

What Saith the Scripture?

<http://www.WhatSaithTheScripture.com/>

The Spirit of Slavery (Part 2) Or, The Oppression of Slavery Is Not Worse Than the Selfishness of Sin

"Where the Spirit of the LORD is, there is liberty"
(2Corinthians 3:17).

by Tom Stewart
5-1-2002

The Selfishness of Sin

Preface

In the year 2002, there no longer *officially* exists the legal ownership of human beings. "And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death" (Exodus 21:16). Even the fundamentalist, Islamic regime of the Sudan denies the existence of state sanctioned slavery; though the U.S. State Department reports that "Khartoum encourages soldiers to take slaves as payment for combat" in its civil war against rebels in southern Sudan-- who proclaim that their quest for autonomy is part of their resisting the government's attempt to impose Islam upon them (from the January 25th 1998 article, "Curse Of Slavery Haunts Sudan," at CBSNews.com.) "9 Knowing this, that the Law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, 10 for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for **menstealers**, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to Sound Doctrine" (1Timothy 1:9-10). Whenever any economic, political, social, or religious system exerts *total control* of one person by another chiefly for the purpose of economic exploitation-- or, for any myriad of evil purposes that the mind recoils to discuss-- then that is Modern Slavery. As reluctant as any civilized nation is to admit to sanctioning slavery, on February 19th 2002, CNN reported: "The United Nations is launching a global campaign as part of a stark warning about the 'epidemic growth' in human trafficking... Human trafficking is the fastest-growing business of organised crime with an estimated 700,000 people trafficked every year for sexual exploitation and forced labour. Europol estimates the industry is now worth several billion pounds a year" (excerpted from the article, "U.N. warns of human traffic boom.") "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

It is instructive that the apocalyptic destruction of Babylon the Great will yet reveal her merchandise of "slaves, and souls of men" (Revelation 18:13), in the near future. [Read our series, "[Babylon the Great](http://www.WhatSaithTheScripture.com/WStS.Timeline.html#Babylon)" -- <http://www.WhatSaithTheScripture.com/WStS.Timeline.html#Babylon> --, to acquaint yourself with what Scripture describes as "THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (17:5).] Because the Professed Church has forgotten its First Love (2:4), which is Jesus Christ Himself-- who is the God that the Moral Law still commands to be loved with all our "heart, and with all [our] understanding, and with all [our] soul, and with all [our] strength" (Mark 12:33)-- she has also forgotten the Companion Commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (12:31). It is to the shame of man, and especially to the Professed Body of Christ, that slavery will thrive until the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. "Ye are the salt of the Earth:

but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men" (Matthew 5:13).

Charity Anderson Recounts Her Days as a Slave

On April 16th 1937, Ila B. Prine interviewed Charity Anderson in Mobile, Alabama [USA] as part of the Federal Writers' Project. When interviewed, Aunt Charity Anderson claimed to be one hundred and one (101) years old. At the time of the interview, Aunt Charity was living with her niece "in a very comfortable and modern four-room house." Prine reported that Charity's sight was impaired and that she was a "little hard of hearing... [but that] her mind seems to be clear and her memory good. She is not able to leave the house, but with the aid of a stick, she manages to hobble around in the house." "And even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs [literally, gray hairs] will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you" (Isaiah 46:4). Aunt Charity loved to have company and was delighted to be interviewed, while her niece was away working. "When asked if she did not get tired of staying alone in the house? She replied: 'I has so much tr'uble gittin' up and down de steps, and tr'uble gittin' ober de groun', I jes makes myse'f happy her, cause thank de Lord I'se on Zion's March.'" "The hoary head is a crown of Glory, if it be found in the way of Righteousness" (Proverbs 16:31).

Aunt Charity was the slave of "Marster" (Master) Leslie Johnson who kept a public wood yard at Belle's Landing on the Alabama River. Though the institution of American slavery was wrong, Aunt Charity remembered her years as a house servant, waiting tables "in de ol' marster's house" as the "good ol' days." "Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good" (Genesis 50:20). Charity said, "My job was lookin' a'ter de corner table whar nothin' but de desserts sat... My old Marster was a good man, he treated all his slaves kind, and took care of dem... But honey chile, all white folks warn 't good to dere slaves, cause I'se seen pore niggers almos' tore up by dogs, and whipped unmercifully, when dey did'nt do lack de white folks say. But thank God I had good white folks, dey sho' did trus' me to, I had charge of all de keys in the house and I waited on de Missy and de chillun." "1 Let as many servants [Greek, doulos, servant or slave] as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the Name of God and His Doctrine be not blasphemed. 2 And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort" (1Timothy 6:1-2).

Aunt Charity's bondage was in some respects like that of Joseph in Egypt, for she appears to have had understanding of "de Lord," while still a slave-- for, it appears that in spite of the evilness of her bondage, she was brought that understanding through other black, Christian slaves, or from some of the "white folks." "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain" (Psalm 76:10). Like Joseph, Aunt Charity "had charge of all de keys in the house." "2 And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. 3 And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand. 4 And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand" (Genesis 39:2-4).

When an ancient Hebrew was indentured to another Israelite, the LORD warned that his master

should not "rule over him with rigour" (Leviticus 25:43); but instead, he should be treated as an "hired servant" (25:40). Further, "he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of jubile: and then shall he depart from thee, both he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return" (Leviticus 25:40-41); thus, this form of ancient Israelitish servitude would be expunged from the land every fiftieth year. Likewise, Aunt Charity served her master until the Jubilee events following President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of January 1st 1863. Unlike a slave on a cotton plantation, Charity recalled that she "neber seed no cotton planted til' a'ter [she] was free." "I removed his shoulder from the burden: his hands were delivered from the pots" (Psalm 81:6). "But listen, honey, I sho' could wash, iron, knit and weave, bless yuh, I could finish my days' work aroun' de house, and den weave six or seven yards o'cloth." "The hand of the diligent shall bear rule" (Proverbs 12:24).

Charity Anderson was not slothful. Like a Christian should, she worked. "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat" (2Thessalonians 3:10). With evident satisfaction with the life that the LORD allowed her to live, she testified of doing her work diligently, while instilling the same attitude toward work in her master's children. "I'se washed, ironed and waited on de fourth generation ob dis family. I l'arned de chillun how to wash, iron, weave, and knit. I jes wish I could tell dese young chillun how to do, if dey would only suffer me to talk to dem." "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). In her own way, she attempted to keep order in the world that God gave her, when she instructed the children. "I'd tell dem to be more 'spectful to dere mammass, and to dere white folks and say 'yes mam' an 'no mam', instid of 'yes' and 'no' lack dey do now." "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God" (Romans 13:1).

Over an hundred years old, Aunt Charity was still "on Zion's march." "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Proverbs 4:18). "On Zion's march" was her way of describing the way of sanctification, i.e., "perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2Corinthians 7:1). What human government would not love to have such Christians populating its citizenry, especially an ex-slave, who had been impressed with the virtues of an orderly life? "I ain't neber been in no tr'uble in mah life, I ain't been in no lawsuits, I ain't neber been no witness." "For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ" (Colossians 2:5). Christians have been saved and delivered from the bondage of the Old Testament Civil and Ceremonial Law, but we have been freed, like Charity Anderson, to the liberty of the Everlasting Law of Love, i.e., "Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself" (Luke 10:27). "I'se allus tried to treat eberybody as good as I kin, and I uses my manners as good as I knows how." God took care of Charity Anderson, because she lived like she trusted the LORD, even with her crosses and losses, e.g., "de Lord sho' has taken keer ob me. Why, when my house burnt up, de white folks helped me so dat in no time you could'nt tell I had ebber los' a thing." "33 But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. 34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matthew 6:33-34).

In 1937, Charity Anderson understood that the Age of Laodicea had already arrived upon the

Professed Church, i.e., "But honey, de good ol' days is don' gone forebber." "16 So then because thou [Laodicea] art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth. 17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: 18 I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see" (Revelation 3:16-18). Aunt Charity's dim eyes could still clearly see the waning love that was disappearing from the Professed Church, especially when you consider that America had recently experienced the negative moral influences of WW1, and was in the throes of the Great Depression. "But what's the use thinking about dem times, dey's gone, and de world is 'gettin' wicked'er, sin is bolder and bolder, and religion grows colder and colder." "Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the Earth?" (Luke 18:8). [The source for the Charity Anderson interview was the Works Progress Administration (WPA) Federal Writers' Project. This project of the U.S. government during the Great Depression interviewed 2,300 former slaves from 1936 to 1938, collecting narratives, which can be found in "The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography," George P. Rawick, editor (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1972-79)-- and, samples can be found at: <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/wpa/anderso1.html>.]

Slavery: A Quality of Selfishness

Charles G. Finney's legacy is that he was a friend of his fellow man, a true friend of oppressed slaves; but, most of all, he was a friend of God. "And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for Righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God" (James 2:23).

"During the war, before Abraham Lincoln was fully converted to the anti-slavery movement, President Finney wrote three letters to, him. 'On bended knees,' said he, 'I wrote one, and then I prayed God so earnestly all the while that it might move him. But no answer came. I could not be at peace. I wrote again and waited. This time there came a little note, giving no thanks nor promises, only asking a question. I answered it, and knew that God had prevailed.' It was not long after that that the Proclamation of Emancipation was made" [Excerpted from "Oberliniana: A Jubilee Volume of Semi-Historical Anecdotes connected with the past and present of Oberlin College" (1833-1883), p. 76-- as seen at <http://truthinheart.com/AmReformation.html>.]

As an evangelist, the name of Charles G. Finney has been connected with Revivals of Religion, i.e., his "[Revival Lectures](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Revival.Lectures.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Revival.Lectures.html> -- (1835) are still read in order to promote the revival of the Sleeping Church; but, his "[Systematic Theology](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Systematic.Theology.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Systematic.Theology.html> -- (1851) analyzes with unctemporary precision and rugged independence, the way of God in His workings with man. "And when He had removed him, He raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also He gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after Mine own heart, which shall fulfil all My Will" (Acts 13:22). Consider the following extract from Finney's "[Systematic Theology](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Systematic.Theology.3.html#LECTURE%2029)" (Chapter 29 "Attributes of Selfishness") -- [http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Systematic.Theology.3.html#LECTURE 29](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Systematic.Theology.3.html#LECTURE%2029) --, which paints a stark picture of the OPPRESSION that is an attribute of the selfishness of sin, that is implied in disobedience to the Law of God. "The LORD also will be a Refuge for the oppressed, a Refuge in times of trouble" (Psalm 9:9).

Listen to Finney *minutely analyze the evils of slavery*, when he was primarily commenting on

OPPRESSION as an attribute of selfishness, which is the essence of sin. He wrote:

"OPPRESSION IS THE SPIRIT OF SLAVEHOLDING [WStS emphasis]. It is that quality of selfishness that disposes it, in practice, to deprive others of their rights. It is in the nature of selfishness to do this for the purpose of contributing to our own interest or gratification. To define it comprehensively: it is the disposition, inherent in the very nature of selfishness, to enslave God and all the universe; to make them all give up their interest, and happiness, and glory, and seek and live for ours. It is a willingness that all beings should live to and for us; that all interests should bend and be sacrificed to ours. It is a practical denial of all rights but our own, and a practical setting up of the claim that all beings are ours, our goods, and chattels, our property. It is a spirit that aims at making all beings serve us, and all interests subserve our own.

"This must be an attribute of selfishness. Self-interest is the ultimate end; and such is the nature of the selfish choice of this end that the whole life, and activity, and aim, and effort, is to secure this end without any disinterested regard to the right, or personal liberty, of any being in existence. The sinner, while he remains such, has absolutely no other end in view, and no other ultimate motive in any thing he does. Selfishness, or self-gratification, under some form, is the reason for every volition, action, and omission. For this end alone he lives, and moves, and has his being. This being his only end, it is impossible that oppression should not be an attribute of his intention. The whole of oppression is included in the choice of this end of life. Nothing can be more oppressive to the whole universe than for a being to set up his own interest as the sole good, and account all other interests as of no value, except as they contribute to his own. This is the perfection of oppression, and it matters not what particular course it takes to secure its end. They are all equally oppressive. If he does not seek the good of others for its own sake, but simply as a means of securing his own, it matters not at all, so far as his character is concerned, whether he pamper and fatten his slaves, or whether he starve them, whether he work them hard or let them lounge, whether he lets them go naked, or arrays them in costly attire. All is done for one and but one ultimate reason, and that is to promote self-interest, and not at all for the intrinsic value of any interest but that of self. If such an one prays to God, it is because he is unable to command and govern Him by authority, and not at all out of any true regard to the rights, or character, or relations of God. He desires and solicits God's services, just because he cannot get them by force. God's interests and rights are practically treated as of no value by every sinner in the universe. They care nothing for God, except to enslave him; that is to make him serve them without any service in return. They have no design to live to and for him, but that he should live to and for them. They regard all other beings just in the same manner. If there is, in any instance, the semblance, of a regard to their interest for its own sake, it is only a semblance, and not a reality. It is not, and it cannot be, a reality. The assertion, that it is any thing more than hypocritical pretence, is absurd, and contradicts the supposition that he is a sinner, or selfish.

"There are innumerable specious forms of oppression, that, to a superficial observer, appear very like a regard to the real interest of the oppressed for its own sake. It may be gratifying to pride, to ambition, or to some other feeling of a slaveholder, to see his slaves

well fed, well clad, full fleshed, cheerful, contented, attached to their master. For the same reason he might feed his dog, provide him a warm kennel, and an ornament his neck with a brazen collar. He might show a similar affection to his horse and his swine. But what is the reason of all this? Only to gratify himself. God has so moulded his constitution, that it would give him pain to whip his slave, or his dog, or his horse, or to see them hungry or neglected. It would trouble his conscience, and endanger his peace and his soul. There may often be the appearance of virtue in a slaveholder and in slaveholding; but it can absolutely be only an appearance. If it be properly slaveholding, it is and must be oppression; it is and must be selfishness. Can it be that slaveholding is designed to promote the good of the slave for its own sake? But this could not be slaveholding.

"Should an individual be held to service for his own benefit; should the law of benevolence really demand it; this could no more be the crime of slaveholding and oppression, than it is murder or any other crime. It would not be selfishness, but benevolence, and therefore no crime at all, but virtue. But selfishness embodies and includes every element of oppression. Its end, its means, and its every breath, form but an incessant denial of all rights but those of self. All sinners are oppressors and slaveholders in heart and in fact. They practise continual oppression, and nothing else. They make God serve them without wages, and, as He says, 'they make him to serve with their sins [Isaiah 43:24]!' God, all men, and all things and events are, as far as possible, made to serve them without the return of the least disinterested regard to their interests. Disinterested regard! Why the very terms contradict the supposition that he is a sinner. He has, he can have, in no instance, any other than selfish aims in appearing to care for any one's interest for its own sake.

"All unconverted abolitionists are slaveholders in heart, and, so far as possible, in life. There is not one of them who would not enslave every slave at the south, and his master too, and all at the north, and the whole universe, and God himself, so far as he could. Indeed, he does it in spirit, and, remaining selfish, he cannot but aim to enslave all beings, make them as far as possible contribute to his interest and pleasure, without the least disinterested regard to their interest, in return.

"Oppression is an essential attribute of selfishness, and always develops itself according to circumstances. When it has power and inclination, it uses the chain and the whip. When it has not power, it resorts to other means of securing the services of others without disinterested return. Sometimes it supplicates; but this is only because it is regarded as necessary or expedient. It is oppression under whatever form it assumes. It is in fact a denial of all rights but those of self, and a practical claiming of God and of all beings and events as ours. It is, to all intents, the chattel principle universally applied. So that all sinners are both slaves and slaveholders; in heart and endeavour, they enslave God and all men; and other sinners, in heart and endeavour, enslave them. Every sinner is endeavouring, in heart, to appropriate to himself all good."

The Slavery of Sin

How can man stoop to the level of enslaving another human? The essential flaw that causes this wanton bondage is that mankind, yea, the Church has found it difficult to free itself from the bondage of sinning. "Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant [literally, slave] of sin" (John 8:34). The sin that we cannot defeat in ourselves in its most basic form-- the commission of that which is known to be forbidden or omission of that which is known to be enjoined-- neither we nor the world can defeat on the largest scale. How can we ever stop worldwide human bondage, if we cannot even stop our own personal bondage to sinning? "13 Was then [the Law] which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the Commandment might become exceeding sinful. 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:13, 24). In short, the only victory that the Saints will ever see over the sin in their own lives while in this world will be according to their faith in the One who has overcome the world. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1John 5:4). "These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

As long as the Professed Church is satisfied that Gospel Salvation is *only* the erasure of the eternal consequences of their sinning, then their armour will be found incomplete, unable to "quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Ephesians 6:16), making the repetition of their former sinning all but assured. Unless the Church is taught that there is such a thing as a Practical Holiness that must be cultivated in the lives of the Saints from a heart perfected in love to God, i.e., "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us" (1John 4:12), then the bondage of sinning must eventually return. "14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil; 15 and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14-15).

Can the strength of sin be seriously doubted, when the effects of sin can be statistically measured by the skyrocketing numbers of broken marriages and dysfunctional homes, by the soaring number of abused wives and children, by the powerfully increasing and demanding voice and presence of sexual abuse, or by the burgeoning power of substance abuse in the young and old alike? "21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened... 28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient... 32 Who knowing the Judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Romans 1:21, 28, 32). The flourishing absence of horror at the vileness of society at large is indicative that the Almighty must judge what man refuses to acknowledge. "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2Timothy 3:13). "And I will come near to you to Judgment; and I will be a Swift Witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not Me, saith the LORD of Hosts" (Malachi 3:5).

Human governments have been called upon to legislate, mandate, and put into effect increasingly far-reaching measures (legitimate and illegitimate) to prevent man from doing what he should not,

and to force him to do what he should, in effect, putting man into bondage to the law. "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the Law" (1Corinthians 15:56). Of course, without law, there would be no lawbreakers; but, who has a right to complain of any law based upon the Moral Law of God, which requires supreme love for God and an equal love of our neighbour as ourselves? "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Romans 13:9). Why have human laws become more voluminous, oppressive, and enslaving? Is it not that the spiritual intelligence of the people has become so miserable? "And ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). It is an impossibility to enslave a truly righteous people, because they are characterized by a willingness to do the will of God, that God rewards with the Truth that frees. "If any man will do His Will, he shall know of the Doctrine" (7:17).

The Power of Selfishness

The slavery of sin in its outward manifestation may or may not be seen by our neighbour, but the same slavery is the power of selfishness in our own lives, that God alone most certainly does see. "The LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart" (1Samuel 16:7). It is plain from the Scriptures that man is capable of unselfish conduct. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). But sadly, man goes to great extremes to emphasize the pseudo truth that we ought to love ourself above all. "This know also, that in the Last Days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves... more than lovers of God" (2Timothy 3:1, 2, 4). This emphasis upon selfishness, i.e., "fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind" (Ephesians 2:3), which is the ultimate choice of our own gratification, is the exact opposite of the Moral Law of Love (Matthew 22:36-40). In this new millennium, we often hear the complaint, *even from the world*, that too much sex and violence fills the entertainment media; but, it will only increase because the power of selfishness can never be annihilated until the "Earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9). In the meantime, our only consideration is:

- (1) our own victory over the power of selfishness, i.e., "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our LORD Jesus Christ" (1Corinthians 15:57), and
- (2) our attempt to help others obtain the same victory, i.e., "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).

Selfishness is the essence of sin. It is the carnal mind, which "is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:7). It transgresses the Law of Christ. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the Law: for sin is the transgression of the Law" (1John 3:4). But, lest we conclude that we were born naturally selfish, remember that unless we "become as little children, [we] shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 18:3), and that the "unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God" (1Corinthians 6:9), and that only "he that doeth Righteousness is Righteous" (1John 3:7). Therefore, selfishness is first and foremost an **action** of moral agency, *not* an unfortunate contamination of a newborn baby's soul. "15 And they brought unto Him also infants, that He would touch them: but when His disciples saw it, they rebuked them. 16 But Jesus called them unto Him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the Kingdom of God. 17 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of

God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein" (Luke 18:15-17).

Freedom From Selfishness

The very idea of being free from selfishness has so alluded the Professed Church, that it appears too fanciful to be associated with the Saints' earthly pilgrimage; but, what praise can the Redeemed give their LORD in eternity, if He has not delivered them from this enemy of selfishness, while we still reside on this planet? "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2Corinthians 5:17). Because the Church has seen so much failure when resolving to do right-- then sinning-- it has been easier to drop the standard of holiness to make attaining the new, lower substandard legitimate and achievable. "Thus have ye made the Commandment of God of none effect by your tradition" (Matthew 15:6). Our sympathies are too much with man, when we lower the Almighty's Perfect Standard of Love to allow for any kind of selfishness. "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise" (2Corinthians 10:12).

When casting about for an example of any human who has demonstrated the possibility of living a life free from selfishness, we need not look any further than the Son of God, who came "in the flesh" (1John 4:2). The very reason that the "Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14) was that He might be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Hebrews 4:15), as our Great High Priest. Like the priests of ancient Israel, Jesus "was in all points tempted like as we are" (4:15); but, unlike those ancient priests, Jesus was "without sin" (4:15). Jesus, the Son of Man, was as capable as you and I of committing sin, but He "did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth" (1Peter 2:22). His atonement on the Cross of Calvary was to deliver us from the Bondage of Sin and Sinning. "14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil; 15 and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14-15). For those who trust Him, Jesus Christ "hath abolished death, and hath brought Life and Immortality to Light through the Gospel" (2Timothy 1:10).

It is said that monkey trappers would place bait in a hollowed coconut tethered to a stake, leaving only a hole large enough for the monkey to thrust in its hand. When the monkey would grasp the bait, it would be trapped, because its grasping fist could not be pulled back through the small hole-- and, it would still refuse to release the bait, even when the trappers returned for the monkey. How like the monkey are we, when dealing with the legitimate "cares of this world" (Mark 4:19), we become fixated upon the care, refusing to release our grasp, even when the Holy Spirit's "still small voice" (1Kings 19:12) instructs us to roll the burden upon Him, i.e., "Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you" (1Peter 5:7). We cannot walk away from the legitimate "cares of this world" (Mark 4:19), for the All Wise God has designated our labour and sweat to be the means of drawing ourselves to Him. **"Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life"** (Genesis 3:17). But, instead of attempting to monkishly cloister ourselves from any contact with the world, we must become sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit to keep from being ensnared by the world. "And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My Statutes, and ye shall keep My Judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:27).

How will the Spirit of God prevent us from being snared by the world, the flesh, and the Devil? He will bring to our mind His Word to fortify us from yielding to the temptation to not let go of that care and burden. "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11:29). In particular, some attribute or trait of the LORD Jesus Christ will be reminded to us that will make us "willing in the day of [His] power" (Psalm 110:3).

Remembering Christ's meekness under great provocation, for instance, would be of great help to keep us from lashing out against those who would ill treat us, when we are simply following Christ. "21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps: 22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: 23 Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously" (1Peter 2:21-23). Perhaps, you are being unreasonably handled by someone that you have attempted to treat fairly. The Divine Comforter would remind you that we must pray "that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith" (2Thessalonians 3:2), for Jehovah Jesus is the One "that savest by Thy right hand them which put their trust in Thee from those that rise up against them" (Psalm 17:7).

Why such emphasis upon Christ delivering us from selfishness? The Messiah's purpose is to turn us away from our selfishness-- even more important than our newfound assurance of a Heavenly Home. "Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities" (Acts 3:26). True, changing our direction from Hell to Heaven is amazing; but, transforming us from self-seeking to Christ-seeking is even greater. "And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His Name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). Salvation from our lost condition took place in a moment, but our sanctification in living selflessly for Christ will be for Eternity. "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (Romans 11:26). We should not diminish our emphasis upon seeking the salvation of the world from the "wages of sin" (Romans 3:23), but there would be an even greater attraction to the salvation that is in Christ, if it was understood that Jesus Christ delivers us from the oppression of the selfishness of sin forevermore, to "loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free" (Isaiah 58:6).

That the Triune God would manifest Himself through His Son, has been a discovery that has distinguished New Testament Christianity from the Judaism of the Old Covenant. "1 God, Who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 hath in these Last Days spoken unto us by His Son, Whom He hath appointed Heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds; 3 Who being the Brightness of His Glory, and the Express Image of His Person, and upholding all things by the Word of His Power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High" (Hebrews 1:1-3). But, even greater is the revelation that in Christ "are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge" (Colossians 2:3). That is to say, all understanding of right action is treasured up in Christ. "It is the Glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter" (Proverbs 25:2). Thus, God has divinely ordained that we will be sanctified in the process of mining out the treasures of Christ. "23 Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: 24 but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the LORD which exercise Lovingkindness, Judgment, and Righteousness, in the Earth: for

in these things I delight, saith the LORD" (Jeremiah 9:23-24).

So confident is the Almighty of the "depth of the riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God" (Romans 11:33), that His Judgments are unsearchable "and His Ways past finding out" (11:33), that He commands us to permanently set up camp in Himself, knowing that we can never exhaust His riches or wear out our welcome. "4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the Vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. 5 I am the Vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing" (John 15:4-5). The Abundant Christ will also keep us from selfishness by demonstrating His provision of our every need, using even our sense of gratitude to turn us away from self-trust. "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). Trusting Christ and not ourselves for our provision effectively turns us away from selfishness. "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures" (Psalm 36:8). It is impossible for us to be truly happy while selfish, so the LORD has chosen to promote our happiness by causing us to trust in His provision. "O LORD, how manifold are Thy Works! in Wisdom hast Thou made them all: the Earth is full of Thy riches" (104:24).

Conclusion

Thus, the problem with humanity is the selfishness of sin, for all selfishness is sin, i.e., doing "evil with both hands earnestly" (Micah 7:3); and, the love of God and the love of our neighbour as ourself that flows from a heart "born of the Spirit" (John 3:6), is the solution to selfishness. "Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification" (Romans 15:2). The very fact that the trafficking of humans continues today-- and, will continue until the Second Coming of the LORD Jesus Christ-- indicates that selfishness will not be eradicated from humanity without Divine Intervention. "40 As therefore the tares [children of the wicked one] are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. 41 The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; 42 and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 13:40-42).

Key to the Christian's opposition to the slavery of sin is the need for every Saint to be continually sanctified by the Holy Spirit's revelation of some aspect of the character of the LORD Jesus Christ to our soul. "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13). As Christians, we must be fully persuaded that the secret to eradicating all vestiges of selfishness in ourself, has already been given to us by the Lamb of God, "when He ascended up on High, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men" (Ephesians 4:8). In particular, the "Gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38), is that specially promised key of the New Covenant to turn us from the selfishness of disobedience to the True Love that obeys God. "And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My Statutes, and ye shall keep My Judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:27). When the Spirit of God adapts some relation of Christ to the Believer concerning our everyday necessities, then that understanding enables us to walk unselfishly in Perfect Love and Perfect Obedience. "But when the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me" (John 15:26).

The Spirit of Slavery (Part 2) Text

[Please read "[Relations of Christ to the Believer](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Relations.Christ.Believer.html)" -- [http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Relations.Christ.Believer.html](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html) -- by [Charles G. Finney](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html) -- [http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/In.Christ.Jesus.html) -- and "[In Christ Jesus](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/In.Christ.Jesus.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/In.Christ.Jesus.html> -- by [A. T. Pierson](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/A.T.Pierson.html) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/A.T.Pierson.html> -- for a more thorough understanding of how every Believer can and must defeat the slavery of selfishness through the continuing revelation of Jesus Christ to the soul.]

read

[Part 1 of this series](#)

[The Oppression of Slavery](#)

http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Spirit.of.Slavery.Part_1.html