation! Naturally this remorseful sense of sin is an ever growing quantity. Suppose one to have it, going on from bad to worse. All the pain which the mind can inflict on itself it does with

accumulating force, mountain on mountain; ocean on ocean.

- 3. Sometimes one may suffer in body all the body can endure, but the soul be in perfect peace. This state I have known to continue a long, long time; but it is by no means to be compared with the horrors of remorse. No pains of body alone can be compared with the agonies of the soul.

Besides this, think of soul-agony, enduring forever. Let the pain be ever so trifling, yet if there be no limitation of time -- if it can never end, how dreadful! No matter whether it be a governmental infliction, or a natural consequence; in either case, the results are, beyond measure, awful. Now to suppose anything can be a good, compared with deliverance from such sin and from such consequences of sin, is utterly preposterous. All things in the comparison, are as nothing.

- 4. It is amazing to hear some men speak of religion. When you exhort them to become religious, they feel nothing. I met a man of this class some years since and said to him -- "Are you a religious man?" "No sir." "Ought you not to have religion?" "O, I suppose it would do me no hurt!" Think of that -- "no hurt!" He doesn't think it would hurt him to love God, and to love Jesus for His Savior and Friend! Strange that men do not see that if religion is anything, it must be everything.
- 5. If you have this one thing, you have everything of highest value; you have the great thing -- eternal holiness and happiness -- an enduring happiness gained, and an ever-growing misery escaped. O what an aggregate of solid misery and woe! All the misery of hell up to this day is nothing in the comparison with the prospective misery of one lost soul. Accumulate all the miseries of war, pestilence and famine; pile them up heights over height; -- all is not to be compared with the misery of one lost soul in hell. You have often heard the illustration from the supposed case of an old bird who takes one sand from our globe -- supposing it to be all sand -- one each thousand years. You say what an amazing period of time ere this globe will be exhausted. But still the soul of man lives on yet, after this globe has been exhausted of its matter and reduced to nothing -- losing one particle of sand each thousand years. And you may add still to this supposition that this same old bird removes another globe in the same way, and still another and another all the planets of our system and then the sun and then all the other suns which glitter only as stars to us because of their immense distance; let her take them all away -- all the stars and all the nebul -- one grain at a time and only one for each thousand years; let her go on till she has worn out ten thousand pairs of wings and ten thousand beaks -- what then? Eternity is not exhausted. There has not been even a beginning made towards exhausting it. That little child, reposing in its mother's lap, shall outlive all the suns and all the planets of the universe.

Suppose that little one, many years ago, had gone to heaven, and you were now to see him face to face and he could tell you what he has become; and how his mind has been expanding, and his heart become like Christ's; you see that he now knows more than you can conceive. But let that little child go on still in the same career of progress, and the day will come when he will know more than all the angels of heaven know now.

Suppose that you could see Mary -- that Mary who once sat at Jesus' feet -- as she is today -- not as she was then with her eye fixed on Christ and the tear quivering in it -- but as she is now. You would think her more than an angel, and almost divine. So glorious! so heavenly! What a part that must have been which she then chose! Well might she forget everything else. O yes, for the Savior had come, and now is the time to rush to His feet and catch the words of life from His lips. And has He really come to offer her the peerless blessing? How then can she be expected to care much for the little things that so encumber Martha.

REMARKS.

1. Christ says -- "Mary hath chosen;" -- from which you may see that something is to be chosen. To do this choosing must therefore be the great business of life. Christ presents Himself before us to be chosen. The thing to be done is to choose Him and to receive Him thus as our own portion. Mary made this wise discrimination, and seized on the one good part. Perhaps she did not understand that the thing to be gained as her life's great labor was to be chosen and then seized upon.
2. Nothing should divert us from this choice. The mind needs to seize upon it with all its strength. If Mary had run about the house, and set her heart upon getting a good supper for her guest, she would have missed this good part and lost it, perhaps forever. Her mind needed to be fastened, and her attention held until her heart's great choice was fully made. Christ encouraged her to sit there and attend to His life-giving words. When Martha came along, fretting and complaining, Mary may have been deeply grieved. But Jesus took her part, and replied for her, so that she had nothing to do but to bend her ear and her whole heart again to the words of her Lord. Thus to this one thing to be chosen, everything else should yield. Christ said -- "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."
3. Many never fulfill the conditions of this choosing -- never give their fixed attention to this subject. There are multitudes who have seasons of serious thought; but Satan says to them -- "You must not neglect any of your duties;" -- and in this temptation, Christians are sometimes his most effectual allies. Christ says, "Sit down and give your attention earnestly to this one thing." This attention must be a necessity -- a thing indispensable to the wise and blessed choice. You never get the good thing save as you fulfill this condition. Undoubtedly it was Mary's duty to sit down and to give her whole mind up to thought and feeling, so that His truth might find its way to her soul. Christ wanted to save her soul; He saw the way opening -- saw the need of continuous attention, and therefore directed His efforts to this end.
4. If this one thing is secured, all that is really important is gained; if this is lost, all is lost. To secure this one thing needful, there must first be fixed attention, diligent hearing and earnest thought.
5. This leads me to say that some people seem to have forgotten the conditions of having a general revival, or else have made up their minds never to have one. How difficult it is here for the people to agree to make a general effort. When some are ready and urgent, others are not. But if you mean to have a general revival, you must have a general attention; if your heart be for an extensive revival, you must have an extensive attention. If as soon as the church begins to feel the importance of a concerted movement, one goes off to this thing and another to that, all comes to nought. I do not

suppose that true Christians intend to frustrate a revival, but they really do so without purposed intention.

Think of the men among us who have been here for years but are not converted. Shall they be saved? Thus far they are only more hardened. Will they ever choose that good part? When shall it once be? I will tell you. It will be when Christian people shall unite in treating this matter as the one thing needful. Then, when unconverted people see that Christians are absorbed in efforts to save them, and treat everything else as of no value, compared with their souls, then you may expect them to believe you are sincere, and then your example and efforts will have weight. But suppose a general effort to promote a revival is made; they are invited to come in; but they hear that a party is being gotten up at this place and another at another place and that many professed Christians attend these parties, what will they think of it? Must it not tend to banish all serious thought from their minds?

On the other hand, if you all come to the prayer meeting, you cannot keep these men away. They will get ahead of you all.

6. Now if this saving knowledge of Christ be the one thing needful, will you not treat it as if it were?

What will you do now? Some of you may say -- If I should do as Mary did and get no supper for my guest, and prepare him no lodgings, then what would he do? Jesus Christ would say to you -- You don't know your duty!

Christ demands your heart, young man, and yours too, young woman. Do you say -- I must study while I am here, for I am here to study? But what of your soul? Is it nothing to you that you lose your soul?

Will you, Christian, fulfill your part of the conditions of a general revival? Do you answer -- I will give my whole heart to it? I will bend to it my utmost efforts? Then it will not be long before each one will have chosen the one thing needful. Christ would say -- You have all chosen that good part which shall not be taken from you.

7. Each one must take up this matter for himself. It is in its very nature a personal thing.

Conversion will be more or less sudden -- other things being equal -- according as you give up your mind more or less singly and exclusively to the effort. Until you give up your heart fully, you do nothing to purpose.

I once attempted to labor as an evangelist with a church which seemed determined not to make any change in their usual habits. Their custom was to have a sewing society once a month. The minister would go and close with prayer. I had been engaged for some time preaching every evening and minds were becoming solemn; when all at once I heard that the preaching was suspended because of the sewing circle. Preaching went over. By and by, when the interest had become yet greater, another sewing circle, and no preaching. Everything was fixed and nothing could be changed. When I found out all this I said to them -- I cannot stay here, good bye. If any people want a revival, they must consent to give their attention to it.

Many of you are crying out -- Who will show us any good? Our text answers -- Jesus Christ. He will show you the good part which shall never be taken away from you. Will you have it?

"Say, will you have this Christ or no?"

But one thing is needful; do not distract your attention among other things that are comparatively worthless.

On Self-Denial

Lecture III
April 27, 1859

by Charles Grandison Finney
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Text.--Luke 9:23: "And He said to them all, 'If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.'"

In order to understand this solemn declaration of our Lord, the first important point to be ascertained is this --

I. What is the true idea of taking up the cross and denying one's self?

II. Why does Christ demand of us self-denial?

III. Our text says -- 'Take up your cross daily.'

I. What is the true idea of taking up the cross and denying one's self?

- 1. This question presupposes the existence of appetites and propensities which call for indulgence, and then it means, obviously, that in some cases this indulgence must be refused. This is the precise point of the text -- a man who will follow Christ must deny himself in the sense of denying the gratification of all appetites and propensities whenever and how far soever such gratifications are forbidden by the law of benevolence. All impulses towards self indulgence, whether in the line of avoiding things we fear, or seeking things we love, must be denied, and ruled down by a determined will whenever indulgence is not demanded but is forbidden by the law of love. Within the limits of God's law, these constitutional appetites may be indulged; beyond those limits, they must be denied. At whatever point they run counter to

the law of love to God or love to man, they must be put down.

- 2. The thing demanded therefore by this law of Christ's kingdom is, that you consult and obey the will of Christ in this whole matter of self-indulgence; that you obey neither desire nor appetite -- that you never gratify your love of approbation -- never seek any forms of personal enjoyment in disobedience to Christ. You must never do this where duty is known, lest you displease God, for plainly He has rightful control over all your powers.
- 3. Under this principle you must do all your duty to your fellow men -- whether to their bodies or to their souls, denying all those worldly desires and propensities which would conflict with this duty, making Jesus Christ Himself your model and His expressed will your perpetual rule.

II. The question will arise in many minds -- Why does Christ demand of us self-denial?

- 1. Is it because God loves to see us self-mortified -- because He takes pleasure in crucifying the sensibilities to enjoyment which He has given us? By no means. But the true answer is to be found in the fact that He has made us rational and moral beings -- our rational faculties being intended for the control of our entire voluntary activities, and our moral nature rendering us properly responsible for the self-control which God requires. In the lower orders of creation around us, we see animals void of moral responsibility because they are constituted irrational and incapable of responsible moral action. To them, propensity must be law, because they can know no other. But we have a higher law to obey than they. Their highest good is promoted by their obedience to mere physical law; but not so with us. Our sensibilities are blind, and therefore were never intended to be our rule of life. To supply such a rule, God has given us intelligence and conscience. Appetite therefore cannot be our rule, while it can and must be the rule of all the lower, irrational animals.
- 2. Now it is a fact that our sensibilities are out of harmony with our conscience, often clamoring for indulgence which both reason and conscience forbid.

If we give ourselves up to the sway of appetite and unguided sensibility, we are surely misled. These appetites grow worse by indulgence, a fact which of itself shows that God never intended them to be our rule. Often artificial appetites are formed, of such a nature, moreover, as to be exceedingly pernicious in their effects.

Hence we are thrown into a state of warfare. Constant appeals are made to us to arouse our propensities to indulgence; and over against these, constant appeals are made by the law of God and the voice of our reason, urging us to deny ourselves and find our highest good in obeying God. God and reason require us to withstand the claims of appetite sternly and firmly. Note here that God does not require this withstanding, without vouchsafing His aid in the conflict. It is remarkable how the resolute opposition of any appetite, in the name of Christ and under the demands of conscience will readily overcome it. Cases often occur in which the most clamorous and despotic of these artificial appetites are ruled down by the will, under the demands of conscience and with the help of God. At once they lie, all subdued, and the mind remains in sweet peace.

- 3. Here let us consider more attentively that we are conscious of having a spiritual and moral nature as well as a physical. We have a conscience, and we have affections correlated to God, as truly as we have affections correlated to earthly things. There is a beauty in holiness, and there are things correlated to our spiritual tastes as truly as to our physical. Under proper care and effort, our religious nature may be developed towards God, even as our physical nature is towards earthly objects. We are social beings in our earthly relations and not less so in our spiritual nature. We are social spiritually as well as physically, though we may not be aware of it, because our spiritual sociality may have been utterly uncultivated and undeveloped. But we really need divine communion with God and social fellowship with our Infinite Maker. Prior to regeneration this moral capacity of ours is a waste. All men have a conscience and may be aware of it, but they have no spiritual affections towards God, and hence they assume that religion must be a very dry thing. They cannot see how they can enjoy God's presence and prayer. They are all awake to earthly fellowship and friendship, but dead to fellowship and friendship with God. Their love in the form of affection has been drawn out towards man but not towards God. They seem not aware that they have a nature capable of being developed in loving affections towards their divine Father. Hence they do not see how they can ever enjoy religion and religious duties. The coldness of death comes over their souls when they think of it.
- 4. This spiritual side of our nature needs to be cultivated. It has been so long kept back and crushed down, it greatly needs to be brought up. But in order to do this and develop the spiritual side of our nature, it is indispensable that the worldly side be crushed and brought under. For flesh is a dangerous foe to grace. There is no harmony, but only repellency and antagonism between the earthly affections and the heavenly. Unless we subdue the flesh we shall die. It is only when, through the Spirit, we mortify the deeds of the body that we can live.

The Roman church has in past ages distinguished itself for its mortifications of the flesh -- externally considered. These mortifications have thrown off the Protestant world into the opposite extreme. Among all the Protestant sermons I have heard, I do not recollect one on the subject of bearing the cross and denying one's self. I must think that this subject is exceedingly neglected among our Protestant churches. Papal Rome having run wild with this idea, Protestants have taken fright and run off into the opposite extreme. Therefore we need a special effort to guard against this tendency and to bring us back to reason, sense and scripture.

Until I was converted I never knew that I had any religious affections. I did not even know that I had any capacity for spontaneous, deep, outgushing emotions towards God. This was indeed a dark and fearful ignorance, and you may readily suppose I knew little of real joy while my soul was so perfectly ignorant of the very idea of real spiritual joy. But I take it this absence of all right ideas of God is by no means uncommon. If you search, you will find this to be the common experience of unconverted men.

- 5. We all know that the gratification of our animal nature is pleasure -- not the highest sort indeed, yet is a kind of pleasure. How much more must the gratification of our nobler moral affections be joyful! When the soul comes to feast on its spiritual affections, it begins to taste real happiness -- a bliss like that of heaven! I fear many have never comprehended what the Bible means by "blessedness."

- 6. Now let it be well considered that the spiritual side of our nature can be developed and gratified only by a benevolent crossing of our appetites -- a crossing of them, I mean, under the demands of real benevolence towards our fellow men and towards God. This must be our aim, for if we make our personal happiness the end, we can never attain to the exalted joy of true fellowship with God.

It is curious to see how the sensibility is related to self-denial, so that denying ourselves from right motives becomes the natural and necessary means of developing our spiritual affections. Beginning with taking up the cross, one goes on from step to step, ruling down self-indulgences and self-gratification, and opening his heart more and more to fellowship with God and to the riper experience of His love.

- 7. A further reason why men should deny themselves, is that it is intrinsically right. The lower appetites ought not to govern us; the higher laws of our nature ought to. The evidence of this is simply the evidence which proves it to be the duty of beings created rational to use their reason and not degrade themselves down to the level of beasts.
- 8. Another reason is that we can well afford it, for we are surely the gainers by it. I admit that when we resist and deny the demands of self-indulgence, it goes a short way and on a small scale, against happiness; but on the spiritual side we gain immensely, and immensely more than we lose. The satisfaction which arises from real self-denial is precious. It is rich in quality and deep and broad as the ocean in amount.
- 9. Many think that if they would find pleasure they must seek it directly and make it their direct object, seeking it moreover in the gratification of their appetites. They seem to know no other form of happiness but this. It would seem that they never have conceived the idea that the only way to enjoy themselves really is to deny self, fully up to the demands of right, reason, and of God's revealed will. Yet this is the most essential law of real happiness. Where shunning the cross begins, true religion ends. You may pray in your family; you may sternly rebuke sin wherever it is disagreeable to yourself, and do all this without Christian self-denial; but while living in habits of self-indulgence, you cannot stand up for Christ and do your duty everywhere manfully, and especially you will be all weakness when the path of duty leads you where your feelings will be wounded. And no man can expect to escape such emergencies always. If then you would maintain the path of duty without swerving, and enjoy real life and blessedness, you must determine to deny yourself wherever God and reason demand it, and fully up to the extent of those demands. So will you gain more than you can lose. If you are firm and determined, your path will be easy and joyous.
- 10. It often happens that the entire drift of a Christian's feelings is towards self-indulgence, so that if he allowed himself to be guided by his feelings he would surely make shipwreck of his soul. God, on His part, shuts him up to simple faith. Then if he follows the Lord's guidance, he will triumph, and all suddenly his "soul is like the chariots of Amminadab." A case in point is now before my mind of a man who once lived here. After a period of Christian life, he went from our place, backslid from God sorely, became almost an infidel, quite a Swedenborgian, became wealthy, and just when you might suppose him to have gained the heights of earthly

happiness, and when he supposed so himself, he became, instead completely wretched. He was forced to fall back upon himself and say -- I must return to God and do His will -- the whole of it, whatever it may be, or I shall utterly perish. I will, said he, put an extinguisher upon every worldly affection. Nothing that is hostile to God's will shall be tolerated a moment. No sooner had he done this than all his religious life and joys came back again. Then his wife and neighbors began to say of him, "He is indeed a new man in Christ Jesus." From that day, the peace of God ruled in his heart and his cup of joy was full to overflowing. Any man, therefore, can afford to deny himself, since thereby he opens his heart to the joys of immortal life and peace. This is the only way of real happiness.

- 11. This subject explains many of the otherwise strange facts of Christian experience. Here is one man who cannot pray before his family. Enquire more deeply into his case and you will probably find that he cannot enjoy anything in religious duty. Enquire yet further into the cause and you will find that he does not deny himself, but lives under the laws of self-indulgence. Poor man, he cannot please God so!
- 12. Another cannot come out and confess Christ before men. The truth probably is that he has not made up his mind to deny himself at all. On the contrary, he really denies Christ. He shuns the cross. Ah, that is not the way to heaven. In that path you can have no communion with God. Try it a thousand times and you will still find the same result, no peace, and no communion with God.

III. Our text says -- "Take up your cross daily."

- 1. So you must. This is the only possible way of holy living. And it must be done firmly, sternly and continually. It must be made your life-work, save as you gain a respite by substantial victory over your propensities to self-indulgence. Let a man attempt to rule down the appetite for alcoholic drinks, and do it at special seasons only, say once a day, or once in a week, while all the rest of the time he gives himself to full indulgence, he must utterly fail. He never can succeed unless he takes up his cross daily and bears it all the time. Absolutely he must persevere, or his efforts are all for nought. Precisely in proportion as we sternly take up our cross, it grows light and we grow strong to bear it. When a man indulges himself in tobacco, each day's indulgence makes him more a slave. On the contrary, each successive day's abstinence makes him more a conqueror. If a man resolutely declares -- By the help of God, no lust, no appetite, shall have dominion over me -- then holding on, he comes off conqueror. The more firmly you adhere to this principle and the more steadily you rule down the clamors for self-indulgence, so much the more speedily and surely do you gain the victory. Although at first you take up this work tremblingly, if you hold on, you will gain ground. These appetites will take less and less hold upon you. Bearing your cross will itself make you strong for your toil in the Christian life.
- 2. Shunning the cross grieves the Spirit. If you neglect duty, if you fail to pray in your family, omitting it perhaps because you have company present, you may be very sure the Spirit of God is grieved. Satan throws these temptations in your path, and you give him every advantage against you. You will perhaps try to pray while in this state; but, oh! God is not with you! You have been placed where you should have done some things unpleasant to flesh and blood; you

evaded the claims of present duty; you went to bed at night without doing your duty. How was it then with your soul? Did not dark clouds shut off the light of God's face? Did you have any comfort of His presence? Or any communion with your Savior? Pause and ask your heart for the answer.

REMARKS.

1. So long as the religious sensibilities are not developed, men will of course feel a strong demand for worldly affections. What do they know about the religious affections of the heart? What do they know of real love to God, or of the consciousness of the Spirit's witness to their hearts that they are God's children? Really nothing. They have never crossed their sensual propensities. Of course they have not taken the first step towards developing the heavenly affections of the heart. Consequently all their enjoyments are earthly. Their hearts are only below. But just in proportion as they deny themselves do they fall into adjustment to their spiritual nature.

2. It is a great and blessed thing for the Christian to find his nature conformed progressively more and more to God; to find it manifestly coming round right and adjusting itself under divine grace, to the demands of benevolence.

3. Cross bearing, persisted in, brings out a ripe spiritual culture. The soul longs intensely for spiritual manifestations and loves communion with God. Hear him say -- How sweet the memory of those scenes when my soul lay low before God! How did my heart enjoy His presence! Now I am always sensible of an aching void unless God be there.

4. When men go about to seek enjoyment as an end, they surely miss it. All such seeking must certainly be in vain. Benevolence leads the soul out of itself, and sets it upon making others happy. So real blessedness comes.

5. Your usefulness as Christians will be as your cross bearing and as your firmness in this course of life. For your knowledge in spiritual things, your spiritual vitality, your communion with God and, all in one word, your aid from the Holy Ghost, must turn upon the fidelity with which you deny yourself.

6. If you have once known the blessedness of spiritual life, and your heart has been molded into the image of the heavenly, you can no longer return to the miserable flesh-pots of Egypt. There is no longer any possibility of your enjoying earthly things as the portion of your soul. Let that be considered settled. Abandon at once and forever all further thought of finding your joys in worldly, selfish indulgences.

7. To the young, let me say, your sensibilities are quick and lean to worldly things. Now is the time for you to be stern in dealing with your self-indulgent spirit before you have gone too far ever to succeed. Are you strongly tempted to give way to self-indulgence? Remember it is an unalterable law of your nature that you must seek your peace and blessedness in God. You cannot find it elsewhere. You must have Jesus for your friend, or be eternally friendless. Your very nature demands that you seek God as your God -- the King of your life -- the Portion of your soul for happiness. You cannot find Him such to you save as you deny yourself, take up your daily cross, and follow Jesus.

8. To those of you who being yet in your sins, cannot conceive how you can ever enjoy God, and cannot even imagine how your heart can cleave to God, and call Him a thousand endearing names, and pour out your heart in love to Jesus, let me beg of you to consider that there is such communion with God -- there is such joy of His presence, and you may have it at the price of self-denial and whole-hearted devotion to Jesus; not otherwise. And why should you not make this choice? Already you are saying -- every cup of worldly pleasure is blasted -- dried up and worthless. Then let them go. Bid them away, and make the better choice of pleasures that are purer far and better and which endure forever.

The Way That Seems Right, But Ends In Death

Lecture IV
July 6, 1859

by Charles Grandison Finney
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Text.--Prov. 16:25: "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

The same words occur also in Proverbs 14:12, showing that the sacred writer felt deeply the force of this truth.

We must first enquire,

I. What is meant by seeming to be right.

II. What is the doctrine of the text?

III. This one way, what is it?

IV. Why do men think this way to be right?

V. But why do men thus deceive themselves?

VI. This sort of obedience is not the way to heaven.

VII. How should a man act if he may not do what seems to him right?

I. What is meant by seeming to be right.

The original word denotes what lawyers express by saying a thing is right "prima facie" -- on its face -- at first appearance -- as the case presents itself at first view and without looking at the other side. Unless objections appear, it is to be assumed as true. The word implies a want of certainty. It does not preclude doubt or further investigation. Indeed if the matter be one of any importance, there ought to be further investigation, notwithstanding all this appearance of being right. The original word applies naturally to an opinion adopted loosely, on a merely surface view and without honest and thorough investigation. It also implies a credulous state of mind as to this way that seems right. The mind is very willing to satisfy itself with a mere seeming.

Such I take to be the meaning of the phrase "seemeth to be right."

II. What, then, is the doctrine of the text?

- 1. Plainly this -- that we may think we are right and are doing right, when in truth we are utterly wrong. It may seem that we are in the way to heaven, while we are really in the way to hell.
- 2. Hence it is of vital consequence to enquire and ascertain what this way is. It is remarkable that the text speaks of one way, there is a way that seemeth right to a man. It does not indeed expressly affirm that there is but one, yet it may be inferred that the writer's mind rested on one general way in regard to which men deceived themselves to their ruin.

III. Let us therefore enquire for this one way, what is it?

I answer, in general it is the way of obeying God's commands merely in the letter and overlooking the Spirit. In this way men overlook that in which alone real obedience to God consists, namely, the state of mind -- the real motive and spirit in which a deed is done. Men do what their conscience demands, outwardly, but not with the heart. They obey in the letter, but they disobey in the spirit. Their obedience is constrained, not loving and cheerful; and therefore, it is really no obedience at all. They yield to the demands of their conscience as to the letter of the precept; and there, with them, obedience ends. This seems to them to be obedience, and therefore they expect from it God's favor and heaven at last; but they deceive themselves; for the end of this way is only death.

But it will be well to enquire here --

IV. Why do men think this way to be right?

Because it is required, both by conscience and by the sacred scriptures. For example, honesty in business; prayer to God. These and similar duties, both conscience and the Bible require. Of course it seems right to do them. And it truly is right. Outwardly, it is the thing God demands. But they overlook the fact that God does and must demand something more than the outward. They forget that real obedience consists in the loving state of mind in which the externally right things are done. They forget that, while "man looketh on the outward appearance, God looketh on the heart."

V. But why do men thus deceive themselves?

- 1. Because they are in a dishonest, selfish state of mind. They are in a state like Paul's when he verily thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth; but the reason of his verily thinking so lay in the strong committal of his soul to Judaism and to his selfish interests in that system. Really he was not in an honest state of mind, and therefore was not prepared to judge truly in such matters. In a dishonest state of mind, men are satisfied with cheap service done for God. They are by no means careful to give Him good measure. Perhaps they do not even think for a moment that, by the very necessity of His position as Moral Governor of the universe, He must demand the sincere homage of the heart. They think to turn Him off with miserably cheap service. They would not themselves be satisfied with such service from their own wives or children. A merely outside show of obedience and affection would not satisfy them. Yet strangely they assume that such outside obedience in their case will satisfy God! Being in a thoroughly selfish state of mind, they are blind to the spiritual demands of God's law. They have no just conceptions of the real nature of their own righteousness. They assume it to be a fair and perfect robe, but God accounts it only as filthy rags -- not rags only -- but filthy rags -- loathsome and foul -- intolerable.
- 2. Such persons are blind to the spirit of God's law. For example, the law which requires them to pay a debt to a neighbor. In a selfish spirit, one will pay such a debt because the civil law demands it, and he cannot avoid paying it. Or he may do it selfishly to sustain his reputation. But the truly benevolent man pays this debt out of love to his neighbor. He remembers the law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," and he considers nothing less than this, as real obedience to God. Because he loves his neighbor, therefore he pays to him what he owes him. This, and this only is obeying in the true spirit of obedience.
- 3. So selfish men go to the house of God to please themselves and not to please God. They have no heart in it. This seems to them to be right, but it seems so, only because they are selfish, and do not deeply consider the matter. They do not ask themselves -- Would I be pleased with such service from my wife or from my children? Would I be satisfied if my servants thought only of the outward appearance and had no proper respect for my feelings and wishes?

This kind of service is all wrong, however right it may seem. It does not answer the demands of the law of God. This law demands the homage of the heart, and can accept of nothing less. How then can it accept that which is wholly selfish?

VI. This sort of obedience is not the way to heaven.

- 1. It does not make the heart mellow, humble, holy; indeed it has no such influence at all, but rather the opposite. It only makes the heart vain, proud, hard and yet more selfish.
- 2. It should never be forgotten that any obedience which is not from the heart and from real love is no obedience at all.
- 3. People are prone to congratulate themselves on their selfish and external obedience, but such obedience is not performing their duty to God or to man either. It leaves the soul in sin and in bondage.

- 4. This delusion is wholly inexcusable.

VII. Some men, willing to justify themselves, will ask -- How should a man act if he may not do what seems to him right?

- 1. I answer, he may and must do what seems right to him; he must follow the dictates of his conscience; but he must see to it that his mind be honest and that his conscience be enlightened. For this, he is responsible. He can be honest; he can open his eyes to see God's claims in their true light.
- 2. Such selfish men obey their conscience only apparently, not really, for in its proper action, conscience requires a right heart. It demands all this and is satisfied with nothing less. Conscience requires that the mind be upright and the heart truly obedient. It cannot be satisfied with obedience that is merely in the letter and not in the Spirit. Hence it is plain that selfish men do not really obey conscience.
- 3. Again, their obedience is only servile. It is not done in the spirit of heaven and does not mold them into this spirit. It has no tendency to prepare them for the purity of heaven, and cannot, therefore, fit them to enter easily and naturally into the obedience and worship of that world of purity and love. God requires something more than a mere seeming to be right, and selfish men really know, deep in their heart, that such worship is only a seeming.

REMARKS.

1. This class of persons abstain from open vice. Such vice cannot seem to be right to anybody. With any amount of effort, they cannot make it seem right. Hence this way that seems right to a man must be one of strict outward morality and of correct external observance. If men do what seems to be their duty, they cannot stop short of this, for nothing less than this can ever seem to be their duty. A man has been to meeting; he has paid his honest debts; therefore, say they, all is right. All this looks right; nothing less than this could even look right. But those who neglect the outward cannot even suppose their course to be right. It cannot seem right to an honest mind. They trust they are right, they say. Ask them -- Are you walking with God? I trust so, they reply. Are you resting on Christ alone? I hope so. But you observe they speak only with much qualification, not with confidence. This is quite different from the manner of the sacred writers. They do not say -- We trust we are right; we hope we are God's people; but they say -- "We know in whom we have believed;" "We know that we have passed from death into life because we love the brethren." The men of whom the text speaks, say all that they dare say -- all they ought to say of themselves. It is only a faint sort of hope and trust that they have. They altogether lack the clear, strong, decided conviction which the inspired writers felt and expressed.

2. Again, they look only to the proximate intentions -- not to the ultimate; they think only of the outside. They went to public worship; yes they were there. That was all. They do not claim their hearts were there. Ask them, Is that obeying God? I hope so, say they -- but in their hearts their confidence that God can accept it must be very weak. Are the old heart and the new one, just the same? Is the new no better than the old?

3. Men will often deceive themselves even out of the Bible itself. The things said in the Bible of

sinners and hypocrites they apply to Christians and so they find something which both meets their case and encourages their hopes that they are Bible Christians. How sad a thing is this!

4. These self-deceived men have no heart in their worship of God. Their souls are not all liquid, flowing out in praise, and full of love and of heaven. There is none of the spirit of heaven in their hearts. Yet they think they mean to do right and to do their duty. It seems so to them. They are in the way that seemeth right. They read their Bibles; they go to the house of God; they do a great many things; but all goes no farther than right seeming. It is right only in the outward -- the letter. The inward is still all wrong. Jesus Christ is not formed in them, the hope of glory. How awful that men should be deceived by this mere seeming! Mark that man. He goes on with his doings, his hope perhaps still growing a little brighter. How awful to think that he must wake at length in hell! A woman who had lived long with a dull Christian hope, but seemed to herself to be nearly ripe for heaven, drew very near to the grave; she sunk away, and they thought she was really dead -- when suddenly she started up, shrieked once with an expression of unutterable horror, -- Is this hell? then fell back again and passed away! We cannot know what she saw! Yet who would wish to die so?

My dear hearers, the time is short ere we shall know our fitness or unfitness for the eternal world, past all uncertainty, or mistake. No longer here; the places that know us now shall know us no more then. If this day were to be your last, what would you do? Would you not say, I cannot be satisfied with a mere seeming -- I must absolutely know that all is right? What is your state today? Do you say -- I have examined my foundation; I have not been satisfied with merely seeming to be right? But even you, if this day were surely known to you to be your last, would say, (would you not?) I must be more certain. I must go over this whole ground again, for how can I rest while the least possibility of doubt remains! Let this work be honestly done, from first to last; lay your soul bare to the searching of God's word and Spirit; cry unto Him -- "Search me, O God, and try my thoughts; prove me and know my ways, and lead me in the way everlasting." Leave no room for mistake in a matter of such enduring moment. See to it that you, at least, be not of those who go in a way that seemeth right, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

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)*.

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