

*What Saith the Scripture?*  
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# "What the Bible Says About..."

## Archive

as of January 2009

Articles by Tom & Katie Stewart

In order to truly live, man needs to know what God thinks. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). For this reason, it is more than a passing interest that we ought to ask, "What saith the Scripture?" (Romans 4:3). Since "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (10:17), and "without faith it is impossible to please [God]" (Hebrews 11:6), then understanding, believing, and obeying what God has said about anything, is the key to pleasing God. Our "faith which worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6), indicates that we, like Abraham, can be called a "Friend of God" (James 2:23). When our Saviour Jesus Christ said, "Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:14), He indicated that Ultimate Friendship with Him, is based upon the loving obedience, that began when we asked, "What saith the Scripture?" (Romans 4:3). "He that hath an ear, let him hear" (Revelation 2:7) What the Bible Says...

### Table of Contents

Suicide

Abortion

Luck and Gambling

Temptation

Debt

What Every Man Knows

Contentment

False Teachers

Why Did Jesus Have to Suffer?

### What the Bible Says About Suicide

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's"

(1Corinthians 6:19-20).

by Tom Stewart

3-1-2000

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## Preface

To those who are morally able to choose, a True Christian will **not** commit suicide, because suicide is the sin of self-murder. "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1Corinthians 3:17). Jesus is presently in Heaven preparing a "place for you" (John 14:2). And, if Heaven is to be your future Home, then you must "continue in the Grace of God" (Acts 13:43) and "hope to the end for the Grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1Peter 1:13). For, if we do not avail ourselves of God's "Grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16), then we will most assuredly **not** "follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the LORD" (12:14).

Look at it from God's point of view. He has already made ample provision for every conceivable circumstance of your spiritual and physical life. [See our article, "Christ Is All" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/The.Holy.Bible/Christ.Is.All.html> -- .] "His Divine Power hath given unto us **all** things that pertain unto life and Godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2Peter 1:3). To ultimately run out of hope and commit suicide is unpardonable, because it is supreme defiance and "blasphemy against the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 12:31), and "hath never forgiveness" (Mark 3:29). The sin of suicide will never take you to the Heaven where Jesus is. "Then said Jesus again unto them, I go My way, and ye shall seek Me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come" (John 8:21).

## What Is Suicide?

The term *suicide* -- which is generally defined as the "act or an instance of intentionally killing oneself" -- is not specifically used in the Scriptures; however, the injunction against killing embodied in the Ten Commandments, i.e., "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13), dealing with the unlawful homicide of another human being, would also forbid the *murder of self*. The very fact that the Almighty is the Giver Of All Life and "formeth the spirit of man within him" (Zechariah 12:1), tells us that it is not within our right to arbitrarily terminate our own life, against His permission. "Because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets: Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the Earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God Who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:5-7).

To understand suicide to be sin against God and against self, is in keeping with the LORD Jesus Christ's statement concerning the Spirit of the Moral Law, where "love is the fulfilling of the Law" (Romans 13:10). "37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the First and Great Commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour **as thyself**" (Matthew 22:37-39). God requires, both in His Law and Gospel, that all moral agents choose the highest good of God, and of our being in general, for its own sake, as our ultimate purpose in life, i.e., a supreme love for God and an equal love of our neighbour as we would love ourselves. "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the LORD the Church" (Ephesians 5:29).

Neither the modern legal nor medical definitions of suicide entail the Scriptural aspect of suicide being the transgression of the Moral Law, where both God and man are denied the love that are rightfully due them. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother [much less, himself], he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother [or, himself] whom he hath seen, how can he love God Whom he hath not seen?" (1John 4:20). The supreme hatred of one's self and life, where a morally capable individual voluntarily terminates his own life, is also preeminent contempt of the "God [Who] Is Love" (4:16). Especially for True Christians, the very idea of disposing of our own lives as if we were the masters of them, is unthinkable. "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself" (Romans 14:7).

## What Is Not Suicide?

Suicide is not to be confused with accidental, unwitting, or unwilling death of any sort. For though they would be unintentional on our part, that form of death would entirely be under the Merciful Providence of God. "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the LORD" (Job 1:21). Neither should the selfless act of sacrificing one's life that others may live, be considered suicide.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). What Professed Christian would dare to accuse the Sinless Son of God of having committed the sin of suicide? "17 Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. 18 No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. **I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.** This commandment have I received of My Father" (10:17-18).

That willingness to die rather than to deny Christ, i.e., "whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in Heaven" (Matthew 10:33), is the picture of the martyrdom of the early Christians or of the soon-to-be Tribulation Week Saints. Though their death is inexplicably suicidal to the worldly onlookers of Vanity Fair, it should never be mistaken for suicide. Most likely, the Christian Martyrs were and will be greeted with the derision given their Master. "He saved others; Himself He cannot save" (Mark 15:31). But, be it forever remembered that whatever act transacted by the True Saints, that has the signature of supreme love of God, and an equal love of our neighbour *as ourselves*, **can never be suicide.** "7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. 8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His Only Begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. 10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another [i.e., as ourselves]. 12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us. 13 Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit" (1John 4:7-13).

## Why Suicide?

Even the world professes that "depression" is numbered among the "strongest risk factors for attempted suicide." Scripturally speaking, depression is the condition of hopelessness that the world and Backslidden Christianity share, when they refuse to trust God. "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of Promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12). We need firmly to understand that, especially for the Christian, the LORD Jesus Christ "is our Hope" (1Timothy 1:1). We have been given the divine certainty of Scripture that deliverance from the "risk factors for attempted suicide"-- any and all separations, isolations, limitations, pains, sufferings, injustices, and abuses-- comes only from "Christ in you, the Hope of Glory" (Colossians 1:27). Though the Godly have been warned that we will "suffer" (2Timothy 3:12) while in this world, Jesus has assured us, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Whether or not we presently see the mitigation or removal of all of what the world calls "risk factors", our confidence in the LORD Jesus Christ, Who performs "all things well" (Mark 7:37), restrains us from contemplating, attempting, let alone, successfully committing suicide. "If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Romans 8:25). Our faith that overcomes the "world" (1John 5:4), overcomes suicide, because Jesus is the "Author and Finisher" (Hebrews 12:2) of it. And, our hope in Christ sustains us from all "risk factors" until He comes for us. "Looking for that Blessed Hope, and the glorious appearing of the Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

## How Have the Saints Dealt With Suicide?

The Scriptures contain some unflattering and frank depictions about how the Saints have been tempted to commit suicide; but, our God presents the Truth for the benefit of those who will profit by It. "12 For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. 13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him With Whom We Have To Do" (Hebrews 4:12-13). Since no man can enter Heaven, dying in impenitence from the sin of suicide, the lack of success of an attempted suicide may yet indicate that the despondent one is elect. "Then said Jesus again unto them, I go My way, and ye shall seek Me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come" (John 8:21).

Elijah's Thoughts of Suicide. Elijah had successfully encountered, defeated, and slain the prophets of Baal (1Kings 18:19-40), but then the wicked Queen Jezebel quickly threatened to kill Elijah. "2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time. 3 And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there. 4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers" (19:2-4).

But, why would Elijah flee from this wicked woman, much less to seek the LORD to end his life, when he had already defeated 450 prophets of Baal? Because the "spirit and courage he had before were of the Lord, and not of himself; and that those who have the greatest zeal and courage for religion, for God, and his worship, his truths and ordinances, if left to

themselves, become weak and timorous" (from "An Exposition of the Old and New Testament" by John Gill, commenting on 1Kings 19:3). "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength" (Isaiah 40:29). The secret of the strength and power in the life of the Saints, is that it comes from God-- and, is willingly received by faith. "Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness" (41:10).

The question of how Elijah dealt with his suicidal thoughts is more of a description of how God restored spiritual equilibrium to His fearful and despondent prophet.

- First, the LORD mercifully sustained Elijah. "5 And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. 6 And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again" (1Kings 19:5-6). Likewise, "it is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not" (Lamentations 3:22).
- Second, the LORD majestically demonstrated His power to Elijah. "And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire" (1Kings 19:11-12). We also recall that it is "not by [our] might, nor by [our] power, but by My Spirit, saith the LORD of Hosts" (Zechariah 4:6).
- Third, the LORD calmly spoke to Elijah with a small, comfortable voice. "And after the fire a Still Small Voice" (1Kings 19:12). In like manner, the Father has comforted us with the gentleness of His powerful hands. "18 I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners. 19 I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the LORD; and I will heal him" (Isaiah 57:18-19).
- And, finally, the LORD humbled Elijah with the Truth that Elijah was not alone. "Yet I have left Me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him" (1Kings 19:18). Only when we have been humbled by the Almighty, are we truly turned back to Him. "Turn thou us unto Thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old" (Lamentations 5:21).

Christian and Hopeful's Struggle With Suicide in Doubting Castle. John Bunyan's allegory of "The Pilgrim's Progress" (1678) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Stories/Bunyan.Pilgrims.Progress.html> -- brought both CHRISTIAN and HOPEFUL into Doubting Castle after having taken an ill-advised shortcut through By-Path Meadow, i.e., "said CHRISTIAN, 'here is the easiest going'". "And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way" (Numbers 21:4). Their newly acquired traveling companion, "VAIN-CONFIDENCE, by name", walked before them until the "night came on", and "not seeing the way before him, fell into a deep pit." "For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed" (Isaiah 9:16). Immediately, both CHRISTIAN and HOPEFUL sensed that they had inadvisedly chosen their way. They began to struggle their way back, but with little success. "Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard" (Proverbs 13:15).

Sleep overtook them, and when they awoke, GIANT DESPAIR had snared them. "'You have this night trespassed on me, by trampling in and lying on my grounds; and therefore you must go along with me'... The giant, therefore, drove them before him, and put them into his castle, into a very dark dungeon, nasty and stinking to the spirit of these two men." "Lover and friend hast Thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness" (Psalm 88:18). "Here then they lay, from Wednesday morning till Saturday night, without one bit of bread, or drop of drink, or any light, or any to ask how they did." Then, GIANT DESPAIR's wife, DIFFIDENCE, advised the Giant that "he should beat them without any mercy." "Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand" (Micah 2:1).

"Then he falls upon them, and beats them fearfully, in such sort, that they were not able to help themselves, or to turn them upon the floor. This done, he withdraws and leaves them, there to condole their misery, and to mourn under their distress." "Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee" (Jeremiah 2:19). "The next night, she talking with her husband about them further, and understanding that they were yet alive, did advise him to counsel them to make away with themselves. So when morning was come, he goes to them in a surly manner, as before; and perceiving them to be very sore with the stripes that he had given them the day before, he told them that since they were never like to come out of that place, their only way would be, forthwith to make an end of themselves, either with knife, halter, or poison: 'For why,' said he, 'should you choose life, seeing it is attended with so much bitterness?'" "5 Then the devil taketh Him up into the

holy city, and setteth Him on a pinnacle of the temple. 6 And saith unto Him, If Thou be the Son of God, **cast Thyself down:** for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee: and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone" (Matthew 4:5-6). In the same way that the devil would have had an eternal victory in securing the soul of Jesus by the sin of suicide; in like manner, the Giant's wife, as the devil's advocate, would have secured the souls of CHRISTIAN and HOPEFUL in a devil's hell, through the sin of suicide.

"Brother,' said CHRISTIAN, 'what shall we do? the life that we now live is miserable: for my part I know not whether is best--to live thus, or to die out of hand. 'My soul chooses strangling rather than life'-- 'So that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life' (Job 7:15)-- and the grave is more easy for me than this dungeon. Shall we be ruled by the Giant?' Hopeful replied, 'Indeed our present condition is dreadful, and death would be far more welcome to me than thus for ever to abide; but yet let us consider, the Lord of the country to which we are going hath said, 'Thou shalt do no murder,' [Matthew 19:18] no, not to another man's person. Much more, then, are we forbidden to take his counsel to kill ourselves. Besides, he that kills another can but commit murder upon his body; but for one to kill himself, is to kill body and soul at once. And, moreover, my brother, thou talkest of ease in the grave; but hast thou forgotten the hell, whither for certain the murderers go? 'for no murderer hath eternal life' [1John 3:15]. And let us consider again, that all the law is not in the hand of GIANT DESPAIR; others, so far as I can understand, have been taken by him as well as we, and yet have escaped out of his hand: who knows but that God who made the world may cause that GIANT DESPAIR may die that, at some time or other, he may forget to lock us in?--or, but he may in a short time have another of his fits before us, and may lose the use of his limbs? And if ever that should come to pass again, for my part I am resolved to pluck up the heart of a man, and to try my utmost to get from under his hand. I was a fool that I did not try to do it before; but however, my brother, let us be patient, and endure awhile; the time may come that may give us a happy release; but let us not be our own murderers.'"

"Well, on Saturday, about midnight the pilgrims began to pray; and continued in prayer till almost break of day. Now a little before it was day, good CHRISTIAN, as one half amazed, break out in this passionate speech: 'What a fool,' quoth he, 'am I, thus to lie in a stinking dungeon, when I may as well walk at liberty! I have a key in my bosom called Promise; that will, I am persuaded, open any lock in Doubting Castle.' Then said HOPEFUL, 'That's good news; good brother, pluck it out of thy bosom, and try.' Then CHRISTIAN pulled it out of his bosom, and began to try at the dungeon door; whose bolt (as he turned the key) gave back, and the door flew open with ease: and CHRISTIAN and HOPEFUL both came out."

And so, **good Bunyan delivers CHRISTIAN and HOPEFUL from Suicide, GIANT DESPAIR, and DOUBTING CASTLE with the Key of Promise.** "3 According as His Divine Power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto Life and Godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 Whereby are given unto us Exceeding Great and Precious Promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having **escaped** the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2Peter 1:3-4). The secret to the Promises is that they are "according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). "For all the Promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him amen, unto the glory of God by us" (2Corinthians 1:20). So then, deliverance from despair and suicide comes from Christ Jesus. "He that spared not His Own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32).

## Conclusion

A True Christian will not commit suicide because True Saints do not "die in [their] sins" (John 8:21). Only "he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 10:22). And, Murderers of Self are reserved for the Lake of Fire. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the Second Death" (Revelation 21:8). The Saints do not die in their sins because the Faithful God has already made provision for their success. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is Faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able **to bear it**" (1Corinthians 10:13). For one to succeed with the sin of suicide, would be to utterly spurn the Grace of God. "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Romans 5:20).

The only way to recover yourself from committing the sin of suicide, is to return to trusting God. "In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence: and His children shall have a place of refuge" (Proverbs 14:26). "7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. 8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. 9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His Seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: **whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God,** neither he that loveth not his brother [or, himself]" (1John 3:7-10).

Let Christ Jesus "destroy the works of the devil" through allowing Him to keep you from committing the sin of suicide. "I can

do **all** things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).

Amen, and Amen.

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## What the Bible Says About Abortion

"Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of The Judgment"

(Matthew 5:21).

by Katie Stewart

5-1-2000

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### Preface

In any war, inhumanities become the norm instead of the exception. When humanity wars against itself, many innocents of the young and old pay the ultimate price for the sins of others. "They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood" (Psalm 94:21). What we have before us, with the inhumanity of war against the unborn, is abortion "on demand". But the loss of infant life can also happen from sheer necessity. There are abortions, that are, in the strictest sense of the letter of God's own Law, true abortions, but that sadly must take place in order to save the lives of the mothers. These abortions are the casualties of pure necessity-- not of mere desire. By the legal letter of man's law, an abortion ends life-- nothing more. But by the Spirit of God's Law, abortion doesn't just take life. It gives life to the mother of the infant whose life was conceived in her womb. "Not of the letter [in this "interposed" case, the letter of the human law of the land], but of the Spirit: for the letter killeth, but the Spirit **giveth** Life" (2Corinthians 3:6). These necessary abortions are the result of unusually difficult and/or varied medical situations in which there are literally no other choices. The concern of this article is NOT with abortions which occur because of the complete lack of other alternatives. What this article takes "issue" with, are abortions, which, in the general usage and practice of our modern age, i.e., "on demand", do take place even though there ARE choices and alternatives. These are legal abortions, but only by the letter of an evil law, "for the letter killeth" (3:6). "The Earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the Laws, changed the Ordinance, broken the Everlasting Covenant" (Isaiah 24:5).

Tempers rage on the "issue" of abortion, but there are no solutions treasured in the egos of human opinion. "The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace" (Isaiah 59:8). All that modern man medically knows, and yet, "thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor **how** the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so **thou knowest NOT the works of God Who maketh all**" (Ecclesiastes 11:5). Rights are certainly violated, but whose rights are we really talking about, and why? We shouldn't look at abortion as just an "issue" that "Pro Choice" and "Pro Life" argue over. Look at abortion the way the Judge of All the Earth (Genesis 18:25) does. "What saith the Scripture?" (Romans 4:3). Only then can we understand that this emotional and traumatic act of despair, anger, and denial upon the unborn, is in reality, a willful act of transgression against many.

1. Abortion is, first and foremost, a sin against God and His Perfect Law, "thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13). The opposite of "giving" life is "taking" life, or in stronger words, "killing" life. The only One with the ability to "give" life is the LORD Creator of Heaven and Earth. "Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, ALL POWER IS GIVEN *unto ME* in Heaven and in Earth" (Matthew 28:18). The LORD Jesus Christ is the "Faithful Creator" (1Peter 4:19). "All things **were made by Him**; and without Him was not any thing made that was made. **In Him was Life**; and the Life was the Light of men" (John 1:3-4). Therefore, He is the only deserving One to "take" life. Jesus said, "I lay down My Life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down **of Myself**. *I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again*" (John 10:17-18).
2. Abortion is a sin against ourselves, "in those things whereof ye are now ashamed... for the end of those things is death" (Romans 6:21). Sin destroys our whole being, from that "which is outward in the flesh" (Romans 2:28) to the heart-core of our "inner man" (Ephesians 3:16)-- our eternal soul. "But he that sinneth against Me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate Me love death" (Proverbs 8:36).

3. Abortion is a sin against another human being. "If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him" (1Samuel 2:25). But abortion is not a sin against just any human being-- it's the ultimate sin against ultimate innocence. "Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed **innocent** blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths" (Isaiah 59:7). Abortion, as it is commonly used, is murder. "Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required" (Genesis 42:22).
4. And abortion is a sin against society. "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34).

Note: To the many who have been agents in the promotion of, performing of, or receiving of abortions, there is hope for those seeking "space to repent" (Revelation 2:21), and seeing their infants again. Agreeing with God that abortion is murder, i.e., "thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13), is a first step towards the merciful healing found only in a Full Pardon --<http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Jehovah/Topical.Links.Salvation.html> --.

- "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I **acknowledge my transgressions**: and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight: that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest" (Psalm 51:2-4).
- "**Let God be True**, but every man a liar; as it is written, That Thou mightest be justified in Thy Sayings" (Romans 3:4).
- "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso **confesseth and forsaketh** them shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13).
- "I have sinned **against the LORD**... The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die" (2Samuel 12:13).
- "I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I **not hid**. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah" (Psalm 32:5).
- "So shalt thou **put away the guilt** of innocent blood from among you, **when thou shalt do that which is right in the sight of the LORD**" (Deuteronomy 21:9).
- "**Purge me** with hyssop, and I shall be clean: **wash me**, and I shall be whiter than snow. **Make me** to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice" (Psalm 51:7-8).

## When Does Life Begin?

Some feel that abortion isn't murder because the fetus, or even embryo, isn't alive. They admit the fetus/embryo is growing, but insist that (somehow) life isn't involved. "I will show thee that which is noted in the Scripture of Truth" (Daniel 10:21). The LORD Creator says, through David, that He sees the unborn and that they are written in His Book. "13 Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. 14 I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. 15 My substance was not hid from Thee, when I was made in secret... 16 Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect [i.e., embryo, fetus, not yet fully formed]; and in Thy Book all my members [limbs] were written, which in continuance [or, period of time] were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them [not yet fully formed]" (Psalm 139:13-16). David said that the LORD recognized him as a person from conception, while his little fetus body still had no limbs, or "members". If God recognized him as a person, should we not conclude that every fetus from the moment of conception is a person? Since "God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34), would not God treat all fetuses as people?

The phrase in the King James Version, "my substance, yet being unperfect" (139:16) comes from the Hebrew word *golem*, Strong's number 1564, means "embryo" or "fetus".

"verse 16-- '*my substance, yet being unperfect*' [Psalm 139:16]. One word in the original, which means strictly anything rolled together as a ball, and hence is generally supposed to mean here the fetus or embryo." --quote by J. J. Stewart Perowne, from "The Treasury of David" by C. H. Spurgeon.

Even at conception, when the new human is "rolled together as a ball," God records that a human being has begun its journey of existence. "Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in Thy Book all my members were written" (Psalm 139:16). Why can't ignorant man learn from an All Wise God? At that moment of conception, the Power of God's Creation

begins another human life. That human life will exist for an Eternity. If allowed to be born, and allowed to mature to moral agency, that human life will have the privilege of exercising his/her free will in the "image of God." Whether this life will honour God with right choices and ultimately abide in Heaven with his/her Saviour and Father, or whether this life will justify God's punishment in Hell with wrong choices-- one thing is certain. The child, though yet unborn, is none the less a child. Whether the unborn demonstrates his zeal for life by the unusual "kicks" and "punches" from the womb, or whether the babe leaps "for joy" at the entrance of his/her Saviour, as did the unborn John the Baptist at the entrance of his unborn Saviour, Christ Jesus-- the unborn child is none the less a child.

"41 And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, **the babe leaped in her womb**; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: 42 And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and **blessed is the Fruit of thy womb**. 43 And whence is this to me, that the mother of my LORD should come to me? 44 For, lo, *as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy*. 45 And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the LORD. 46 And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the LORD, 47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour" (Luke 1:41-47). (Please note, dear Catholic readers, Mary needed saving by her Saviour just like every other human being does. Please see our article "An Earnest Appeal to Roman Catholics --<http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/An.Earnest.Appeal.html> -- Or, Roman Catholicism Examined in Light of the Scriptures".)

Even before a woman outwardly shows the form of the one growing inside her, she is said to be "with child".

- "And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou art **with child**..." (Genesis 16:11).
- "Thus were both the daughters of Lot **with child** by their father" (Genesis 19:36).
- "...she is **with child** by whoredom" (Genesis 38:24).
- "If men strive, and hurt a woman **with child**, so that her fruit depart from her..." (Exodus 21:22).
- "Phinehas' wife, was **with child**, near to be delivered..." (1Samuel 4:19).
- "And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I am **with child**" (2Samuel 11:5).
- "And Hazeel said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do... and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women **with child**" (2Kings 8:12).
- "Like as a woman **with child**, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs" (Isaiah 26:17).
- "Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found **with Child** of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 1:18).
- "Behold, a virgin shall be **with Child**, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matthew 1:23).
- "To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great **with Child**" (Luke 2:5).
- "...as travail upon a woman **with child**..." (1Thessalonians 5:3).
- "And she being **with child** cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered" (Revelation 12:2).

If Scripture pronounces the fetus to be a child, and Scripture is God's Own Word, then God verifies to all who would listen, "Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of The Judgment" (Matthew 5:21). "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, **yet will I not forget thee**" (Isaiah 49:15). "And the LORD said... for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood" (Hosea 1:4).

Life begins when God tells it to begin. "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils **the Breath of Life**; and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7). If the LORD is mighty enough to GIVE life (i.e., "Thy

hands have made me and fashioned me" [Psalms 119:73]), then the LORD is mighty enough to command WHEN life begins.

"1 And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die. 2 And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel: and he said, **Am I in God's stead, Who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?** ... 22 And she conceived, and bare a son; and said, **God hath taken away my reproach**" (Genesis 30:1-2,22).

Almighty is His Name.

"By the God of thy father, Who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, Who shall bless thee with blessings of Heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, **blessings of the breasts, and of the womb**" (Genesis 49:25).

It is only the providence and permission of the Almighty Life Giver that determines if a closed womb will bear the fruit of life.

Elkanah "4 gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions: 5 But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: but **the LORD had shut up her womb**... 8 Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weapest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? am not I better to thee than ten sons?... 10 And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore. 11 And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if Thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of Thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget Thine handmaid, but **wilt give unto Thine handmaid a man child**, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head... 19 Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and **the LORD remembered her**. 20 Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because **I have asked him of the LORD**" (1Samuel 1:4-5,8,10-11,19-20).

When the Almighty Life Giver commands life to begin, even the natural forces of age and impossibility cannot stop the unleashing of that Power of Life.

- "11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. 12 Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? 13 And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? 14 Is any thing too hard for the LORD? **At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son**... 21:2 For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, **at the set time of which God had spoken** to him" (Genesis 18:11-14,21:2).
- "Through faith also Sara herself **received strength to conceive seed**, and was delivered of a child when **she was past age**, because she judged Him Faithful Who had Promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and **him as good as dead**, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable" (Hebrews 11:11-12).

## In the Image of God

What is the "image" of God? "And God said, Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the Earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the Earth. 27 So God created man in His Own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them. 28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the Earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the Earth" (Genesis 1:26-28). Man is not an "evolutionary creature", nor even one of the "animal" species. According to the Creator's own Words, man was created by God to MIRROR Himself. Therefore, a special premium is placed on the Creation of human beings, as well as on our destruction. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for **in the image of God made He man**" (Genesis 9:6). The act of murder upon any human being is an insult against God. It is destruction to the image of Himself and everything He embodies. Infinite and unique in person and character, the penalty for such destruction and insult can only be Eternal Death. "Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of The Judgment" (Matthew 5:21).

What Supreme Love was bestowed upon us! "What is man, that Thou shouldest magnify him? and that Thou shouldest set Thine heart upon him?" (Job 7:17). The image of Himself that God shared with us was *His ability to make moral decisions*. Animals act instinctively. They have no moral consciousness. Man has God's moral capacity. Angels and mankind are honoured above all Creation because we have a moral will to exercise the doing of right or the doing of wrong.

"The Eternal God 'created man in His Own image' (Genesis 1:27), elevating man **above** the Animal Kingdom, and making him capable of acting in a Benevolent or selfish way. 'I call Heaven and Earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: **therefore choose** life, that both thou and thy seed may live' (Deuteronomy 30:19). Angels, also, have this God-given capacity of moral agency, in that the angels, who were the 'morning stars' (Job 38:7), conspired with Lucifer against the Almighty, and a 'third part of the stars of Heaven' (Revelation 12:4) fell, becoming the demons or 'evil angels' (Psalm 78:49). The presence of sin and holiness in the universe indicates that God providentially presides over a Moral Government, with man as His rebellious or obedient subjects. 'And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a Name written, **KING OF Kings, AND LORD OF Lords**' (Revelation 19:16)." (Excerpted from "The Mainspring of Moral Action" --[http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Edit\\_Mainspr.Moral.Action.html](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Edit_Mainspr.Moral.Action.html) -- by Tom Stewart, "From the Editor's Desktop" --<http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/W.S.t.S.Fellowship.html#From the Editors Desk> -- series.)

Lucifer, the highest angel, envied God Almighty. His free will allowed him the Godlike privilege to choose-- but his choice was defiance. He fell from God's grace, from his blessed heavenly position. And adding to his sin, he seduced others to defiance also and took a third of Heaven's angels with him.

- "12 How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground... 13 For thou **hast said in thine heart, I will** ascend into Heaven, **I will** exalt my throne above the stars of God: **I will** sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14 **I will** ascend above the heights of the clouds; **I will** be like the most High. 15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit" (Isaiah 14:12-15).
- "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which **deceiveth the whole world**: he was cast out into the Earth, and **his angels were cast out with him**" (Revelation 12:9). "...drew the third part of the stars of Heaven, and did cast them to the Earth" (Revelation 12:4).
- "Who **opposeth** and **exalteth** himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (2Thessalonians 2:4).
- "And The King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, **Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me**. Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into Everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:40-41).

Moral beings are in the image of God. It is our great privilege to choose-- and our **highest** privilege to choose Right. "What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be Righteous?" (Job 15:14). To partake of this gift of life as a man in God's mirror, and to be enjoined by God Himself to partake of His Righteousness and "Divine Nature" (2Peter 1:4) is to be "crowned... with glory and honour".

"3 When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; 4 What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him? 5 For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast **crowned him with glory and honour**. 6 Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet" (Psalm 8:3-6).

To kill this gift of life in God's image is to partake of God's judgment.

"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man **shall his blood be shed**: for in the image of God made He man" (Genesis 9:6).

Despite what the law of our land says, know that **God says** "taking" life is "*killing*" life. A person who takes the life of another person indiscriminately and criminally is called a "murderer".

"16 And if he smite him with an instrument of iron, so that he die, he is a murderer... 17 And if he smite him

with throwing a stone, wherewith he may die, and he die, he is a murderer... 18 Or if he smite him with an hand weapon of wood, wherewith he may die, and he die, he is a murderer... 21 Or in enmity smite him with his hand, that he die... he is a murderer" (Numbers 35:16-18,21).

The just punishment pronounced from the Righteous Judge decrees that "the murderer shall surely be put to death... the revenger of blood shall slay the murderer, when he meeteth him" (35:16-18,21). I didn't say it. No human said it. "The Judge of All the Earth" (Genesis 18:25) said it. Whether it is politically correct, or not, "whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of The Judgment" (Matthew 5:21). The penalty can be stalled for a time and mankind can even offer a pardon, but God's "stay of execution" will end. God's Law will not be mocked. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

## The First Murdering Father

The first and most famous of all murderers, and in fact, the father of them all, is Satan. "Ye are of your father the Devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. **He was a murderer from the beginning**, and abode not in the Truth, because there is no Truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44). In facing the facts as God sees them, Satan's part in the advancement of abortion is central. While we can't blame him for every time that we've given in to "the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2Peter 1:4), we can "amen" the LORD when He says, "he that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning" (1John 3:8). Jesus demonstrated the love He had for His Father by the obedience He willfully gave Him. "I speak that which I have seen with My Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father... He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His Commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him" (John 8:38; 1John 2:4).

The Devil hates the Son of God, and did his best to murder Him on a Cross. "The dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for **to devour her Child** as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a Man Child, Who was to rule all nations with a Rod of Iron" (Revelation 12:4,5). His deluded thought was that he had succeeded, until "her Child was caught up unto God, and to His Throne" (12:5). The Son of God had to be born as man and die for man because it was "for this purpose [that] the Son of God was manifested, that He might **destroy** the works of the devil" (1John 3:8). Murder is a work "of the devil". Jesus hates murder, and we know that "whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that **no** murderer hath Eternal Life abiding in him" (1John 3:15).

"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which **deceiveth the whole world**: he was cast out into the Earth, and his angels were cast out with him... And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the Earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the Man Child" (Revelation 12:9,13).

Satan is at the heart of this "abortion issue". He tried to usurp the Father's Throne (Isaiah 14:12-15), and has proceeded to strip this once-perfect Earth of bounty and blessing, and murdering the innocence of once-pure hearts by enticing men through "the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2Peter 1:4) to be of those "that committeth sin [and become] of the devil" (1John 3:8). He has taken out his hatred of the Father and the Son on all humanity. He pulls men down to his level, and with a supremely murderous heart, he lends his powerful aid in their Eternal Death; for all "the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and **murderers**, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8).

This Usurper, "the god of this world" (2Corinthians 4:4), dares to steal from the LORD Creator, The Giver of Life, the infinitely abiding right **to control life and death**. Even the Usurper's False Prophet of the Seventy Weeks of Daniel --<http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/Seventy.Weeks.of.Daniel.html> -- "**had power to give life** unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast **should be killed**" (Revelation 13:15). This "power to give life" is the Usurper's false imitation of life, and is explained in our "Commentary of the Book of Revelation", Chapter 13, which states:

"Jesus said during His earthly ministry, i.e., '4 And I say unto you My friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. 5 But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear Him, which after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him' (Luke 12:4-5). *Pneuma* is the Greek word that the Authorized Version (KJV) has translated as 'life' (13:15); but, it is more commonly translated as *spirit* or *ghost*, and even as *wind*, i.e., "The wind [Greek, pneuma] bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit [Greek, pneuma]" (John 3:8). 'Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed any thing, seeing He giveth to all life [Greek, zoe], and breath, and all things' (Acts 17:25). **Therefore, the 'life [Greek, pneuma]' (13:15) that the False Prophet gives to the 'image of the beast' (13:15)**

**will not be the same kind of 'life [Greek, zoe]' (Acts 17:25) that only the Almighty bestows** --"Commentary of the Book of Revelation" --<http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/The.Holy.Bible/Commentary.Revelations.1.html> --, Chapter 13 --<http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/The.Holy.Bible/Commentary.Revelations.13.html> --.

Satan usurps God's infinitely abiding right to control life and death by his murderous authorship of abortion. **All** abortionists are among this group of murderous usurpers.

- "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the Light of the Glorious Gospel of **Christ, Who is the Image of God**, should shine unto them" (2Corinthians 4:4).
- "Also in thy skirts is found **the blood of the souls of the poor innocents**: I have not found it by secret search, but upon **ALL** these" (Jeremiah 2:34).
- "For the land is full of **bloody crimes**, and the city is full of violence" (Ezekiel 7:23).

This hatred of the Son manifests itself every time Satan inspires another murder. Satan's murderous hatred of God and His Son is the heart of the "abortion issue". It is the blackness of Satan's hellish heart that authors the death of innocence, and every time a sweet baby is killed Satan's rage increases. His murdering army increases, "that they may add sin to sin" (Isaiah 30:1).

- "The iniquity of the house of [America] is exceeding great, and the land is **full of blood**, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, The LORD hath forsaken the Earth, and the LORD seeth not" (Ezekiel 9:9).
- "Thus saith the LORD GOD, The city sheddeth blood in the midst of it, **that her time may come**" (Ezekiel 22:3).

Scoffers mock, "How doth God know? can He judge through the dark cloud?" (Job 22:13). But "woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?" (Isaiah 29:15). Beware scoffers! The Almighty, "being full of compassion... destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned He His anger away, and did not stir up **ALL** His wrath" (Psalm 78:38). But "the LORD said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man" (Genesis 6:3). For the warning has gone forth, that "between blood and blood, between Law and Commandment, statutes and judgments, ye shall even **warn them** that they trespass not against the LORD, and so wrath come upon you" (2Chronicles 19:10).

Those that work death on the innocent shall have death worked upon them. "12 When He maketh inquisition for blood, He remembereth them: He forgetteth not the cry of the humble... 16 The LORD is known by the Judgment which He executeth: **the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands**" (Psalm 9:12,16). "What wilt thou say when He shall punish thee?... shall not sorrows take thee, **as a woman in travail**?" (Jeremiah 13:21).

- "Sudden destruction cometh upon them, **as travail upon a woman** with child; and they shall not escape" (1Thessalonians 5:3).
- "For I have heard a voice **as of a woman in travail**, and the anguish as of her that bringeth forth her first child, the voice of the daughter of Zion, that bewaileth herself, that spreadeth her hands, saying, Woe is me now! for my soul is wearied because of murderers" (Jeremiah 4:31).
- "...when pangs come upon thee, the pain as **of a woman in travail**!" (Jeremiah 22:23).
- "The sorrows **of a travailing woman** shall come upon him" (Hosea 13:13).
- "Now why dost thou cry out aloud? is there no king in thee? is thy counsellor perished? for pangs have taken thee **as a woman in travail**" (Micah 4:9).

Judgment is SOON to be poured out.

- "2 Now, thou son of man, wilt thou judge, wilt thou judge the bloody [nation]? yea, thou shalt show her all her abominations. 3 Then say thou, Thus saith the LORD GOD, The [nation] sheddeth blood in the midst of it, that **her**

**time may come...** 4 Thou art become guilty in thy blood that thou hast shed; and hast defiled thyself in thine idols which thou hast made; and thou hast caused thy days to draw near, and art come even unto thy years: therefore have I made thee a reproach unto the heathen, and a mocking to all countries. 5 Those that be near, and those that be far from thee, shall mock thee, which art infamous and much vexed... 12 **In thee have they taken gifts to shed blood;** thou hast taken usury and increase, and **thou hast greedily gained** of thy neighbours by extortion, **and hast forgotten Me,** saith the LORD GOD... 14 Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee? I the LORD have spoken it, and will do it" (Ezekiel 22:2-5,12,14).

- "6 Wherefore thus saith the LORD GOD; Woe to the bloody [nation], to the pot whose scum is therein, and whose scum is not gone out of it!... 7 For her blood is in the midst of her... 9 Therefore thus saith the LORD GOD; Woe to the bloody [nation]! I will even make the pile for fire great. 10 Heap on wood, kindle the fire, consume the flesh, and spice it well, and let the bones be burned. 11 Then set it empty upon the coals thereof, that the brass of it may be hot, and may burn, and that the filthiness of it may be molten in it, that the scum of it may be consumed. 12 She hath wearied herself with lies, and her great scum went not forth out of her: her scum shall be in the fire. 13 In thy filthiness is lewdness: because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused My fury to rest upon thee. 14 I the LORD have spoken it: it shall come to pass, and I will do it; I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent; according to thy ways, and according to thy doings, shall they judge thee, saith the LORD GOD" (Ezekiel 24:6-7,9-14).
- "He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (Proverbs 29:1).
- "Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall... whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant" (Isaiah 30:13).
- "Surely Thou didst set them in slippery places: Thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors" (Psalms 73:18-19).

Satan usurps God's right to control life and death by his murderous fathering of abortion. Those in the promotion of, performing of, or receiving of abortions, usurp God's right to control life and death by their selfish murders, and are "...partaker[s] of [Satan's] evil deeds" (2John 1:11). "Ye are of your father the Devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a **murderer** from the beginning" (John 8:44).

## Precious Castaways: "Thou Becamest Mine"

When the LORD sees a Tiny Human trashed as man's castaway, this is His Word as to how He feels and what He does. "Now **when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of Love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a Covenant with thee, saith the LORD GOD, and thou becamest Mine.** 9 Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil. 10 I clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk. 11 I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck. 12 And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head. 13 Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen" (Ezekiel 16:8-13). And the Covenant is Eternal Togetherness, "for **of such is the Kingdom of God**".

- "16 And they brought young children to Him, that He should touch them: and His disciples rebuked those that brought them. 14 But when Jesus saw it, He was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for **of such is the Kingdom of God.** 15 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. 16 And He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them" (Mark 10:13-16).
- "And they brought unto him also **infants**, that He would touch them" (Luke 18:15).
- "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is **greatest** in the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 18:3-4).

"Precious" and "castaway" are contradictory terms which form an accurate title given to any child that is thrown away. In this instance, man's trash is God's treasure. "He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in His sight" (Psalm 72:14). That which man violently discards, God defends in declaring, "**I have created him for My glory**, I have formed him; yea, I have made him" (Isaiah 43:7).

1. Abortion annihilates the miraculous creation of life that is God's gift to every baby.
2. Abortion disregards the process of birth that God engineered for bringing new life full circle.
3. Abortion robs God of His Sovereignty in dispensing life and death.
4. Abortion robs God of the pleasure He derives from seeing His children grow in faith and grace.
5. And abortion robs God of lifetimes of glory and praise that would have honoured Him.

"Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created ALL things, and **for Thy pleasure they are and were created**" (Revelation 4:11).

If we look closer at the above passage in Ezekiel, we find that Jerusalem was the castaway treasure that God entered into "Covenant" with, and the "time was the time of Love". We can substitute America for Jerusalem, concerning love and judgment, for "he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons" (Colossians 3:25). Since the LORD's treatment of His people is without partiality, we can hear, as well, His compassionate warning to us, "a Christian nation". "Hear ye the Word of the LORD, O house of [America], and all the families of the house of [America]" (Jeremiah 2:4).

Ezekiel 16:1-15,20-23,35-38. "1 Again the Word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 2 Son of man, cause [America] to know her abominations, 3 And say, Thus saith the LORD GOD unto [America]... 4 As for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all. 5 *None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the loathing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born.* 6 And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, **I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live**; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, **Live**. 7 I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou hast increased and waxen great... 8 Now **when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of Love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a Covenant with thee, saith the LORD GOD, and thou becamest Mine.** 9 Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil. 10 I clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk. 11 I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck. 12 And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head. 13 Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and brodered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a [nation]. 14 And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was **perfect through My Comeliness**, which I had put upon thee, saith the LORD GOD. 15 But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown, and pouredst out thy fornications on every one that passed by; his it was... 20 Moreover **thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto Me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured.** Is this of thy whoredoms a small matter, 21 that **thou hast slain My children**, and delivered them to cause them to pass through the fire for them? 22 And in all thine abominations and thy whoredoms thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, when thou wast naked and bare, and wast polluted in thy blood. 23 And it came to pass after all thy wickedness, (woe, woe unto thee! saith the LORD GOD)... 35 O harlot, hear the Word of the LORD: 36 Thus saith the LORD GOD; Because thy filthiness was poured out, and thy nakedness discovered through thy whoredoms with thy lovers, and with all the idols of thy abominations, and **by the blood of thy children, which thou didst give unto them**; 37 Behold, therefore I will gather all thy lovers, with whom thou hast taken pleasure, and all them that thou hast loved, with all them that thou hast hated; I will even gather them round about against thee, and will discover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness. 38 And I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and **I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy.**"

When physical life on this Earth ends for the unborn and the newborn, the LORD takes His precious treasures Home to Heaven, "for of such is the Kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14). King David demonstrated this truth from the Word, while being punished for his adultery and murderous act against Uriah the Hittite.

"Wherefore hast thou despised the Commandment of the LORD, to do evil in His sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon" (2Samuel 12:9).

Bathsheba, Uriah's wife, was given a child in her womb-- David's child. And even though repentance was given to the LORD, King David's sin had consequences which bore physical witness to his watching nation.

"And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die. And Nathan departed unto his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick" (2Samuel 12:13-15).

Even knowing beforehand, that the LORD had predestined physical death for the infant, King David "besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the Earth" (2Samuel 12:16). And though David continued in this way for a week, "it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died" (2Samuel 12:18). David reasoned this way, "While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? **I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me**" (2Samuel 12:22-23). David proved that the only way he could be reunited with his infant son was to "go to him" in that Place of God's Own preparing (John 14:2), because the baby would not "return" to Earth.

"In My Father's House are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2).

Truly, the Covenant is Eternal Togetherness. "And thou becamest Mine" (Ezekiel 16:8).

## Why Choose Abortion?

Let's consider the plight of many teen girls, not that this problem is limited to teens, by any means, but America's teenagers have compounded the number of abortions in our country by a larger portion for many years, "fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath" (Ephesians 2:3). Before the sin of abortion ever comes into the picture, an unmarried teenage girl commits fornication. "Flee fornication... [s]he that committeth fornication sinneth against h[er] own body" (1Corinthians 6:18). "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? **Be not deceived:** neither **fornicators**, nor idolaters, nor **adulterers**..." (1Corinthians 6:9).

- "Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (1Peter 2:11).
- "Now the body is not for fornication, but for the LORD; and the LORD for the body" (1Corinthians 6:13).
- "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the Earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry" (Colossians 3:5).

She often lies to her parents, her friends, and even to herself. "For from within, out of the heart of [girls], proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders... covetousness, wickedness, deceit" (Mark 7:21-22). Soon, lying is no longer optional. "Behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:23). One sin leads to another, and another, and sooner than she ever wants to admit-- there is blood on her hands. "By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood" (Hosea 4:2).

"A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood" (Proverbs 6:17).

Usually, an abortion isn't committed without first committing a wide range of other sins, thus breaking many Commandments. "17 ...if thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments. 18 ...Thou shalt **do no murder**, thou shalt **not commit adultery**, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt **not bear false witness**, 19 honour thy father and thy mother" (Matthew 19:17-19). "For whosoever

shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the Law" (James 2:10-11). "Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of Me; and that cover with a covering, but not of My Spirit, **that they may add sin to sin...** This is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the Law of the LORD" (Isaiah 30:1,9).

Why do teenagers choose abortion? For the same reason their parents do, and for the same reason all participants choose abortion-- because they're motivated by entire self-love. Their only thought is a consuming interest in the benefit and well-being of self. Regardless of the many ways abortion is rationalized, the deep-seated root is SELF. "Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity" (Matthew 23:28).

Our vanity says, "It's my body. It's my choice." That's only partially correct. The choice is ours, given to us by God when He made us in the image of His free will to choose right or wrong. "I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil" (Deuteronomy 30:15). But as for your body belonging to you, **no**. "The Earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" (Psalm 24:1). And the saddest thing in the world, is to find people who profess to know the LORD, and yet contend that their bodies are their own.

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and **ye are not your own**? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1Corinthians 6:19-20).

He made your body and gave it life. "Know ye that the LORD He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves" (Psalm 100:3).

But concerning your free will, be forewarned that there are consequences for making sinfully wrong choices. "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door" (Genesis 4:7). Sinfully wrong choices are morally wrong. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the LORD. For as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9). For He gives abundant Wisdom from the Counsel of His own Word. "For who hath stood in the Counsel of the LORD, and hath perceived and heard His Word? who hath marked His Word, and heard it" (Jeremiah 23:18). The problem is, people choose not to listen. The LORD said that they, "would not hearken to My Voice; and... would none of Me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels" (Psalms 81:11-12).

Take God at His Word. "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for **joy** that a man is born into the world" (John 16:21).

"Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker" (Psalm 95:6).

## A Need to Know-- Partial-Birth Abortions

We are going to briefly discuss partial-birth abortions. I am not a person who wants to know "gory details". I do not enjoy the feelings of fear, terror, horror, etc. And rightly so, for the Christian, when dealing with fear understands that "there is no fear in Love; but perfect Love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in Love" (1John 4:18). When there is a time in life where I have a genuine need to know something that I really don't want to know, I proceed carefully. Trust the LORD. "What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee" (Psalm 56:3). I believe the LORD has taught us in His Word, that knowing too much about such topics can rob us of peace and innocence and grieve His Spirit, but that we ought to be "wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil" (Romans 16:17-19).

"<sup>17</sup> Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the Doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. <sup>18</sup> For they that are such serve not our LORD Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. <sup>19</sup> For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you **wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil**" (Romans 16:17-19).

Of course, a proper motive for approaching sensitive information is all important. Solomon's motive pleased God.

"<sup>9</sup> Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? <sup>10</sup> And the speech pleased the LORD, that Solomon had asked this thing. <sup>11</sup> And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for

thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself **understanding to discern judgment**; 12 Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart" (1Kings 3:9-12).

Christians do not need to bring themselves down to the world's level in order to understand if something is sin. "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Ephesians 4:14). We are sent forth among the enemy to learn just enough to be "wise" but yet still unlearned, in large part, to remain "harmless". "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore **wise** as serpents, and **harmless** as doves" (Matthew 10:16).

- "That ye may be **blameless and harmless**, the sons of God, **without rebuke**, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Philemon 2:15).
- "Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit **in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men**" (1Corinthians 14:20).
- "13 Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom... 15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. 16 For **where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work**. 17 But the Wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (James 3:13,15-17).

Our strength is that which we understand of the LORD.

- "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but **understanding what the will of the LORD is**" (Ephesians 5:17).
- "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, **thoroughly furnished unto all good works**" (2Timothy 3:16-17).
- "For now we live, **if ye stand fast in the LORD**" (1Thessalonians 3:8).

We are not to follow the world's values, but to understand what God thinks.

- "Therefore shall ye keep Mine Ordinance, **that ye commit not any one of these abominable customs**, which were committed before you, and that ye **defile not yourselves therein**: I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 18:30).
- "For My people is foolish, they have not known Me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge" (Jeremiah 4:22).
- "If any man will do HIS will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John 7:17).

However, there are situations in life which we must, of necessity, confront "head-on"; situations that are profoundly sad and evil. "Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" (Matthew 18:7). When this happens, our aversion (or, our inner spirit or conscience) is alerted by the Holy Spirit, and causes us to be careful not to offend ourselves. "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth" (Romans 14:22). In the same way that pain protects the outer man, our conscience protects our inner man. These systems of protection were built-in by the Creator for our good. "And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31).

We all know how sweet and cute newborns are, but to understand just how very human and developed a newborn can be, read this account of Jacob's partial-birth struggle with his twin brother, Esau .

- "22 And the children [Esau and Jacob] struggled together within her [Rebekah]; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to inquire of the LORD. 23 And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two

manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger. 24 And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. 25 And the first came out red, all over like a hairy garment; and they called his name Esau. 26 And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob" (Genesis 25:22-26).

- "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed... He [Jacob] took his brother [Esau] by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God" (Genesis 32:28; Hosea 12:3).

This brings us to the brutal truth of partial-birth abortions. Because our nation has condoned abortion "on demand", the progression has worsened until it has now reached this hideous high. This is not easy to read, even though it is stated as simply as possible. Why is it necessary to read? **Because the following description demonstrates that these babies are real people, with real feelings, and that, if they could only speak what they obviously felt, they assuredly would shame any guilty which still had a conscience.** Some of America's wellknown religious leaders have said,

"the late-term abortion procedure known as 'partial-birth abortion', wherein an abortionist incompletely delivers a baby, leaving its head within the mother. He then penetrates the base of a late-term baby's skull so that he can suction out its brain (thereby collapsing its little head) prior to full delivery. Evidence confirms that these unborn children experience profound pain during these procedures.

[If they could speak, these much-sinned-against baby people could say as the Apostle Paul did, "I bear in my body the marks of the LORD Jesus" (Galatians 6:17).]

A surgical nurse who observed firsthand this gruesome procedure at [an] abortion clinic, recounted the immense revulsion she experienced while participating in a partial-birth abortion: "The baby's little fingers were clasp and unclasp and his feet were kicking. Then, the doctor stuck the scissors through the back of his head and the baby's arms jerked out in a flinch, in a startled reaction -- like a baby does when he thinks that he might fall."

It is important to note that most of these abortions are performed on healthy babies carried by healthy mothers who choose to terminate their pregnancies for purely elective reasons.

["Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto Me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured. Is this of thy whoredoms a small matter, that thou hast slain My children?" (Ezekiel 16:20-21).]

Dr. Haskel, the man credited with perfecting this procedure, said in 1997, 'I'll be quite frank. Most of my abortions are elective in (the fifth and sixth month) range.'

["15 Their feet are swift to shed blood: 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways: 17 And the way of peace have they not known" (Romans 3:15-17). As the enemy has done to Thy children, LORD, do so even to them. "Thou shalt break **them** with a Rod of Iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Psalm 2:9).]

Initially, the president and his pro-abortion allies utilized the argument that partial-birth abortions were extremely rare and conducted only in dire situations. But, you'll recall that the source of that misinformation, Ron Fitzsimmons, executive director of the National Coalition of Abortion Providers, admitted that as many as 5,000 such abortions were performed each year.

Fitzsimmons also confessed that 'they are primarily done on healthy women and healthy fetuses.'

["The innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked" (Exodus 23:7).]

Dr. Dominick Caselnova of the American College of Ob-Gyns, called the practice 'not only a brutal mutilation of the baby, but a threat to the health and safety of the mother.'

According to Linda Pratt Shafer, the partial-birth abortion procedure, wherein a woman's cervix is forcefully and mechanically dilated, weakens the cervix and poses risks of miscarriage in future pregnancies."

A weakened cervix which risks future pregnancies isn't the only judgment a woman carries who has done this to her own child. "Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, and shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters... and the land was polluted with blood" (Psalm 106:37-38).

**The Most Common Symptoms of Post Abortion Judgment:**

1. Guilt - "So shalt thou put away the guilt of innocent blood from among you, when thou shalt do that which is right in the sight of the LORD" (Deuteronomy 21:9).
2. Depression - "By sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken" (Proverbs 15:13).
3. Grief - "Woe is me now! for the LORD hath added grief to my sorrow" (Jerusalem 45:3).
4. Shame - "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to Thee, my God: for [my] iniquities are increased over [my] head, and [my] trespass is grown up unto the Heavens." (Ezra 9:6).
5. Nervousness, anxiety - "An evil spirit from the LORD troubled [her]" (1Samuel 16:14).
6. Lack of concentration, confusion - "O LORD, to [me] belongeth confusion of face... because [I] have sinned against Thee" (Daniel 9:8).
7. Anger - "For the wrath of man worketh NOT the righteousness of God" (James 1:20).
8. Fear - "Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me" (Psalm 55:5).
9. Flashbacks - "For our transgressions are multiplied before Thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them" (Isaiah 59:12).
10. Problems communicating even with family members, and especially with their children - "So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away" (Psalm 64:8).
11. Sleep disorders - "I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest" (Jerusalem 45:3). "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isaiah 57:21).
12. Eating disorders - "Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap" (Psalm 69:22).
13. Pain, either sympathetic and/or physical - "Sin shall have great pain, and... shall have distresses daily" (Ezekiel 30:16).
14. Numbness, mental and/or physical - "For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I [the LORD] should heal them" (Acts 28:27).
15. Hallucinations of a baby crying - "Thine heart shall meditate terror" (Isaiah 33:18).
16. Horrific dreams of dismembered babies - "But whoso hearkeneth unto Me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil" (Proverbs 1:33).
17. Abusiveness - "For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience... put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth" (Colossians 3:6,8).
18. Sexual perversions - "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will

judge" (Hebrews 13:4).

19. Substance abuse - "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1).
20. Self-mutilation - "Cursed be the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed" (Jeremiah 20:14).
21. Thoughts of suicide - "Which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures... so that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life" (Job 3:21; 7:15).
22. Suicide - "I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years" (Isaiah 38:10). "But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us" (2Corinthians 1:9-10).

The ONLY hope of erasing the guilt and shame, the ONLY hope of ever having hope again, is to, first, acknowledge God's condemnation. "2:34 **In thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents:** I have not found it by secret search, but upon all these... 3:3 ...thou refusedst to be ashamed... 5 Will He reserve His anger for ever? will He keep it to the end? Behold, thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldest" (Jeremiah 2:34; 3:3,5). Repentance is your agreement with God that you are the wretch that He says you are. "We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us: for we have sinned against the LORD our God" (3:25). God **cannot** forgive you until you repent.

- "**If we confess our sins**, He is Faithful and Just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1John 1:9).
- "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21).[Please read the NOTE above about receiving a Full Pardon.]

## Conclusion

To all of life on the whole of the planet, abortion "on demand" not only murders the innocent, but degenerates life for the rest of us. Not just in the sense of living physically for the sake of the physical, but abortion degenerates our life in the sense of living life for God, in His image, for His pleasure and praise, and for the sake of God Himself. "13 Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. 14 I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: **marvellous** are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well" (Psalm 139:13-14). We must listen to the Word of God, and obey Him. "10 To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the Word of the LORD is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it. 11 Therefore I am full of the fury of the LORD; I am weary with holding in... 15 Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the LORD. 16 Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein. 17 Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Harken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken. 18 Therefore hear, ye nations, and know, O congregation, what is among them. 19 Hear, O Earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto My Words, nor to My Law, but rejected it" (Jeremiah 6:10-11,15-19).

"And now they sin more and more" (Hosea 13:2).

- First, abortion "on demand" is the sin of murder, "and ye know that no murderer hath Eternal Life abiding in him" (1John 3:15).
- Second, if we can rationalize early term abortions, then we can rationalize late term abortions-- even partial-birth abortions. "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2Timothy 3:13).

- Third, if we can rationalize the brutal dismemberment of a newborn child, then we are next ready to selectively eliminate any child that society deems to be inconvenient, physically unfit, socially unacceptable, or politically undesirable. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves" (2Timothy 3:1-2).
- Finally, if we allow "these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" (Luke 23:31), i.e., we will become completely demoralized, desensitized, deceived, and willing for the future Final Solution of the Antichrist to eliminate the world of the religiously "undesirable elements", who refuse to worship the Antichrist and receive the 666 Mark of the Beast, "and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed" (Revelation 13:15).

"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the Only Wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen"  
(Jude 24,25).

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## What the Bible Says About Luck and Gambling

"Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of The Judgment"

(Matthew 5:21).

by Katie Stewart

7-22-2000

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### Preface

For the Christian, winning and losing have a different meaning than the world, when dealing with the reality of Jesus Christ. "7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. 8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my LORD: for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 9 and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God **by faith**" (Philippians 3:7-9). Because Christians are to separate themselves from the world by their conduct, i.e., "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the LORD, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2Corinthians 6:17), it is imperative that the Saints have an understanding of the meaning of such worldly concepts as luck and gambling, that go beyond a *mere* legalistic listing of things to be avoided, i.e., "Touch not; taste not; handle not" (Colossians 2:21). Instead, our heartfelt obedience in avoiding luck and gambling must be soundly founded upon a proper understanding of "What saith the Scripture?" (Romans 4:3).

### Luck

Who needs luck? Certainly not the Christian! Just look at all the "riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19) the Saints have been given! "2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our LORD, 3 According as His divine power hath given unto us **all things** that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2Peter 1:2-3). Though luck may have the connotation of prosperity or success in the world's vocabulary, it involves the element of *chance*; and, *uncertainty* is **not** part of the success guaranteed by the LORD. Instead, the Saints can find in the Scriptures, Promise after *definite* Promise to make *certain* their prosperity and success. "This Book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest **observe to do** according to **all** that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Joshua 1:8). "But whoso looketh into the Perfect Law of Liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man **shall be blessed** in his deed" (James 1:25). [To explore more about the "Exceeding Great and Precious Promises" (2Peter 1:4), see the Promises section of our website.] It may sound unfair to vilify luck, when it seems to have been such a good friend in days gone by, but we no longer ought to knowingly take credit away from the LORD Jesus Christ for our success by attributing our prosperity to luck. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things [i.e., luck] are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2Corinthians 5:17).

The Providence of God is more than able to match and exceed the luck of the world. "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Ephesians 3:20). God's Providence is His benevolent and wise forethought and provision for His children. "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). "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). And, instead of wishing luck to another Christian, the Saints should say, "God bless you", e.g. "24 The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: 25 The LORD make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: 26 The LORD lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace" (Numbers 6:24-26). When addressing someone who may, or may not, be a Christian (but, has benefited you, or you desire their good), our Spanish friends have a pleasing expression: "Vaya con dios" (meaning: "Go with God"); or, simply say, "God be with you", e.g., "And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The LORD be with you. And they answered him, The LORD bless thee" (Ruth 2:4). And, of course, it is understood in our sentiments and greetings, "The LORD is with you, while ye be with Him; and if ye seek Him, He will be found of you; but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you" (2Chronicles 15:2).

## The Spirit of Gambling

Luck and gambling go together, because chance inhabits both. "The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites" (Isaiah 33:14). With the world, the uncertainty of ill or loss is mixed with the chance of benefit or advantage. "13 Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: 14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. 15 For that ye ought to say, If the LORD will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (James 4:13-15). Sadly, the spirit of gambling can be seen in all parts of human endeavor, because gambling is a fundamental violation of the Law of Love, which Jesus taught. "36 Master, which is the great commandment in the Law? 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the First and Great Commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:36-40). Since the Law of Christ (Galatians 6:2) mandates a supreme love for God and a love for our neighbour that is equal to the consideration that we ought to give to ourselves, then *gambling violates the Law of Love because it only allows or enables the gain of one party at the expense of another*. "We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil" (Proverbs 1:13). And, "for the **love** of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1Timothy 6:10). [For a fuller explanation of the Law of Love, read Charles G. Finney's "The Law of God, No.1" --- [http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin\\_1839/OE1839.Law.of.God.1.html](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin_1839/OE1839.Law.of.God.1.html) -- and "The Law of God, No. 2" --- [http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin\\_1839/OE1839.Law.of.God.2.html](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin_1839/OE1839.Law.of.God.2.html) -- of "The Oberlin Evangelist" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Finney.Oberlin.Evangelist.html> -- , 1839.]

By far, it is more important that we seek the blessing of the LORD, than we seek by gambling and chance the luck of the world. "3 For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked... 5 They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men... 7 Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish. 8 They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. 9 They set their mouth against the Heavens, and their tongue walketh through the Earth... 12 Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches... 16 When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; 17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. 18 Surely Thou didst set them in slippery places: Thou castedst them down into destruction. 19 How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors... 23 Nevertheless I am continually with Thee: Thou hast holden me by my right hand. 24 Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory" (Psalm 73: 3, 5, 7-9, 12, 16-19, 23-24).

## Addiction

Christians are devoted to the LORD and "have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints" (1Corinthians 16:15). However, America's addictions are shameful disgraces against God. "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34). Even the world realizes that gambling is tearing apart the fabric of our society. Just listen to the facts they have gathered against gambling.

"America is addicted to gambling and doesn't even know it. Americans are familiar with our nation's other major addictions: narcotics, alcohol, tobacco... But today, the fastest growing addiction in America is unchecked and almost unrecognized. It is gambling." Our country now has multiple millions of adult gamblers, "and, more ominous, millions of teenagers addicted to gambling. But individuals are not the only gambling addicts. State governments themselves have become addicted to the revenues derived from casinos, slot machines, keno and lotto. Thus, instead of warning citizens, many governments are exploiting them. They

ignore the social costs brought by state- authorized gambling because they need the cash to balance their budgets or so they believe. They're hooked... Twenty years ago, commercial gambling casinos were prohibited in every state except Nevada. Only 13 states had lotteries. There was no such thing as a Native American casino. Altogether, Americans wagered about \$17 billion on legal commercial gambling. Between 1976 and 1988, casinos were legalized in Atlantic City and the number of state lotteries more than doubled. Then, between 1989 and 1994, gambling casinos were legalized in 21 new states and slot or video poker machines were authorized at racetracks and bars in 10 states. All told, Americans wagered nearly \$550 billion on legal gambling in 1995 an astonishing 3,200 percent increase in just twenty years... legalized gambling destroys individuals, wrecks families, increases crime, and ultimately costs society far more than the government makes... It is important to understand that gambling addiction is just as real, and its consequences just as tragic, as alcohol or drug addiction." Compulsive gamblers potentially, "lose all the money they have. Then they run up credit card debt. They sell or pawn possessions and plead for loans from family and friends. More than half end up stealing money, often from their employers. The average Gamblers Anonymous patient will have lost all their money and accumulated debts from \$35,000 to \$92,000 before seeking treatment. Thousands file bankruptcy. Many addicts can't be helped [and] they commit suicide. And when [compulsive] gambling strikes, it rarely affects just one person. Family savings are lost, college education or retirement funds disappear, home mortgages are foreclosed. And under the stress of losing everything, many problem gamblers commit domestic violence and child abuse. Since casinos came to the Mississippi Gulf Coast, domestic violence has increased 69 percent and an estimated 37 percent of all [habitual] gamblers have abused their children.

Researchers now call gambling the fastest growing teenage addiction, with the rate of [compulsive] gambling among high school and college-aged youth about twice that of adults. According to Dr. Howard J. Shaffer, Director of the Harvard Medical School Center for Addiction Studies, "Today, there are more children experiencing adverse symptoms from gambling than from drugs...and the problem is growing." --from "AMERICA'S GAMBLING ADDICTION" --- <http://www.ncalg.org/pages/bkgrnd.htm> -- by Bernard P. Horn, NCALG Political Director, 1996

## Conclusion

Since luck does **not** give the LORD Jesus Christ the credit for our prosperity and success, all True Saints should avoid any such expression as "Good luck" from slipping from our mouths, that would give those around us the impression that they should seek something or someone other than the LORD Jesus for True Prosperity and True Success. "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 15:5). Rather, we, of all people, should say, "God bless you" or "God be with you". "Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Colossians 4:6). And, since the spirit of gambling is found in any activity that would allow us to be profited **only** at the expense of our neighbour, let us avoid all "appearance of evil" (1Thessalonians 5:22) by separating ourselves from this antithesis of love. "20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God Whom he hath not seen? 21 And this Commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God love his brother also" (1John 4:20-21). May we seek to demonstrate by our lives the *reality* and *certainty* of the "More Sure Word of Prophecy" (2Peter 1:19) of the LORD Jesus Christ.

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## What the Bible Says About Temptation

"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"

(Matthew 6:13).

by Tom and Katie Stewart

1-10-2001

Note: This article has been revised (7-13-01) from the original to aid the reader in clarity of understanding.

## Preface

This is a study about understanding temptation, not simply because the Master enjoined, "Pray that ye enter not INTO

temptation" (Luke 22:40), but because we *also* desire to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in doing all that is humanly possible **to prevent temptation from turning INTO sin.** "10 With my whole heart have I sought Thee: O let me not wander from Thy Commandments... 133 Order my steps in Thy Word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me" (Psalm 119:10, 133). God tests. Satan tempts. From the first temptation of Eve in the Garden when the Serpent succeeded in causing our First Parents to doubt the love of God, to the final "Hour of Temptation" (Revelation 3:10) of the Apocalypse, mankind has struggled, and will struggle, with the necessity to overcome temptation.

Our willingness to comply with the Master's injunction to pray that He would "lead us not INTO temptation" (Matthew 6:13), demonstrates His desire to "deliver us FROM evil" (6:13), "for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). "The LORD knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of temptations" (2Peter 2:9). **The effort we put forth to understand this basic issue of temptation, should bring forth the fruit of preservation from sinning.** "Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee" (Proverbs 2:11). And, if we are intolerant of entering INTO temptation, then we must avail ourselves of all that Christ is and of all His Promises, to avoid falling INTO sin. "3 According as His Divine Power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and Godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 whereby are given unto us Exceeding Great and Precious Promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2Peter 1:3-4).

## Table of Contents

**IMPORTANT!**

To avoid broken links, due to file length, please wait for the page to

**load completely**

before selecting a link. *Thanks.*

Preface

1. Enduring the Trial of Temptation is One Thing. Sinning By Entering INTO Temptation, is Another.

2. Temptations Exploit Desires

3. God Tests. Satan Tempts. But, Why Does God Allow Temptation?

4. When I Am Weak, He Can Deliver

5. God Leads Us Just Like He Led Jesus

6. The Test of the Cross

7. Overcoming Temptation Prevents Entering INTO Sin

Conclusion

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

## 1. Enduring the Trial of Temptation is One Thing. Sinning By Entering INTO Temptation, is Another.

Temptation" usually defines *a time of TESTING by the LORD*, which may/or may not also be used as *a time of TEMPTING by the Devil*, and always results with either a passing grade or with utter failure."Blessed is the man that endureth temptation [testing/tempting]: for when he is **tried**, he shall receive the Crown of Life, which the LORD hath promised to them that love Him" (James 1:12).

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**Excerpt Number 1:** From A. T. Robertson's "Word Pictures of the New Testament":

"And bring us not into temptation (kai mh eisenegkh ei peirasmon). 'Bring' or 'lead' bothers many people. It seems to present God as an active agent in subjecting us to temptation, a thing specifically denied in James

1:13. The word here translated 'temptation' (peirasmon) means originally 'trial' or 'test' as in James 1:2 and Vincent so takes it here. Braid Scots has it: 'And let us not be sifted.' But God does test or sift us, though he does not tempt us to evil. No one understood temptation so well as Jesus for the devil tempted him by every avenue of approach to all kinds of sin, but without success. In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus will say to Peter, James, and John: 'Pray that ye enter not into temptation' (Luke 22:40). That is the idea here. Here we have a 'Permissive imperative' as grammarians term it. The idea is then: 'Do not allow us to be led into temptation.'"

The singular and plural of "temptation" are used 23 times in the Bible, with two basic uses, which, unless understood, make for confusion.

- (1) A temptation is most often an **ordeal or trial** of being tested/tempted. Someone or something is used by God in the test to refine our holiness, with Satan (at times- but not always) being allowed by God to tempt us. Being confronted with a temptation is the act of being tested/tempted, and is a fact of everyday living in this world which even Jesus demonstrated. "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations [testings/temptings]" (Luke 22:28), i.e., in My confrontation with ordeals, trials, difficulties, etc. If Jesus was tested/tempted to sin, so will we be, for He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin [i.e., Jesus did NOT enter INTO the temptation, i.e., by giving in to sin]" (Hebrews 4:15). Jesus cautioned us of the confrontations we do, and will face. "18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you... 20 Remember the Word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:18,20). Sixteen of the above mentioned 23 verses are used in this way and are listed as follows:
  - "There hath no temptation [testing/tempting] taken you but such as is common to man: but God is Faithful, Who will not suffer [or, allow] you to be tempted [/tested] above that ye are able; but will with the temptation [testing/tempting] also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1Corinthians 10:13).
  - "And when the Devil had ended all the temptation [testing/tempting], he departed from Him for a season" (Luke 4:13).
  - "They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the Word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation [testing/tempting] fall away" (Luke 8:13).
  - "And my temptation [testing/tempting] which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus" (Galatians 4:14).
  - "Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation [testing/tempting] in the wilderness" (Psalm 95:8).
  - "Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation [testing/tempting] in the wilderness" (Hebrews 3:8).
  - "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation [testing/tempting]: for when he is **tried**, he shall receive the Crown of Life, which the LORD hath promised to them that love Him" (James 1:12).
  - "Because thou hast kept the Word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the Hour of Temptation [Testing/Tempting], which shall come upon all the world, to **try** them that dwell upon the Earth" (Revelation 3:10).
  - "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations [testings/temptings]" (Luke 22:28).
  - "Serving the LORD with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations [testings/temptings], which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews" (Acts 20:19).
  - "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations [testings/temptings]" (1Peter 1:6).
  - "The LORD knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of temptations [testings/temptings], and to reserve the

unjust unto the Day of Judgment to be punished" (2Peter 2:9).

- "2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall *into* divers temptations [testings/temptings]; 3 knowing this, that the **trying** of your faith worketh patience" (James 1:2-3).
- "Or hath God assayed to go and take Him a nation from the midst of another nation, by Temptations [Testings], by Signs, and by Wonders, and by War, and by a Mighty Hand, and by a Stretched Out Arm, and by Great Terrors, according to **all that the LORD your God did** for you in Egypt before your eyes?" (Deuteronomy 4:34).
- "The Great Temptations [Testings] which thine eyes saw, and the Signs, and the Wonders, and the Mighty Hand, and the Stretched Out Arm, whereby the LORD thy God brought thee out: so shall the LORD thy God do unto all the people of whom thou art afraid" (Deuteronomy 7:19).
- "The Great Temptations [Testings] which thine eyes have seen, the Signs, and those Great Miracles" (Deuteronomy 29:3).
- (2) A temptation is also the idea of, not just a test, but a failed test of entering INTO sin. A test allowed by God to refine is also used by "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1John 2:16), and *sometimes* even by Satan, to tempt us actually INTO sin. Seven of the above mentioned 23 verses are used in this way, and all of them use the word "INTO". "But they that will be [yearn for, or lust to be] rich **fall INTO temptation and a snare**, and INTO many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." The use of the word "temptation" in "Lead us not INTO temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Matthew 6:13), refers to this failure of entering INTO temptation by **succumbing** to "the sin which doth so easily beset us" (Hebrews 12:1). The seven instances in the New Testament of the word "temptation" being used in this way are as follows:
  - "And lead us not INTO temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Matthew 6:13).
  - "And lead us not INTO temptation; but deliver us from evil" (Luke 11:4).
  - "40 And when He was at the place, He said unto them, Pray that ye enter not INTO temptation... 46 And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter INTO temptation" (Luke 22:40,46).
  - "Watch and pray, that ye enter not INTO temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41).
  - "Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter INTO temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak" (Mark 14:38).
  - "But they that will be [yearn for, or lust to be] rich fall INTO temptation and a snare, and INTO many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition" (1Timothy 6:9).

So, the more used KJV meaning of the word "temptation" (as well also, as it is used in our own everyday English) refers to "temptation" as the **ordeal or trial** of being tested/tempted. God tests. Satan tempts. "There hath no temptation [or, testing/tempting] taken you but such as is common to man: but God is Faithful, Who will not **suffer** [or, allow] you to be tempted [or, tested] above that ye are able; but will with the temptation [testing/tempting] also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1Corinthians 10:13).

- (1Peter 1:7) "That the **trial** of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

The least used meaning of "temptation" implies imminent failure of the test/tempt. Our text, "Lead us not INTO temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Matthew 6:13) means, "Help us not to fail our testing/tempting by entering INTO sin, but deliver us from sin." **It does NOT mean that simply being tested/tempted is sin, but only that succumbing to temptation IS sin.** Since "all the Promises of God in [Christ] are Yea, and in Him Amen" (2Corinthians 1:20), we can lay hold of the Master's Instruction to "pray that ye enter not into temptation" (Luke 22:40), with the bold assurance that, indeed, "sin shall not have dominion over [us]" (Romans 6:14)!

**Excerpt Number 1:** From C. G. Finney:

"Every appetite and passion that has the ascendancy, and leads us into sin, must be crucified and its dominion entirely destroyed, or the soul is utterly lost." --from "Temptations Must Be Put Away" -- [http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin\\_1840/OE1840.Temptations.html](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin_1840/OE1840.Temptations.html) --, by Charles G. Finney (1792-1875) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html> --, "The Oberlin Evangelist" 1840 -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin.Evangelist.1840.html> --.

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

## 2. Temptations Exploit Desires

Temptations can come with or without the Devil's interference. It is true that the "Accuser of our brethren... which accused them before our God day and night" (Revelation 12:10) can, with God's permission, use our desires to tempt us to sin, but we do our own sinning. To credit Satan with our failures is to credit him with more than he can do. At the end of the day, just because the Devil lusts to be God doesn't make him Omnipotent Omnipresent, nor Omniscient. "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that Power belongeth unto God" (Psalm 62:11) and "if God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31). No, we take bottom line "free will" responsible for our own sin. "They which commit such things are worthy of death" (Romans 1:32).

- (Deuteronomy 30:19) "I call Heaven and Earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you Life and Death, Blessing and Cursing: therefore **choose** Life, that both thou and thy seed may live."
- (Joshua 24:15) "If it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, **choose** you this day whom ye will serve... but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."
- (Isaiah 7:15) "Refuse the evil, and **choose** the good."

And most often, we sin without the Devil's help. Our "flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41). We submit to "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1John 2:16). And as long as we are on this Earth, we shall be tempted by the desires of our flesh. But this is NOT sin. We have no excuse for sin; we cannot blame our flesh and we cannot blame the Devil. For, if we "walk in the Spirit" we "shall NOT fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16).

Sin is an act that we commit. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the Law: for sin is the transgression of the Law" (1John 3:4). Sin is committed with knowledge. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

- (John 9:41) "Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, **We see**; therefore your sin remaineth."
- (Luke 12:47) "And that servant, **which knew his lord's will**, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes."
- (2Peter 2:21) "For it had been better for them not to have known the way of Righteousness, than, **after they have known it**, to turn from the Holy Commandment delivered unto them."

It is in **consenting** to the temptation that sin is born. [To learn more about the nature of sin and the weakness of the flesh, please read, "Back to the Basics: The Principles of the Doctrine of Christ / E. Sin" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Exposition.Perf.III.html#Sin> --, from our article, "An Urgent Call to Christian Perfection" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Exposition.Perfection.html> --.]

James instructs us that God is NOT to be blamed for our failures. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man" (James 1:13). Temptations, whether from the Devil or from our flesh, attempt to exploit desires. "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust [literally, desire or craving-- a non-sinful desire], and enticed" (1:14). We have addressed the correct usage of the James 1 references to the word "lust" in the following excerpt.

### Excerpt Number 3:

#### "Every Man is Tempted of His Own Desires."

James, the half-brother of the LORD Jesus Christ, recorded the most succinct account of why we sin. '14 But

every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust [Greek, epithumia, meaning 'desire' or 'craving'], and enticed. 15 Then when lust [Greek, epithumia] hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death' (James 1:14-15). Before we conclude that we sin because of an inborn, sinful lust; take into account that the desire or craving described by the Greek word 'epithumia', is also used to describe a rightful desire:

(1) of the LORD Jesus, i.e., 'And He said unto them, With desire [Greek, epithumia] I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer' (Luke 22:15),

(2) of the Apostle Paul to the Philippians, i.e., 'For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire [Greek, epithumia] to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better' (Philippians 1:23),

(3) of one desiring the office of a bishop, i.e., 'If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth [Greek, epithumeo, also meaning 'lusteth'] a good work' (1Timothy 3:1), and

(4) of the Apostle Paul to the Thessalonians, i.e., 'But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire [Greek, epithumia]' (1Thessalonians 2:17).

Now, 'every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust [Greek, epithumia meaning 'desire'], and enticed' (James 1:14), relates that all moral beings are tempted by their own desires, as were both Lucifer in Heaven and Adam in the Garden of Eden, when both were yet in a sinless state. That desire may be compounded by the increasingly degenerative state of physical humanity, due to the effects of physical depravity. 'Who will render to every man according to his deeds' (Romans 2:6). And, at what time that desire becomes the supreme preference of the moral agent-- as opposed to the supreme love of God and an equal love of our neighbour as ourself (Matthew 22:37-39)-- then the desire becomes sin. 'Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin' (James 1:15). The certain result of sin is always death. 'And sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death' (1:15). **Both physical and spiritual death result from sinning.** 'For the wages of sin is death' (Romans 6:23). Therefore, we sin because we are tempted by our own desires, and most commonly by our physically depraved bodies. 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' (7:24). But, thanks be to God for the victory, for 'there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit' (8:1)!" --from "Must We Then Sin?" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Must.We.Then.Sin.html> --.

**Excerpt Number 4:** From C. G. Finney:

"Whatever is prized more than sin is hated, is our idol and our god. That is our god which we supremely regard. If we supremely love Jehovah, we shall sooner part with any thing than offend Him. Hence Christ teaches that, except a man hate his father, and mother, and brother, and sister, and even his own life, for Christ's sake, he cannot be his disciple. If any thing is loved or prized in comparison with God, we have no religion at all. If a man, therefore, does not dread sin more than he dreads death, he is no disciple of Christ. If there is any thing in the world that he loves more than he hates sin, any thing whatever, that would be spared, notwithstanding it kept him in bondage to sin, he is not, and cannot be a disciple of Christ. I speak of course of those things that can be put away by us, by an act of self-denial on our part. And if there is any kind or degree of self-denial which we would not prefer to being in sin, then, if the Bible is true, we are not the disciples of Christ. Let it be understood, now, that I do not speak of some very rare and high attainments in piety; but of a universal condition of discipleship. Christ has laid it down in as strong language as any in which it can be expressed. He uses the strongest language, without seeming to fear being misunderstood. He says, 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.'... If a man but love God, he will not, cannot rest until every cause of stumbling be searched out, and removed." --from "Temptations Must Be Put Away" -- [http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin\\_1840/OE1840.Temptations.html](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin_1840/OE1840.Temptations.html) --, by Charles G. Finney (1792-1875) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html> --, "The Oberlin Evangelist" 1840 -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin.Evangelist.1840.html> --.

*Temptations, being enticements (or testings/temptings), morally challenge our desires and cravings.* Mankind has many desires. There are morally good desires and morally bad desires. For the lost and immoral of this world, there is only "tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile" (Romans 2:9). It is a sad fact, but their moral rejection of God Almighty leaves them in complete despair. Even in the most common desire of the unbelievers to do prosperously well on this planet-- let's say, for example, as in farming-- the Scriptures teach that even "the plowing of the wicked, is sin" (Proverbs 21:4). Why? Because when "thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness" (Matthew 6:23). The condition is all or nothing-- no in-betweens-- no grays. Therefore, the unholy are completely unholy. In

God's sight, they cannot even have good desires, for "there is none good but One, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments" (Matthew 19:17). What about the backslidden "Christian" element? The warning to the unholy is **especially** extended to the unholy among professing Christians, i.e., "every one that nameth the Name of Christ" (2Timothy 2:19). Those who claim to be Christ's, who DON'T "depart from iniquity" (2:19), also have NO good desires. You are either good OR bad, and your corresponding prospects, hopes, confessions, and desires-- from God's point of view-- match completely. "Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit" (Matthew 12:33). There is NO intermediate ground here. "The ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire" (Matthew 3:10). If you are holy, then God is well pleased with you, and also with your desires. Your desires will not be corrupted by temptations (testings/temptings) because the Word of God is your Standard. "For the Commandment is a Lamp; and the Law is Light; and reproofs of Instruction are the Way of Life" (Proverbs 6:23). But, if you are NOT holy, then God is NOT pleased. "God is angry with the wicked every day" (Psalm 7:11). Your desires, when tested/tempted, will submit to sin completely. "12:26 The way of the wicked seduceth them... 4:19 The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble... 15:9 The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the LORD" (Proverbs 12:26, 4:19, 15:9). It is NOT POSSIBLE to be good and bad AT THE SAME TIME.

**Excerpt Number 5:** From C. G. Finney:

"As holiness consists in ultimate intention, so does sin. And as holiness consists in choosing the highest well-being of God and the good of the universe, for its own sake, or as the supreme ultimate end of pursuit; so sin consists in willing, with a supreme choice or intention, self-gratification and self-interest. Preferring a less to a greater good, because it is our own, is selfishness. All selfishness consists in a supreme ultimate intention. By an ultimate intention, as I have said, is intended that which is chosen for its own sake as an end, and not as a means to some other end. Whenever a moral being prefers or chooses his own gratification, or his own interest, in preference to a higher good, because it is his own, he chooses it as an end, for its own sake, and as an ultimate end, not designing it as a means of promoting any other and higher end, nor because it is a part of universal good. Every sin, then, consists in an act of will. It consists in preferring self-gratification, or self-interest, to the authority of God, the glory of God, and the good of the universe. It is, therefore, and must be, a supreme ultimate choice, or intention. Sin and holiness, then, both consist in supreme, ultimate, and opposite choices, or intentions, and cannot by any possibility, coexist." --from "Unity of Moral Action" --  
<http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Unity.of.Moral.Action.html> --, by Charles G. Finney (1792-1875) --  
<http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html> --.

"43 For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 44 **For every tree is known by his own fruit.** For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. 45 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh. 46 And **why call ye Me, LORD, LORD, and do not the things which I say?"**

(Luke 6:43-46).

**Excerpt Number 6:**

"'Awake to righteousness, and sin not.' The LORD never demands man to do anything halfway, if it were possible. 'No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon' (Matthew 6:24). There is no duality to man's moral choice. The choice is either sinful or holy, but never both. There is, in the truest sense, a unity of moral action. If we awake to righteousness, we will not be sinning. If we sleep to righteousness, we will be sinning. Notice that 1 Corinthians 15:34 does **not** allow the following duality of moral choice:

- (1) Awake to righteousness and sin, or
- (2) Awake to unrighteousness and sin not. Both combinations are absurd!

'Let us **lay aside** every weight, and the **sin** which doth so easily beset us' (Hebrews 12:1). How are we to 'run with patience the race that is set before us' (12:1)? This is the 'race' of faith. We cannot run with the weight of sin. To weigh ourselves down with sin is to stop the running of the race of faith. Either we 'lay aside... sin' and 'run... the race', or we weigh ourselves down with sin and cease to run the race. Do one or the other, but never both. There is, and must be, a unity of moral action.

'Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which **no man** shall see the LORD' (Hebrews 12:14). Holiness is a voluntary choice. Sin is a voluntary choice. Choose sin, and you must cease to be holy. Choose holiness,

and you must cease to be a sinner. Obviously, a man cannot be sinful against his will any more than he can be holy against his will." --from "An Urgent Call to Christian Perfection" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Exposition.Perfection.html> --.

**Excerpt Number 7:** From C. G. Finney:

"Those who secretly dislike the doctrine of entire holiness in this life, are not Christians. From the manner in which many professors of religion treat this question, it seems manifest that they feel a secret dislike to it. They seem indisposed to understand it. They appear to set themselves to object to and pervert it, rather than candidly and earnestly to investigate it, with a manifest desire that it might be true... It is no wonder that the Church do not believe in the doctrine of entire sanctification in this life. They are well satisfied that, with their present habits and indulgences, they cannot be entirely sanctified. And as these habits and indulgences appear to be stereotyped, they reject the doctrine of entire freedom from sin in this life, as unreasonable." --from "Temptations Must Be Put Away" -- [http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin\\_1840/OE1840.Temptations.html](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin_1840/OE1840.Temptations.html) --, by Charles G. Finney (1792-1875) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html> --, "The Oberlin Evangelist" 1840 -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin.Evangelist.1840.html> --.

Be warned in this, that "if therefore the Light that is in thee be darkness, how GREAT is that darkness! (Matthew 6:23). You may claim that you have good desires. You may claim that you "believe in the Light" (John 12:36), that you are "the children of Light" (12:36), and yet, if you say that you're "in the Light, and hateth [your] brother, [you are] in darkness even until now" (1John 2:9).

**Excerpt Number 8:** From C. G. Finney:

"Some indulge temptation and sin, until so blinded and hardened, as to feel no condemnation, and think that all is well. Their consciences have become stupefied and remain indignantly silent. And what they once esteemed to be sin they no longer regard as such. They can now complacently indulge in what would once have made them tremble... If any thing is found to be a temptation and a cause of stumbling to us, we should never indulge or defend it, because others indulge in the same thing. Perhaps they may do it without its being an overcomng stumbling-block to them. Or if it does overcome and lead them into sin, their going to destruction is certainly no good reason why we should do so." --from "Temptations Must Be Put Away" -- [http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin\\_1840/OE1840.Temptations.html](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin_1840/OE1840.Temptations.html) --, by Charles G. Finney (1792-1875) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html> --, "The Oberlin Evangelist" 1840 -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin.Evangelist.1840.html> --.

But, if the LORD's people, "by the fear of the LORD... depart from evil" (Proverbs 16:6), then their cravings are "good and right in the eyes of the LORD" (2Chronicles 14:2). Therefore, Scripture truly declares that "the desire of the righteous is ONLY good" (Proverbs 11:23).

WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT to discuss the desires of the righteous and the wicked? Because TEMPTATIONS STRIVE TO EXPLOIT OUR DESIRES. And **if your desires are NOT tempered by the Scriptures, your efforts to overcome temptations will only continue in their hell-bent direction.** "Holding forth the Word Of Life; that I may rejoice in the Day of Christ, that I have NOT run in vain, neither laboured in vain" (Philippians 2:16). Your success must depend on the Power of the LORD. "For it is God which worketh in you both **to will and to do** of His Good Pleasure" (Philippians 2:13).

- (Ezekiel 36:27) "I will put My Spirit within you, and **cause you to walk** in My Statutes, and ye shall keep My Judgments, and do them."
- (Romans 8:1) "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, **who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.**"
- (Galatians 5:16,25) "16 This I say then, **Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall NOT fulfil the lust of the flesh...** 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

**To be morally tempted is to be enticed to do evil.** God tests, but it is Satan who tempts. "The Serpent was more subtle than any beast... And he said unto the woman, Yea, HATH GOD SAID...?" (Genesis 3:1). We can either "do that which is right and good in the sight of the LORD: that it may be well with thee" (Deuteronomy 6:18), or we can allow our desires to bring forth the deadly fruit of sin. "15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. 16 DO NOT ERR, my beloved brethren" (6:15-16). Being confronted with temptation (or, being tempted) is eternally different than the literal committing of sin by entering INTO the temptation. When confronted with a moral temptation, a wrong desire is stirred. It is at this moment, that you must decide whether you will turn from the temptation, e.g. "choosing rather to suffer

affliction with the people of God" (Hebrews 11:25), or continue on "to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (11:25). IF you do not turn from the temptation by your own free will, then you allow your wrong desire (i.e., that which you know in your heart is clearly against God's Commands) to participate in sin. "Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver" (Psalm 50:22). **In consenting to the temptation, sin is born.** "Lead us not INTO temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Matthew 6:13) means, "Help us not to fail our testing/tempting by entering INTO sin, but deliver us from sin." It does NOT mean that simply being tested/tempted is sin, but only that succumbing to temptation IS sin.

"At what time that desire becomes the SUPREME PREFERENCE of the moral agent-- as opposed to the supreme love of God and an equal love of our neighbour as ourself (Matthew 22:37-39)-- then the desire becomes sin. 'Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin' (James 1:15)."  
--from "Must We Then Sin?" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Must.We.Then.Sin.html> --.

Confrontations with temptation, i.e., being tested/tempted, on the other hand, are simply the by-products of having this beautiful, God-given, free will.

- "Yea, and **all that will live Godly** in Christ Jesus [via, their free will] **shall suffer** persecution [via, temptations]" (2Timothy 3:12).
- "...that we must through **much tribulation** [via, temptations] **enter into the Kingdom** of God [via, their free will]" (Acts 14:22).

Temptations are common to every man.

"There hath no temptation [testing/tempting] taken you but such as is common to man: but God is Faithful, Who will not suffer [or, allow] you to be tempted [/tested] above that ye are able; but will with the temptation [testing/tempting] also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1Corinthians 10:13).

**Excerpt Number 9:** From C. G. Finney:

"What may be expedient for one to possess, or enjoy, may not be so for another. On account of natural temperament, or the influence of grace, one man may have possessions without being a temptation to him, to draw him away from God, which another cannot have. It is never safe for us to possess or indulge in any thing because another does so; for it may be that we are not equally able to bear it... Under some circumstances, we may not be able to bear, what under other circumstances we could bear without injury... From this subject it is easy to see the importance of watchfulness, and giving the utmost attention to the occasions of our stumbling, whether proximate or remote. When I was a young convert, I was struck with this resolution of Edwards [Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Jonathan.Edwards.html> --, former president of Princeton University]:

'Resolved, that when I do any conspicuously evil action, to trace it back till I come to the original cause, and then both carefully endeavor to do so no more, and to fight and pray with all my might against the original of it.'

It is no doubt of the utmost importance, that our eyes should be continually open to all the influences that are acting on us, and affecting our moral characters. Every article of dress, every thing in our employments, amusements, companions, books, diet, in all our habits, and in all our ways, whatever leads us into sin, should be put away... All the promises in regard to support under temptation and deliverance from it, are to be understood to be upon the condition that we avoid and put away all temptation as far as we possibly can. We often find promises to which no express condition is annexed, but where a condition is either plainly implied or expressed in some other part of the word of God. Take the promise in 1 Cor. 10:13: 'There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.' Here is a promise without any condition expressed with regard to deliverance from the power of temptation. But our text, is to be regarded as a condition annexed by Christ Himself to all promises of this stamp. And these passages together teach this doctrine, that we need not fall under the power of any temptation, that we cannot avoid or put away from us--that when we have gone the full length of sacrificing a right hand or a right eye, to be rid of temptation, that no unavoidable temptation shall come upon us, from which we shall not have grace to escape. And this is all that such promises can mean, when viewed in the light of the expressed or implied conditions of the gospel... Whenever all is done that can be done, to avoid temptation, and to put away

whatever brings us into bondage to sin, we may expect, and are bound to expect, that no temptation shall come upon us, from the power of which we are not able to escape. It is then entirely within the reach of every individual to live in a state of entire consecration, or sanctification, to God." --from "Temptations Must Be Put Away" -- [http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin\\_1840/OE1840.Temptations.html](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin_1840/OE1840.Temptations.html) --, by Charles G. Finney (1792-1875) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html> --, "The Oberlin Evangelist" 1840 -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin.Evangelist.1840.html> --.

Temptations are common in all situations-- "yet **not**" given INTO by the Godly.

"4:8 We are troubled on every side, yet **not** distressed; we are perplexed, but **not** in despair; 9 persecuted, but **not** forsaken; cast down, but **not** destroyed... 6:4 But in all things **approving ourselves** as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, 5 in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; 6 by pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned" (2Corinthians 4:8-9; 6:4-6).

"Take heed unto yourselves,  
lest ye forget the Covenant of the LORD your God, which He made with you,  
and make you a graven image, or the likeness of any thing,  
which the LORD thy God hath forbidden thee" (Deuteronomy 4:23),  
for it is in consenting to the temptation, that sin is born.

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

### 3. God Tests. Satan Tempts. But, Why Does God Allow Temptation?

In the first place, is it legitimate to suppose that God does *allow* us to be tempted? Yes, He does, because we only must look at what He allowed for Jesus immediately after the Saviour was baptized with water and the Holy Ghost at the Jordan River. "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil" (Matthew 4:1). Notice that the Father did *not* tempt the LORD Jesus. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man" (James 1:13). Neither did the Spirit lead the LORD Jesus INTO temptation, that is, INTO sin. "And lead us not INTO temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Matthew 6:13). The Holy God does not lead us INTO sinning against Himself. He is never the author of sin. Instead, the LORD Jesus' instruction to pray that the Father would "lead us not INTO temptation" (6:13) means, "LORD, please help us not to fail our testing/tempting by entering INTO sin, but deliver us from sin." It does NOT mean that simply being tested/tempted is sin, but only that succumbing to temptation IS sin.

- "Order my steps in Thy Word: and let not **any** iniquity have dominion over me" (Psalm 119:133).

That the Father would allow the Son to be "led up of the Spirit into the wilderness **to be tempted of the Devil**" (Matthew 4:1) is NOT unique to the Son of God only, for Jesus "was in all points tempted **like as we are**, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). God gave permission to Satan to "sift" (Luke 22:31) the Apostle Peter. And, remember that Job, a "perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil" (Job 1:8), could only have been tempted by Satan **after** the Almighty gave Satan permission to do so. "And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that [Job] hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD" (1:12). Though Job was sorely tried and finally stumbled, he repented and came "forth as gold" (23:10). Accordingly, Job is remembered for his patience. "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the LORD; that the LORD is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (James 5:11).

Again, "**Why** does God allow temptation (testing/tempting)?" From the very Beginning, the God Who created man for His "pleasure" (Revelation 4:11), intended man's moral likeness to Himself (i.e., "God created man in His own image" [Genesis 1:27]), to furnish the opportunity for pleasing Himself **by man choosing to obey** His Commandments. "If ye love Me, keep My Commandments" (John 14:15). Man's necessity to make a choice of obeying or disobeying the Creator's Commandment, i.e., "But of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17), was put to the test when Satan lied about the command, i.e., "Ye shall *not* surely die" (3:4), slandering God's character, and questioning God's benevolence toward man. "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (3:5). Thus, God allowed the Serpent to tempt our First Parents to sin, while intending the same occasion to be a test of their love, faith, and obedience to prove them, refine them, and fashion them into a greater portrait of Himself.

- "Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from Heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may **prove** [Hebrew, nasah, to put to the proof] them, whether they will walk in My Law, or no" (Exodus 16:4). "And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will **refine** them as silver is refined, and will **try** [Hebrew, bachan, to prove or test, as metals are tested in the crucible] them **as gold** is tried: they shall call on My Name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is My people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God" (Zechariah 13:9).

As long as man is in the flesh, he is in the place of testing. After surveying the Old Testament Scriptures where the Hebrew words nasah (to prove) and bachan (to try) occur, a noted Hebrew scholar wrote:

"A consideration of these passages leads to the conclusion that the various evils and struggles and difficulties which are prompted from within, or which befall man from without, are ordered by God as part of the great system of probation or testing to which every child of Adam is being subjected. The agency of the Evil One is permitted for the purpose of bringing a man into that sort of contact with evil which will serve to test his real principles." --concerning Temptation, from Chapter 25 "Satan, Tempter" of "Synonyms of the Old Testament: Their Bearing On Christian Doctrine" (1897) by Robert Girdlestone, of Oxford.

This probation can be seen in that man is continually being tested by God and tempted by the Devil. "2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; 3 knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience" (James 1:2-3). Just as schools have their final examinations, mankind awaits God's Final Judgment, where the Righteous will receive their final reward at the Bema Seat, and the Wicked will obtain their just punishment at the White Throne, after their failure at the final "Hour of Temptation" (Revelation 3:10). "5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the Day of Wrath and revelation of the Righteous Judgment of God; 6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds: 7 to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, Eternal Life: 8 but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the Truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and Anguish" (Romans 2:5-8). (See our article, "The Judgment Seat of Christ" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Judgment.Seat.of.Christ.html> --, which describes the judgment of the Righteous.)

The Father does lead His people into situations of testing, for the purpose of refining, "to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His Commandments, or no... that He might humble thee, and that He might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end" (Deuteronomy 8:2,16). **Though Satan's purpose in tempting us is our sinning, the Father's purpose in our testing is that we might be perfected.** "2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; 3 knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. 4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be **perfect and entire**, wanting nothing" (James 1:2-4). It is for this reason that God DOES lead us by His Spirit to be tempted by the Devil. For example, Adam and Eve were given the test of not eating something. "But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die" (Genesis 3:3). God gave the command of what not to do, and then gave the warning of what the penalty would be. Satan ("satan" literally means "adversary") then proceeded to tempt man through perverting God's Word. "And the Serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:4). Adam, after sinning, blamed his sin on God by saying, "The woman whom THOU gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat" (Genesis 3:12). The LORD knows that the common thing we will do when we sin, is to blame Him for giving us the test we just failed. "O LORD, why hast Thou made us to err from Thy Ways, and hardened our heart from Thy fear?" (Isaiah 63:17).

- (Habakkuk 2:13) "Behold, is it not of the LORD of hosts that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity?"
- (Romans 9:19-20) "Why doth He yet find fault? For who hath resisted His Will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus?"

Specifically, Scripture records that "God did tempt [Hebrew, nasah] Abraham" (Genesis 22:1), **but** the translation of the Hebrew word *nasah* as "tempt" could have been translated as "prove", as in testing Abraham, "for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man" (James 1:13).

"1 And it came to pass after these things, **that God did tempt Abraham**, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. 2 And He said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of... 6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. 7 And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said,

Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? 8 And Abraham said, My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together. 9 And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. 10 And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. 11 And the Angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. 12 And He said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto Him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me... 16 And said, By Myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son" (Genesis 22:1-2,6-12,16). "By faith Abraham, **when he was tried**, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the Promises offered up his only begotten son" (Hebrews 11:17).

Each choice of man has the opportunity of praising God, when he passes his trial of faith. "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1Peter 1:7). It is a grave mistake for the Saints to conclude that their trials were something out of the ordinary that were not supposed to happen. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you" (1Peter 4:12). It should not come as any surprise to the Saints of the New Covenant that God has been testing all along our love for Him. "The LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deuteronomy 13:3). The result of God's testing of the Righteous is that they are **confirmed in holiness**. "And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that His fear may be before your faces, **that ye sin not**" (Exodus 20:20). **God's proving of man is not to satisfy God's lack of knowing in advance what man will do, but that the moral process of choosing may be completed, to glorify God through man's passing of the test, and to justify God through His Judgment of those who give in to temptation.** 5 When Jesus then lifted up His eyes, and saw a great company come unto Him, He saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? 6 And this He said **to prove him** [Philip]: for He Himself knew what He would do" (John 6:5-7). God tests. Satan tempts.

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

#### 4. When I Am Weak, He Can Deliver

Testings cause us to remember our humanness. "7 And lest I [the Apostle Paul] should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. 8 For this thing I besought the LORD thrice, that it might depart from me. 9 And He said unto me, **My Grace [Help] is sufficient for thee: for My Strength is made perfect in weakness**. Most **gladly** therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, **that the Power of Christ may rest upon me**. 10 Therefore **I take pleasure** in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for **WHEN I AM WEAK, THEN AM I STRONG**" (2Corinthians 12:7-10). Testings keep us in NEED of our Saviour, "for in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, **He is able to succour** [or, help] **them that are tempted**" (Hebrews 2:18).

The Apostle Paul was mightily tested/tempted in his flesh. "13 Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the Gospel unto you at the first. 14 And **my temptation** [testing/tempting] **which was in my flesh** ye despised not, nor rejected" (Galatians 4:13-14). Jesus said, "I will show him [Paul] how great things he must suffer for My Name's sake" (Acts 9:16). And suffer greatly he did. Paul recorded it for us, by the Spirit of God: "23 in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. 24 Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. 25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness" (2Corinthians 11:23-27). And our brother "in bonds" set the example.

- (Ephesians 6:20) "For which I am an ambassador **in bonds**: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."
- (Colossians 4:3) "Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the Mystery of Christ, for which I am also **in bonds**."
- (Hebrews 13:3) "Remember them that are **in bonds, as bound with them**; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body."

Paul's great suffering worked great faith in him, fulfilling his desire to "make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us" (2Thessalonians 3:9). Dear Brother Paul was given to us in the Scripture, that we would "remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God: **whose faith follow**, considering the end of their conversation" (Hebrews

13:7). And "the end of [Paul's] conversation" was a faithful witness in martyrdom. "Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the Name of the LORD Jesus" (Acts 21:13). But Paul's testimony is clear: "10 thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, 11 persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: **but out of them all the LORD delivered me.** 12 Yea, and ALL that will live Godly in Christ Jesus *shall suffer* persecution" (2Timothy 3:10-12). Our testing works strong testimony as we stand *with the LORD* in His sufferings for the sake of the Gospel. "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our LORD, nor of me his prisoner: but **be thou partaker of the afflictions** of the Gospel according to the Power of God" (2Timothy 1:8).

For deliverance comes only from Him "Who gave Himself for our sins, **that He might deliver us from this present evil world**, according to the Will of God and our Father" (Galatians 1:4).

- (2Timothy 4:18) "And **the LORD shall deliver me from every evil work**, and will preserve me unto His Heavenly Kingdom: to Whom be Glory FOR EVER AND EVER. Amen."
- (Matthew 6:13) "And lead us not INTO temptation, but **deliver us from evil**: For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, FOR EVER. Amen."
- (1Peter 5:10-11) "10 But the God of all Grace, Who hath called us unto His Eternal Glory by Christ Jesus, **after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.** 11 To Him be Glory and Dominion FOR EVER AND EVER. Amen."
- (Psalm 34:7) "The Angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear Him, and **delivereth** them."

And, we will receive deliverance from the LORD when we choose correctly and "stand fast in the LORD" (1Thessalonians 3:8). "3 That no man should be moved [or concerned] by these afflictions: for yourselves know that **we are appointed thereunto.** 4 For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that **we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass**, and ye know. 5 For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, **I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.** 6 But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you: 7 therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you **in all our affliction and distress** by your faith: 8 For now we live, **IF ye stand fast in the LORD**" (3:3-8).

We cannot EXPECT God's deliverance if we refuse to "stand fast" in the afflictions that "we are appointed thereunto". If we don't "fight the good fight of faith" (1Timothy 6:12), and instead, in the temptation, choose to sin, then the LORD has every right to say to us, "I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that WORK iniquity" (Matthew 7:23). "The LORD knoweth them that are His... Let every one that nameth the Name of Christ **depart from iniquity**" (2Timothy 2:19).

**Excerpt Number 10:** From C. G. Finney:

"To continue the temptation and expect grace to overcome it, is to 'turn the grace of God into lasciviousness.'  
**If any form of temptation is allowed to have dominion over us, we are inevitably and for ever lost.**

- 1. Because it is a state of impenitence. He is an impenitent sinner, who prefers living in sin, to cutting off a right hand or plucking out a right eye.
- 2. To suffer a temptation that prevails over us to continue, when by an act of self-denial on our part we can put it away, is but to confirm a state of impenitence. Every day and hour we suffer ourselves to continue under such an influence, the bonds of impenitence are strengthening, until we are hopelessly delivered up to the dominion of our besetting sins.
- 3. To suffer any form of temptation to continue, which as a matter of fact leads us into sin--which temptation can be put away by us--is totally inconsistent with any degree of holiness. Suffering the temptation under such circumstances is an impenitent state of mind. It is the opposite of all holiness. It so supremely loves the darling object as to refuse to part with it, although as a matter of fact it leads us to sin against God! I say again, that this is not merely a state of defective piety; it must be a state of no piety at all... We see why so many, who admit the truth of the doctrine of entire sanctification in this life, do not practically embrace it.

They have some idol with which they will not part. Their right hand and their right eye are so dear to them, that they will not spare them for the sake of eternal life. Especially, they will not do this, as from the common sentiments of the Church, they think they can get along very well without. They seem to reason thus: 'We are about as good as common Christians, although to be sure, we are in the practice of many sins. The great mass of Christians do not believe that entire sanctification in this life is necessary or even attainable. We can, therefore, satisfy ourselves with but partial sanctification in this life, and still go to heaven. Why then should we throw away all our idols, merely for the sake of entire sanctification here, when partial sanctification will, in the judgment of the Church, and even of the ministers, do just as well. Now it is doubtful whether any such state is really attainable; and if it is, as I can get to heaven just as well without, I will not be so extravagantly foolish as to part with a right hand or a right eye, for the sake of being wholly without sin in this life.' Now this seems to be a statement in words of the real, though unexpressed sentiments, of many professors of religion. The truth is, they are unwilling to give up their sins, and they resolve, if possible, to get into heaven without. Let such hear the words of Christ: 'If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.'" --from "Temptations Must Be Put Away" -- [http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin\\_1840/OE1840.Temptations.html](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin_1840/OE1840.Temptations.html) --, by Charles G. Finney (1792-1875) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html> --, "The Oberlin Evangelist" 1840 -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin.Evangelist.1840.html> --.

We need to respond to our testings with confidence that He Who allows these tests, even leads us into them (as He, the Father, led His Son by His Spirit, into the wilderness to be tested), will also CAUSE us to triumph by His Strength, and "deliver us from evil" (Matthew 6:13). "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations... Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the Crown of Life, which the LORD hath promised to them that love Him" (James 1:2,12).

- (John 14:15) "If ye love Me, keep My Commandments."

"4 For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, Thou knowest it altogether. 5 **Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid Thine hand upon me...** 9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; 10 even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me" (Psalm 139:4-5,9-10). God leads us into battle, and **assuredly** He leads us out of the battle and into victory. "The LORD shall **preserve thy going out and thy coming in** from this time forth, and even for Evermore" (Psalm 121:8).

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

## 5. God Leads Us Just Like He Led Jesus

Is there a contradiction between "lead us not INTO temptation" and Jesus' being "led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil" (Matthew 4:1; 6:13)? No, both are true; **but they don't mean the same thing**. If it is correct to say that "lead us not INTO temptation" means lead us not INTO sinning (which it does), then, when you first think about it, it sounds like the Holy Spirit led Jesus INTO sinning (which He did NOT). The Scripture says that we are to pray that we will not be led "INTO temptation" (Matthew 6:13), i.e., INTO sin, or the giving in to sin. But, this is not the same thing as being led by the Spirit "to be tempted by the Devil" (Matthew 4:1). The Spirit never leads any man INTO sin or sinning. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, NEITHER TEMPTETH HE ANY MAN" (James 1:13). That kind of "leading" comes only from one source-- the Devil. "The Serpent beguiled me [Eve], and I did eat" (Genesis 3:13). But, the Spirit does lead us to be tempted by the Devil, and it happens every time "the Accuser of our brethren" (Revelation 12:10) is given permission by God to do so.

- (Luke 22:31-32) "And the LORD said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may **sift** you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee, **that thy faith fail not**: and when thou art converted [or, reconverted, i.e., returned from backsliding], strengthen thy brethren."

Again, there is the possibility that being led by the Spirit to be tempted by the Devil **might** result in our sinning. Why would God allow or author it? And, why, when in prayer, would we ask the Father, "Lead us not INTO temptation", if God never tempts? "9 After this manner therefore pray ye... 13 Lead us not INTO temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Matthew 6:9,13). We cannot possibly be asking the Father that He, Himself, not lead us "INTO" sin, because He NEVER leads His children to "evil" or "death", "for the wages of sin is death; but the Gift of God is Eternal Life through Jesus Christ our LORD" (Romans

6:23). His Will for us is exactly the opposite of walking INTO sin. "They also do NO iniquity: they walk in His Ways" (Psalm 119:3).

To know God's Character is to love Him for His Character, for "17 every Good Gift and every Perfect Gift is from Above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights, with Whom is NO VARIABleness, NEITHER SHADOW OF TURNING. 18 Of His Own Will begat He us with the Word of Truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (James 1:17-18). The Spirit of God wants us to pray that the LORD would **not permit us to fail our test** and succumb to the temptation. "Lead us not INTO [or, do not let us succumb to] temptation, but deliver us FROM evil." Therefore, LORD, "lead us not INTO temptation" can only mean, "**LORD, please do not let me sin.**"

**Excerpt Number 11:** From C. G. Finney:

**"Our next petition is--** 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.'

And what is implied in this?

A fear and dread of sin;--a watchfulness against temptation; an anxious solicitude lest by any means we should be overcome and fall into sin. On this point Christ often warned his disciples, and not them only, but what He said unto them, He said unto all,--'Watch.'

A man not afraid of sin and temptation cannot present this petition in a manner acceptable to God.

You will observe, moreover, that this petition does not by any means imply that God leads men into temptation in order to make them sin, so that we must needs implore of Him not to lead us thus, lest He should do it. No, that is not implied at all; but the spirit of the petition is this;--O Lord, Thou knowest how weak I am, and how prone to sin; therefore let thy providence guard and keep me that I may not indulge in anything whatever that may prove to me a temptation to sin. Deliver us from all iniquity--from all the stratagems of the devil. Throw around us all thy precious guardianship, that we may be kept from sinning against Thee. How needful this protection, and how fit that we should pray for it without ceasing!" --from "Conditions of Prevailing Prayer- No. 2" -- [http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin\\_1847/OE1847.Prevailing.Prayer.2.html](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin_1847/OE1847.Prevailing.Prayer.2.html) --, by Charles G. Finney (1792-1875) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html> --, "The Oberlin Evangelist" 1847 -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin.Evangelist.1840.html> --.

Since "we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in ALL points tempted like as we are, YET WITHOUT SIN" (Hebrews 4:15), and since the Father DOES lead His people into situations of testing, then we can conclude that He DID lead Jesus, by His Spirit, into TESTINGS in the wilderness-- not just to be tempted of the Devil. The TEMPTATIONS OF THE DEVIL in the wilderness were the TESTINGS that the Spirit led Him to. "1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil. 2 And when He had FASTED forty days and forty nights [testings of God overcoming the temptations of the flesh and the Devil], He was afterward an HUNGERED. 3 And when the tempter came to Him, he said, IF THOU BE the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread" (Matthew 4:1-3). The Devil's temptations are USED by God for His testings of us for our perfecting.

- "4 But He answered and said, **It is written**, Man shall not live by bread alone, but **by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God**. 5 Then the Devil taketh Him up into the Holy City, and setteth Him on a pinnacle of the Temple, 6 and saith unto Him, If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down: for **it is written** [Satan perverts Scripture], He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee: and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone. 7 Jesus said unto him, **It is written again**, Thou shalt not tempt the LORD thy God. 8 Again, the Devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; 9 and saith unto Him, All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me. 10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for **it is written**, Thou shalt worship the LORD thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve. 11 Then the Devil leaveth Him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto Him" (Matthew 4:4-11).
- "And immediately the Spirit driveth Him into the wilderness. And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto Him" (Mark 1:12-13).
- "1 And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, 2 being forty days tempted of the Devil. And in those days He did eat nothing: and when they were ended, He afterward hungered. 3 And the Devil said unto Him, If Thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. 4

And Jesus answered him, saying, **It is written**, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word of God. 5 And the Devil, taking Him up into an high mountain, showed unto Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6 And the Devil said unto Him, All this power will I give Thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. 7 If Thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be Thine. 8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: **for it is written**, Thou shalt worship the LORD thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve. 9 And he brought Him to Jerusalem, and set Him on a pinnacle of the Temple, and said unto Him, If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down from hence: 10 **for it is written**, He shall give His angels charge over Thee, to keep Thee: 11 And in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone. 12 And Jesus answering said unto him, **It is said**, Thou shalt not tempt the LORD thy God. 13 And when the Devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from Him **for a season**" (Luke 4:1-13).

Satan uses Scripture, literally to attempt "to pervert the right ways of the LORD" (Acts 13:10). "**If Thou be the Son of God** [tempting the LORD with pride], cast Thyself down from hence [a suicidal act]: **for it is written**, He shall give His angels charge over Thee, to keep Thee [a misuse of Scripture]" (Luke 4:9-10). But, Jesus is "not ignorant of his devices" (2Corinthians 2:11), and counters his attack by "**rightly** dividing the Word of Truth" (2Timothy 2:15). "And Jesus answering said unto him, **It is said**, Thou shalt not tempt the LORD thy God" (Luke 4:12).

Remember when Satan tempted Eve? "Now the Serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, HATH GOD SAID...?" (Genesis 3:1). The correct response to this kind of attack is to take "the Sword of the Spirit, which is the WORD OF GOD" (Ephesians 6:17), and parry the attack with "Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the WORD OF GOD, **and KEEP IT**" (Luke 11:28). And then to "stand fast in the faith" (1Corinthians 16:13) and brandish "the Sword" to the defense of God's Word with a judicious flourish of, "WHAT SAITH the Scripture?" (Romans 4:3). For "the WORD OF GOD is not bound" (2Timothy 2:9). Overcome Satan by the One Whose "Name is called The WORD OF GOD" (Revelation 19:13), and "be strong in the LORD, and in the Power of His Might" (Ephesians 6:10). Don't give in to Satan's temptation by sinning. "11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Ephesians 6:11-13).

- (James 4:7-8) "7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded."
- (1Peter 5:6,8-9) "6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time... 8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 9 whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."
- (Ephesians 4:27) "Neither give place to the Devil."

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

## 6. The Test of the Cross

The Supreme Test was given to God's Son. It was the Cross. "7 Who in the days of His flesh, when He [the Son] had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him [the Father] that was able to save Him [the Son] from death, and was heard [not in that He no longer had to die, but] in that He feared [that the Son respected and loved the Father enough to die as He had been sent to do]; 8 Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; 9 and being made perfect, He became the Author of Eternal Salvation unto all them that obey Him" (Hebrews 5:7-9). If the Captain of our Salvation had to be perfected by His suffering, how can we expect not to suffer for our perfecting, nor to escape Divinely allowed temptations? "For it became Him, for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto Glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation **perfect through sufferings**" (Hebrews 2:10).

**Excerpt Number 12:** From C. G. Finney:

"**Christ, as a man, was obliged to watch and deny Himself**, and keep Himself clear of those besetments and temptations that would naturally overcome Him. His Apostles followed in his steps. Paul found it indispensable to keep his body under, to mortify his members which were upon the earth; and it is an

unalterable law of the kingdom of grace, that men must put away those weights and easily besetting sins that hinder and overcome them, or they will never enter into the kingdom of God." --from "Temptations Must Be Put Away" -- [http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin\\_1840/OE1840.Temptations.html](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin_1840/OE1840.Temptations.html) --, by Charles G. Finney (1792-1875) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html> --, "The Oberlin Evangelist" 1840 -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin.Evangelist.1840.html> --.

Jesus "was in ALL points tempted like as we are" (Hebrews 4:15). So, imagine ourselves about to face the painful and horrible death of crucifixion, even knowing that it was God's Will that we be martyred, would we not do as Jesus did when He "fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O My Father, IF IT BE POSSIBLE, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39)? And, as He shared with His sleeping disciples, did Jesus not know that human beings should "watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (26:41)? Would Jesus not fight the same terror we would have to fight? "O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy Will be done" (26:42). "Father, IF Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless NOT My will, but Thine, be done" (Luke 22:42).

It was NOT that our Jesus was unwilling. But, it was a fight to overcome His flesh, in that, even with an angel ministering to Him, as angels do for us humans (e.g., "For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in ALL thy ways" [Psalm 91:11]), Jesus fought hard **just to get to the Cross**. "And there appeared an angel unto Him from Heaven, strengthening Him. And being in an agony He prayed MORE earnestly: and His sweat was as it were **great drops of blood** falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:43-44). Jesus needed to be resolved as "flint" to finish His course. "5 The LORD GOD hath opened Mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. 6 I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting. 7 For the LORD GOD will help Me; therefore shall I not be confounded: **therefore have I set My face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed**" (Isaiah 50:5-7). [Please read "What Happened in Gethsemane?" -- [http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Edit\\_Gethsemane.html](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Edit_Gethsemane.html) --]

With the most dreadful moment of all still before Jesus, when the Father would put upon His Precious, Pure, Son "WITHOUT SIN" (Hebrews 4:15), "our sins: and not... ours only, but also... the sins of the whole world" (1John 2:2), that the Father would then NOT desire to look upon His Only Begotten, then covered with our ugliness, but would actually turn away, allowing His Plan of Salvation FOR US to succeed.

"The LORD [God the Father] hath laid ON Him [God the Son] the iniquity of us all... Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Isaiah 53:6; Matthew 27:45-46).

And this turning away also demonstrates to us the Father's **separation** from sin, insomuch as to turn away even from "His Only Begotten Son" (John 3:16), Who actually became Sin for us. "For He [the Father] hath made Him [the Son] to be Sin for us, Who knew no sin" (2Corinthians 5:21). Can God ask anything less of us, but that we would follow His most excellent example, and let nothing of the sin of this world or personal sin of any kind "separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our LORD." "35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?... 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our LORD" (Romans 8:35,39). But sin separates us from God. "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2). [Please read "Must We Then Sin?" Or, A Response to the Doctrine of Sin Nature or the Doctrine of Original Sin. Or, A Clarification of What is Sin, Why We Sin, and How Not to Sin -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Must.We.Then.Sin.html> --.]

Physical testings are a joyful bond that we share in common with our Saviour and Deliverer, our LORD Jesus. "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the LORD Jesus, **that the Life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body**" (2Corinthians 4:10). The Apostle Paul wanted us to keep "looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; Who for the joy that was set before Him **endured The Cross**, despising the shame" (Hebrews 12:2). And soon, our Reward, Who victoriously "is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God" (12:2), will greet us "face to face" (1Corinthians 13:12), and by His side we evermore shall stay. "21:3 And I heard a great voice out of Heaven saying, Behold, the Tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and **God Himself shall be with them**, and be their God... 22:3 And there shall be no more curse: but the Throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; **and His servants shall serve Him**: 4 And they shall see His face; and His Name shall be in their foreheads. 5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the LORD God giveth them Light: and they shall reign FOR EVER AND EVER" (Revelation 21:3; 22:3-5).

"For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, FOR EVER. **Amen**" (Matthew 6:13).

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

## 7. Overcoming Temptation Prevents Entering INTO Sin

Entering INTO "temptation" implies imminent failure of the test/tempt. To prevent failure, preparation must be made, or else we will repeat our sin, "as a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly" (Proverbs 26:11). Knowing past failures, "a prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished" (Proverbs 22:3). Scripture clearly teaches us, one of the first things we must do to prevent sin is to pray. "Lead us not INTO temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Matthew 6:13). Prayer demonstrates to the LORD that we believe Him and depend upon Him. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not INTO temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41). Prayer will secure victory over sin. "He said unto them, Pray that ye enter not INTO temptation" (Luke 22:40).

Let us verbally paint the picture. The testing from the LORD and the tempting from "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1John 2:16)-- as well as what the Devil might be allowed to add-- BEGINS. You see the dangerous situation approaching. You watch it build. You feel the anger or frustration trying to get the death grip over you. Your resolve feels threatened, as your flesh weakens more. Danger! Danger! The Holy Spirit warns us! "This is the way, walk ye in it" (Isaiah 30:21)! Quick! Run to Jesus, "casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you" (1Peter 5:7). He will have "mercy, and [give] Grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

How does The Victory actually take place? What are the mechanics of it? **"IF** the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead **shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit** that dwelleth in you" (Romans 8:11). And you will **"know Him, and the Power of His Resurrection**, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being **made conformable unto His death**" (Philippians 3:10). "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins... being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (1Peter 3:18). Jesus is our Example, for He "was in **ALL points tempted like as we are, YET WITHOUT SIN** [i.e., Jesus did NOT enter INTO the temptation, i.e., by giving in to sin]" (Hebrews 4:15). This is how Jesus did it! This is how Jesus means for us to do it! "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:13-14). Who are "the sons of God"? "As many as are **led** by the Spirit" to "**mortify** the deeds of the body". In other Words, "they that are Christ's **have crucified the flesh** with the affections and lusts" (Galatians 5:24), "if so be that we suffer with Him" (Romans 8:17).

**NOTE:** Do you see why those who are NOT ready for the LORD Jesus, our Soon Coming Bridegroom [Please read, "A Tale of Ten Virgins" -- [http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/A.Tale.of.Ten.Virgins.html#Ten Virgins](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/A.Tale.of.Ten.Virgins.html#Ten%20Virgins) --], cry out, "LORD, LORD, open to us" (Matthew 25:11), and He answers them, "Verily I say unto you, I know you not" (25:12). "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit... But ye are NOT in the flesh, but IN the Spirit, IF SO BE that the Spirit of God dwell IN you" (Romans 8:5). And who are those who have the Spirit of God IN them?

1. Those who obey Him. "The Holy Ghost, Whom God hath given to them that obey Him" (Acts 5:32).
2. Those who have not forced Him away. "Quench [literally, extinguish] not the Spirit" (1Thessalonians 5:19).

### Excerpt Number 13:

"The Foolish Virgins are the Backslidden Church. They walk as if there was no God who watched or cared. 'They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no Oil with them' (Matthew 25:3). Of what use is a lamp without fuel? 'Then Samuel took the horn of Oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward' (1Samuel 16:13). Oil represents the Holy Spirit. 'And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, Whom God hath given to them that **obey Him**' (Acts 5:32). God's **grace**, not our obedience, **merits** the Holy Spirit; but our **obedience is necessary for the abiding** of the Holy Spirit. 'Quench not [literally, extinguish not] the Spirit' (1Thessalonians 5:19). Make no mistake, foolishness-- as used in this context-- is not accidental, but purposely unconcerned about obedience. Foolishness, so represented, is sin. 'The thought of foolishness is sin' (Proverbs 24:9)." --from "A Tale of Ten Virgins" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/A.Tale.of.Ten.Virgins.html> --

"This I say then, Walk IN the Spirit, and ye shall NOT FULFIL the lust of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16). This is a given Fact from the mouth of God. Therefore, "if we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (5:25). And if you don't "walk in the Spirit", how can you claim to *have* the Spirit, Who is only "given to them that obey Him" (Acts 5:32)? Therefore, "if any man

have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Romans 8:9), and so forces the LORD to say, "I know you not" (Matthew 25:12).

As mentioned before, A. T. Robertson put it this way, "Here we have a 'Permissive imperative' as grammarians term it. The idea is then: 'Do not allow us to be led into temptation.'" It is a cry for help, "LORD, don't allow it! Give me overcoming! Don't let me fail my test!" "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son" (Revelation 21:7). As a child of God, we run to Him, cry to Him, and cling to Him. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father [literally, Daddy]" (Galatians 4:6). And "He that spared not His Own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall he not with Him also freely give us ALL things?" (Romans 8:32), even "as His Divine Power hath given unto us ALL things that pertain unto **Life and Godliness**, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to **Glory and Virtue**" (2Peter 1:3). **Of course He will help us pass our test!** Of course He will help us to NOT BE LED "INTO temptation" but will "deliver us from evil" (Matthew 6:13). Jesus came to Earth for this very reason-- "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10) and to "destroy the works of the Devil" (1John 3:8). He saves us from sin and from sinning!

- (1John 5:4) "For whatsoever is born of God **overcometh** the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."
- (Revelation 2:7,26) "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that **overcometh** will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God... And he that overcometh, and keepeth My Works unto The End, to him will I give power over the nations."
- (Revelation 3:5) "He that **overcometh**, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels."
- (Revelation 3:12) "Him that **overcometh** will I make a pillar in the Temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the Name of My God, and the Name of the City of My God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of Heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My New Name."
- (Revelation 3:21) "To him that **overcometh** will I grant to sit with Me in My Throne, **even as I also overcame**, and am set down with My Father in His Throne."
- (Revelation 21:7) "He that **overcometh** shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son."

It is only the Holy Spirit that can reveal our sense of need to us. "I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins" (Jeremiah 17:10). Our prayer is for Him to do so. "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23-24). And just as surely as we ask, He will answer. "The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts" (Proverbs 17:3).

1. **Make a List.** After the LORD has helped you to "break up your fallow ground" (Hosea 10:12), make a list of your weaknesses and "cares of this life" (Luke 21:34).

2. **Find the Promises.** With your list in hand, match your needs with the corresponding character traits of the LORD Jesus that promise victory for you. "Put ye on the LORD Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Romans 13:14). For instance, if materialism is your temptation, by "looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2) you can "love not the world, neither the things that are in the world" (1John 2:15). The LORD said, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15) for you become "choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection" (Luke 8:14). He also said, "24 How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God! 25 For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God. 26 And they that heard it said, Who then can be saved? 27 And He said, The things which are impossible with men **are possible with God**" (Luke 18:24-27). Remember, it is the Promises that lie in the names, capacities, offices, and relations of our LORD that cause us to be like Him. Our goal is "to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Romans 8:29), "because as He is, so are we in this world" (1John 4:17). [Please read "The Relations of Christ to the Believer" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Relations.Christ.Believer.html> -- by C. G. Finney -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html> -- and "In Christ Jesus" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/In.Christ.Jesus.html> -- by A. T. Pierson -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/A.T.Pierson.html> -- for great assistance in seeking Christ as the Supply for your every need.]

Excerpt Number 14:

"Jesus implied that everyone, including His Human Self, has tendencies of habit, circumstances of the flesh, and predispositions of circumstances in the world, that will inevitably cause us to sin *unless* identified and **countered by a strength of God's character, that can be claimed in faith as a Promise**. 'For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour [literally, help] them that are tempted' (Hebrews 2:18). For instance, if I understand that I have a tendency to lose my patience with a certain person in a familiar circumstance, i.e., the 'sin which doth so easily beset us' (12:1), then it behooves me to seek by prayerful searching of the Word for a revelation of the LORD's strength of patience, that the Holy Spirit may apply to me, should the circumstance arise yet again. 'A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished' (Proverbs 22:3). Further, Christ Jesus 'pleased not Himself' (Romans 15:3), leaving me the example of patience 'for our learning' (15:4); thereby, holding forth the opportunity that the 'God of patience and consolation [would] grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus' (15:5). This is the anatomy of praying not to be led INTO temptation. 'For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an Example, that ye should follow His steps' (1Peter 2:21).

If we are to be holy, we must not be continually falling prey to sin. 'Follow peace with all men, and Holiness, without which no man shall see the LORD' (Hebrews 12:14). And, if we seek not to be caught perpetually in the teeth of sin, we need to be continually claiming Promises in prayer not to succumb to temptation. 'There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is Faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it' (1Corinthians 10:13)." --from "How to Promote the Beauties of Holiness" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/The.Beauty.of.Holiness.2.html> --.

**3. Praying the Word.** After you have made your list and found your Promises, pray. Scripture clearly teaches us, one of the first things we must do to prevent sin is to pray. "Lead us not INTO temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Matthew 6:13). Prayer demonstrates to the LORD that we believe Him and depend upon Him. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not INTO temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41). Prayer will secure victory over sin. "He said unto them, Pray that ye enter not INTO temptation" (Luke 22:40).

**Excerpt Number 15:**

"Pray Not to Be Led Into Temptation... Christians underestimate the necessity of prayer in overcoming temptation, perhaps because they incorrectly assume that God's unwillingness that we commit any kind of sin, prevents Him from allowing the world, the flesh, or the Devil to tempt us. Remember, Christ 'was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin' (Hebrews 4:15). The purpose of God allowing temptation is to get us to turn to Him for help. 'Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find Grace to help in time of need' (4:16). [R. A. Torrey's 'How to Pray' -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/How.to.Pray.html> -- gives insight into the basics of prayer.]

Our LORD Jesus Christ was allowed by the Father to be tempted in the wilderness by the *flesh* (i.e., '2 And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward an hungred. 3 And when the Tempter came to Him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread' [Matthew 4:2-3]), and to be tempted by the *world* (i.e., '8 Again, the Devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; 9 and saith unto Him, All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me' [4:8-9]). The LORD Jesus countered and overcame the temptation by resorting to the help of the Word of God each time, i.e., 'It is written' (4:4, 7, 10). Our victory over temptation is no different. You must also 'resist stedfast in the faith' (1Peter 5:9) before Satan 'will flee from you' (James 4:7). If the Father saw fit to *allow* His Only Begotten Son to be tempted, to benefit us by the example of Jesus overcoming by actively and purposely depending on the Word of God, then the Father *will also allow* us to be tempted to glorify Himself by our overcoming temptation. 'Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man' (James 1:13). Also, remember that the Apostle Peter denied the LORD Jesus after he failed to avail himself of the opportunity to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane, because he was tired and did not see the need. 'Watch and pray, that ye enter not INTO temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the

flesh is weak' (Matthew 26:41). [Read our editorial, 'What Happened in Gethsemane?' -- [http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Edit\\_Gethsemane.html](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Edit_Gethsemane.html) -- for more concerning this.] --from "How to Promote the Beauties of Holiness" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/The.Beauty.of.Holiness.2.html> --.

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

## Conclusion

Testings are from the hand of God the Father for our perfecting. Temptings are from the Devil, but God allows them, also for our perfecting. "Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good" (Genesis 50:20). Jesus was "led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil" (Matthew 4:1). In this same way, Job was led to be tempted by Satan. "8 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the Earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?... 12 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand" (Job 1:8,12). But, the Spirit of God does NOT lead us INTO sin. "9 After this manner therefore pray ye... 13 Lead us not INTO temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Matthew 6:9,13). In fact, **the Spirit of God wants us to pray that the LORD would not permit us to fail our test and succumb to the temptation.** "Lead us NOT INTO [or, do not let us succumb to] temptation, but deliver us FROM evil." Or, "**LORD, please do not let me sin.**"

The "wilderness" experience that Jesus endured for "forty days and forty nights" (Matthew 4:2) can teach us many things. But, the lesson of being delivered "from evil" (6:13), in Jesus' being led TO testing by God, or His being led INTO temptation" by the Devil, depends upon the victory we **must** learn from Christ Jesus alone. "Nay, in all these things we are **more** than conquerors **through Him** that loved us" (Romans 8:37).

- (1Corinthians 15:57) "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our LORD Jesus Christ."
- (2Corinthians 2:14) "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of His Knowledge by us in every place."
- (Hebrews 2:15,18) "And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage... For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour [help] them that are tempted."

**Jesus became as human as you and I to prove that we can, like Himself, overcome the Devil and NOT give in to sin.** He demonstrated that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every WORD that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). With each temptation that the Devil cunningly used to try and ensnare our LORD Jesus, the Record is given to us of the method Jesus used for overcoming the temptations and the Devil-- "It is written", "It is written again", and "It is written" (Matthew 4:4,7,10). **God's Word is our Defense**, "His Truth shall be thy Shield and Buckler" (Psalm 91:4), and "His Name is called The Word of God" (Revelation 19:13)!

**Excerpt Number 16:** From C. G. Finney:

"If we are not enabled to put away and overcome temptation, it is because we have no Savior. The Savior's name is Jesus, because He saved his people from their sins. If, therefore, you are not enabled to overcome your sins, it is because you reject the Savior." --from "Temptations Must Be Put Away" -- [http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin\\_1840/OE1840.Temptations.html](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin_1840/OE1840.Temptations.html) --, by Charles G. Finney (1792-1875) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html> --, "The Oberlin Evangelist" 1840 -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin.Evangelist.1840.html> --.

Jesus is our Saviour from sin **and from sinning**. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might DESTROY the works of the Devil" (1John 3:8). He came "for this purpose" and He died "for this purpose". "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" (Hebrews 2:14).

**Excerpt Number 17:** From C. G. Finney:

"And now, whatever you do, do quickly. Will you put away now and for ever those temptations that overcome you, which can be put away by you? And will you now commit yourselves to the keeping and protection of the Lord Jesus Christ, to sustain you against the power of those temptations which you cannot avoid? Or will you hold on to your idols but a little longer, until all is lost. Again I say, whatever you do, do quickly. Every moment's delay is grieving the Holy Spirit. And even while I speak, unseen hands may be ready to toll the knell of eternal death over your soul! while you sink, weeping and wailing, down the sides of the pit!

Professor of religion, and you, impenitent sinner, do you realize, that while I speak the curtain may be ready to drop, the scene close, and your soul shut up to the horrors of the second death! O, do you know, 'that now of a long time your judgment lingereth not, and your damnation slumbereth not'--that the Spirit is grieved--God is provoked; Divine forbearance almost exhausted--and your soul for ever lost! Again I say, what you do, do quickly." --from "Temptations Must Be Put Away" -- [http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin\\_1840/OE1840.Temptations.html](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin_1840/OE1840.Temptations.html) --, by Charles G. Finney (1792-1875) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html> --, "The Oberlin Evangelist" 1840 -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin.Evangelist.1840.html> --.

It is perhaps the final indication that a misunderstanding of the basic doctrines of God, righteousness, holiness, testing, temptation, sin, and judgment, would conclude with the "Hour of Temptation" (Revelation 3:10) that precedes the Second Coming of the LORD Jesus Christ. When we stumble over the "first principles of the oracles of God" (Hebrews 5:12), we will be unable to understand the doctrines of eschatology-- the study of Last Things-- *because we misunderstood the first things*. Our only protection from sinfully stumbling over the basic doctrines *or* the doctrines of eschatology, would be the Spirit of God's preservation of those who have **a willing heart**. "16 Jesus answered them, and said, My Doctrine is not Mine, but His [the Father's] that sent Me. 17 If any man **will do His Will, he shall know** of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself" (John 7:16-17). The plain Promise of the LORD to His people preceding the time of His appearing the Second Time, is that they will be kept from the "Hour of Temptation" (Revelation 3:10), because they have lovingly kept His Word. "Because thou hast kept the Word of My Patience, I also will keep thee from the Hour of Temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the Earth" (Revelation 3:10). Just as we are promised to escape temptation **without sinning**, i.e., "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is Faithful, Who will not suffer [allow] you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also **make a way to escape**, that ye may be able to bear it" (1Corinthians 10:13), we are promised to be kept from the "Hour of Temptation" (Revelation 3:10). If the Faithful God cannot keep us from sinning, neither will He be able to keep us from the "Hour of Temptation" (3:10); but, **if He is able to "make a way to escape"** (1Corinthians 10:13) **from sinning, then surely He can Pre-Tribulationally Rapture His Watching and Waiting Saints**. "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted **worthy to escape** all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36). (See our article, "Must There Be a Pre-Tribulation Rapture?" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Must.Pre.Trib.Rapture.html> --, for a Scriptural look at the event.)

#### Related Topics:

##### Victory Over Temptation

-- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Victory.Over.Temptation.html> --

##### Christ's Human Sinlessness Proves the Justice of God's Demand for Man's Sinlessness

-- [http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Edit\\_Christ\\_s.Sinlessness.html](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Edit_Christ_s.Sinlessness.html) --

##### The Amazing Humanity of Jesus Christ

-- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Jehovah/Amazing.Humanity.of.Jesus.html> --

##### Escaping the Lie of the Serpent

-- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Escaping.the.Lie.html> --

##### The Subtle Trap

-- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/The.Subtle.Trap.html> --

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## What the Bible Says About Debt

"Owe no man any thing"

(Romans 13:8).

by Charles G. Finney

{1792-1875}

-- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html> --

from "The Oberlin Evangelist" Publication of Oberlin College

-- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Finney.Oberlin.Evangelist.html> --

Lecture XIII  
July 31, 1839

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Text.--Rom. 13:8: "Owe no man any thing."

In discussing this subject I design to show:

*I. The meaning of the text.*

*II. That to be in debt is sin.*

*III. The duty of those who are in debt.*

### **I. I am to show the meaning of the text.**

The meaning of this text, like most others, is to be learned from a careful examination of the verses in its connection. The Apostle begins the chapter by enforcing the duty of obedience to civil magistrates.

"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. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive unto themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God unto thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must be subject not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For, for this cause pay ye tribute also, for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing."

They are the servants of God, employed for your benefit. You are therefore to pay them tribute; i.e. give them the support which their circumstances require.

In the light of this and various other passages of scripture, I have often wondered how it was possible that any person could call in question the duty of obeying civil magistrates. Or how they could call in question the right and duty of magistrates to inflict civil penalties, and even capital punishment, where the nature of the case demands it. Certainly this passage recognizes their right and their duty "to execute wrath" upon transgressors, as the servants and executioners of God's vengeance.

"Render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, viz: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

From this connection, it is evident that the Apostle designed to teach, that whenever we come to owe a man, we should immediately pay him. And not suffer any debt or obligation to rest upon us undischarged.

"Owe no man any thing, but to love one another." Here the Apostle recognizes the truth that love is of perpetual obligation. And that this obligation can never be so canceled or discharged as to be no longer binding. He recognizes no other obligation except love with its natural fruits as being, in its own nature, of perpetual obligation.

In respect to this obligation, all that we can do is to fulfill it every moment, without the possibility of so fulfilling it, as to set aside the continued obligation to love.

But we are to owe no man any thing else but love. We are to "render to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due, honor to whom honor."

I understand the text, then, simply to mean, let no obligation but that of love with its natural fruits, which is, from its very nature, a perpetual obligation, rest upon you undischarged.

I am aware that some modern critics maintain that this passage should have been rendered indicatively. But such men as Doddridge and Henry, Barnes and Prof. Stuart, are of the opinion that its imperative rendering is correct. And all are agreed that the doctrine of this text, as it stands, is plainly a doctrine of the Bible.

Here the question arises, what is it to owe a man in the sense of this text? I answer,

- 1. If you employ a laborer, and do not stipulate the time and terms of payment, it is taken for granted that he is to be paid when his work is done, and to have the money. If you hire him for a day, and nothing is said to the contrary, he cannot demand his pay till his day's work is done. Till then you owe him nothing. The same is true if you hire him for a week, or a month, or a year. When the time which he is to labor is stipulated, and nothing is said about the time and terms of payment, you owe him nothing, i.e. nothing is due till his time has expired. Then you owe him, and then you are bound to pay him, and pay him the money. But if the time was not specified which he was to labor, he may break off at any time, and demand pay for what he has done. Or if the time of payment was expressed or understood, whenever it arrives, you then owe him, and are bound to pay him agreeably to the understanding.
- 2. The same is true if you hire a horse, or any other piece of property. If you hire it for a specified time, and nothing is said of the conditions of payment, the understanding is that you are to pay when the time for which the property was hired has expired. It then becomes a debt. Then you are to pay, and pay the money. If there were any other understanding, fixing the time and terms of payment, you do not owe the man until the specified conditions are complied with.
- 3. The same is true if you purchase any piece of property. If nothing is stipulated to the contrary, the understanding is that you are to pay the cash, at the time you receive the property. At that time, and neither before nor after, you are expected to pay the purchase money.

We do not properly owe an individual until we are under an obligation to pay him. Whenever he has a right to demand the pay, we have no right to withhold it.

There may be such a thing as contracting a prospective debt, giving your obligation to become due at a certain time. But then you do not properly owe, because you are under no obligation to pay till it becomes due. But whenever it becomes due you are bound immediately to pay it.

## **II. I am to show that it is a sin to be in debt.**

- 1. Because it is a direct violation of the command of God. This text is just as binding as any command of the decalogue. And a violation of it is a setting aside the command of Jehovah, as much as to commit adultery or murder. It is not to be regarded merely as a piece of advice given by the Apostle, but as a direct, and positive, and authoritative command of God.
- 2. It is unjust to be in debt. If your creditor has a right to demand payment, you certainly have no right to withhold it. If it is due it is a contradiction to say that it is not unjust for you not to pay. It is a contradiction, both in terms, and in fact, to say that you owe a man, and at the same time are guilty of no injustice in refusing or neglecting to pay him. It is as much injustice as stealing, and involves the same principle. The sin of stealing consists in the appropriating to ourselves that which properly belongs to another. Therefore whenever you withhold from any man his due, you are guilty of as absolute an injustice, as if you stole his property.
- 3. It is sin, because it is falsehood. I have already shown that you do not properly owe a man till it becomes due. It becomes due when and because there is a promise on your part expressed or implied, that you will pay it at that time. Now you cannot violate this promise without being guilty of falsehood.
- 4. If what has just been said is true, it follows that men should meet their contracts, as they would avoid the grossest sin. They are bound to avoid being in debt--to meet and fulfill their engagements, as much as they are bound to avoid blasphemy, idolatry, murder or any other sin. And a man who does not pay his debts is no more to be accounted an honest man, than he who is guilty of any other heinous crime.

- 5. If a professor of religion is in debt, he is a moral delinquent, and should be accounted and treated as a subject of Church discipline.

OBJECTION.--It may be said, I cannot avoid being in debt. I answer to this,

That if you cannot pay, you could have avoided contracting the debt, and were bound to do so.

Do you reply, I really needed the thing which I purchased?

I ask, were your necessities so great that you would have been justified, in your estimation, in lying or stealing to supply them? If not, why have you resorted to fraud? The same authority that prohibits lying or stealing, prohibits your owing a man. Why, then, do you violate this commandment of God, any more than the other? Is it not because a corrupt public sentiment, has rendered the violation of this commandment less disgraceful than to violate these other commands of God? Why did you not resort to begging instead of running in debt? Better far to beg than to run in debt. Begging is not prohibited by any command of God, but being in debt is prohibited. True, it is disgraceful to beg. But a God-dishonoring public sentiment has rendered it far less so to be in debt. And does not this account for your shameless violation of this command of God?

Do you say again, I have been disappointed. I expected to have had the money; I made the contract in good faith, and expected to meet it at the time. But others owe me and do not pay me, therefore I am unable to pay my debts. To this I reply,

You should have contracted with that expressed condition. You should have made known your circumstances, and the ground of your expectation in regard to being able to pay at the time appointed. In that case, if your creditor was willing to run the risk, of your being disappointed, the fault is not yours, as you have practiced no injustice or deception. But if your contract was without condition, you have taken upon yourself the risk of disappointment, and are not guiltless.

But here it may be said again, nearly the whole Church are in debt, and if subject to discipline, who shall cast the first stone? I reply,

(1) If it be true that the Church is so extensively in debt, no wonder that the curse of God is upon her.

(2) Again, it may be true that a Church may be so generally involved in any given sin as to make that sin a difficult subject of discipline, because each man knows that he himself is guilty, and must in his turn submit to the same discipline. But when this is true of any Church, it is a shameless abomination for the members of that Church to attempt to hide themselves under the admitted fact that nearly all the Church are involved in the guilt of it.

Now rest assured that when any sin becomes so prevalent that it cannot, and is not made, in that Church, a subject of discipline, God himself will sooner or later take up the rod, and find means to discipline, and that effectually, such a Church.

### **III. I am to state the duty of those who are in debt.**

- 1. They are bound to make any sacrifice of property or time, and indeed any sacrifice that it is possible for them to make, to pay their debts.

Here it may be asked again, does the law of love permit my creditor to demand a sacrifice of me? If he loves me as he does himself, why should he require or even allow me to make a sacrifice of property to pay what I owe him? I reply:

- (1) If any one is to make a sacrifice or suffer loss, it is the debtor and not the creditor. It will almost certainly be some damage to him to be disappointed in not receiving his due. It may so disarrange his affairs, and break in upon his calculations as to occasion him great damage. Of this he is to be the judge.
- (2) Your sacrifice may be necessary not only to prevent his loss, but to enable him, to meet his contracts, and thus prevent his sin. His confidence in your veracity may have led him to contract prospective debts, and by not paying him, you not only sin yourself, but cause him to sin.
- (3) The refusal of one to make a sacrifice to pay his debts, may involve many others, in both loss and sin. A.

owes B., B. owes C., and C. owes D., and so on in a long chain of mutual dependencies. Now if there be a failure in the first or any other link of this chain, all below it are involved in loss and sin. Now where shall this evil be arrested?

Suppose you hold the place of C. A. refuses to make a sacrifice to pay B., and B to pay you. Shall you sin because they do, and involve your creditor in loss and sin? No. Whatever others may do, you are bound to pay your debts. And unless your creditor voluntarily consents to defer the time of payment, you are bound to pay him at any sacrifice.

- 2. Persons that are in debt should not contract new debts to pay old ones. It is the practice of some when they get involved, to keep up their credit, by borrowing of one to pay another. Their meeting and canceling the last debt, depends altogether upon the presumption, that they shall be able to borrow the money of some body else. When they have borrowed of one they will keep him out of his pay as long as possible without losing their credit. And then, instead of making a sacrifice of property sufficient to discharge the obligation, they borrow from B to pay A, and from C to pay B, and thus, perhaps, disappoint and disoblige a dozen men by not paying them exactly at the time agreed, instead of at once stopping short, and parting with what they have, at any sacrifice, to pay the debt.

I do not say that a man should not in any case borrow of one man to pay another. But this I say, that as a general thing, such practices are highly reprehensible. Still, if a debt becomes due, and you have not the money at hand, but are certain that at a given time you shall have it, I do not suppose it wrong for you to borrow and pay this debt, with the understanding that you pay this borrowed money at the time specified. But to borrow money with no other prospect of an ultimate payment than that you can borrow again, and thus keep up your credit from time to time, is wicked.

- 3. Those who are in debt have no right to give away the money which they owe. If you are in debt, the money in your hands belongs to your creditor, and not to you. You have no right, therefore, "to be generous till you are just." You have strictly no more right to give that money away than you have to steal money to give away.

But here it should be particularly understood what is and what is not to be accounted as giving money away; e.g. it is not giving away your money to pay the current expenses of the congregation to which you are attached. Your proportion of the current expenses of the congregation or Church to which you belong is impliedly, if not expressly contracted by you. You cannot withhold it any more than the payment of any other debt.

The same may be said of the support of ministers and foreign missionaries, and all for whose support the faith of the Church is pledged. It seems to be a common, but erroneous understanding of professors of religion, that what are more generally called their secular debts or obligations are binding, and are to be discharged of course. But that their obligations, expressed or implied, to religious institutions are not so absolutely binding; and of course they can give nothing, as they express it, to these objects until their debts are paid. Now, beloved, you ought to know that to the support of the institutions of religion, you are pledged, both virtually and actually, by your profession, and that these are your most sacred debts, and are thus to be considered and discharged by you. I beseech of you not to consider the meeting and canceling of such demands as these in the light of a gift,--as if you were making God a present instead of discharging a solemn debt. I have been astonished to find that the pecuniary embarrassments of the few past years have so far crippled the movements of the great benevolent societies for want of funds; and that Missionaries, for whose support the faith and honor of the Church were pledged, should be so far cut short of their necessary supplies, under the pretense that the Church must pay her secular debts before she could discharge her high and sacred obligations to them, and the work in which they are engaged.

- 4. A person who is in debt has no right to purchase for himself or family things not absolutely essential for their subsistence. Things that might lawfully be purchased and used under other circumstances become unlawful when you are in debt.

A creditor has no right to deprive you of necessary food and indispensable raiment, or of your liberty. To do so would put it out of your power ever to pay. But you have no right to indulge in any thing more than the necessaries of life, while your debts are unpaid. To do so is as unlawful as it would be to steal to purchase unnecessary articles.

**REMARKS.**

1. From what has been said, it is plain that the whole credit system, if not absolutely sinful, is nevertheless so highly dangerous that no Christian should embark in it.

Since the preaching of this sermon, this remark has been censured as a rash one. A rash remark! Let the present history and experience of the Church say whether the credit system is not so highly dangerous that the man who will venture to embark in it is guilty of rashness and presumption. When has religion for centuries been so generally disgraced, as by the bankruptcy of its professors within the last few years? And how many millions of money are now due from Church members to ungodly men that will never be paid? Rash! Why this is the very plea of the Church, that they can do nothing for the support of the gospel, because they are so much in debt. Is there no danger of any man's getting in debt who attempts to trade upon a borrowed capital? Indeed it is highly dangerous, as universal experience shows.

And what is the necessity, I pray, for Christians to embark in so dangerous an enterprise, and one that so highly jeopardizes the honor or religion? Is it because the necessities of life can be procured in no other way? Is it because the institutions of religion demand it? Religion sustains a greater loss through the debts and bankruptcies of Christians, than it ever gains by their prosperity.

But the credit system, as it now prevails and has prevailed, is useless, and worse than useless; e.g. suppose the consumers of merchandise, instead of anticipating their yearly crops and yearly income and running in debt with the expectation of paying from these, were to take a little pains to reverse this order of things and be a year beforehand, paying down for what they purchase, and having the income of each year beforehand, so as to contract no debts. In this case the country merchants, giving no credit, but receiving ready pay, would be able to pay down on the purchase of their goods from the wholesale dealer--the wholesale dealer would pay down to the importer--the importer to the manufacturer--and the manufacturer to the producer.

Now any man can see that many millions a year would be saved to this country in this way. The manufacturer could afford an article cheaper for ready pay--and so could the importer--and the wholesale dealer--and each one in his turn, down to the consumer. Every one could sell cheaper for ready pay, as no risk would be run, and business could be done with much greater convenience and safety. Thus an entire rejection of the credit system, in its present form, and an adoption of the system of ready pay would afford to the consumer every article so much cheaper as to save millions of dollars every year. And I do not apprehend that there is in reality any serious difficulty in so reversing the whole order of business.

At another time I may more particularly examine the credit system in its foundation and various ramifications, and the nature and tendencies of the prevailing system of doing business on borrowed capital. But at present I can only say, as I have said, that, waiving the question whether it is absolutely sinful in itself, it is too highly dangerous to be embarked in by those who feel a tender solicitude for the honor and cause of Christ.

2. That if in any case the present payment of debts is impossible, your duty is to regard your indebtedness as a sin against God and your neighbor--to repent, and set yourself with all practicable self-denial, to pay as fast as you can. And unless you are laying yourself out to pay your debts, do not imagine that you repent either of your indebtedness or any other sin. For you are impenitent, and a shameless hypocrite rather than a Christian, if you suffer yourself to be in debt, and are not making all practicable efforts to do justice to your creditors.

3. If payment is possible, by any sacrifice of property on your part, sin is upon you, till you do pay. There is a wicked custom among men, and to a considerable amount in the Church, of putting property out of their hands, to avoid a sacrifice in the payment of their debts.

As an instance take the eLder whom I mentioned in a former lecture, who confessed to me that "he was avoiding the sacrifice of his property, in the payment of his debts, by finesse of law."

4. The lax notions and practices of the world, and of the Church upon this subject, are truly abominable. It has come to pass, that a man may not only be considered a respectable citizen, but a respectable member of the Church, who suffers himself to be in debt--who has judgments and executions against him, and who resorts not only "to finesse of law to avoid the payment of his debts," but who practices the most palpable frauds against both God and man, by putting his property out of his hands to avoid meeting his just responsibilities.

O shame, on the Church, and on these professors of religion. Some of them will even go to an unconverted lawyer for advice in this iniquitous business, and lay open before his unconverted heart, their shameless iniquity. Alas, how many lawyers are thus led to call in question the whole truth of the Christian religion; and over these dishonest professors, they stumble into

hell. And until the Church will rise up and wash her hands, and cleanse her garments from this iniquity, by banishing such persons from her communion, the cause of Christ will not cease to bleed at every pore.

5. Some persons take the ground, that not to meet their contracts and pay their debts when they become due, is not sinful, on account of the general understanding of businessmen upon such subjects. To this I answer,

(1) There is no understanding among businessmen that debts are not to be paid when they become due. Among that class of men the nonpayment of a debt, always involves a disgrace, and a wrong, even in their own estimation.

(2) Let the public sentiment be what it might among businessmen, still the law of God cannot be altered, and by this unchanging law it is a sin to be in debt. And as "sin is a disgrace to any people," it is both a sin and a shame to be in debt.

6. The rule laid down in this text is applicable, not only to individuals, but to corporations, and nations, and all bodies of men assuming pecuniary responsibilities.

7. It is dishonest and dishonorable, to hire or purchase an article and say nothing about payment till afterwards.

8. The violation of this law, is working immense mischief in the Church, and in the world. It is truly shocking to see to what an extent the Church is involved in debt, and Church members are engaged in collecting debts of each other, by force of law. The heart burnings, and bitterness that exist among Church members on account of the nonpayment of their debts to each other, are awfully great and alarming.

Besides all this, in what light does the Church appear before the world--as a mass of moneymakers, and speculators, and bankrupts--shuffling and managing through finesse of law, to avoid the payment of their debts?

I could relate facts within my own knowledge, and many of them too, that would cause the cheek of piety to blush. Alas, for the rage, and madness of a speculating, moneymaking, fraudulent Church!

9. There is great reason to believe that many young men, in the course of their education, involve themselves in debts, that so far eat up their piety as to render them nearly useless all their days. I would sooner be twenty-five years in getting an education, and paying my way, than involve myself in debt to the Education Society or in any other way.

How many young men there are, who are in debt to the Education Society, and who are dealing very loosely with their consciences, on the subject of payment. Because the Education Society do not press them right up, they let the matter lie along from time to time--increase their expenditures, as their income may increase, instead of practicing self-denial, and honestly discharging their obligations to the Society.

10. I cannot have confidence in the piety of any man, who is not conscientious in the payment of his debts. I know some men who are in debt, and who spend their time and their property, in a manner wholly inconsistent with their circumstances; and still make great pretensions to piety. They are active in prayer meetings--take a conspicuous place at the communion table--and even hold a responsible office in the Church of Christ, and yet they seem to have no conscience about paying their debts.

I believe it is right, and the duty of all churches and ministers to exclude such persons from the communion of the Church. And were it generally done, it would go far to wipe away the stains that have been brought by such persons upon the religion of Jesus Christ. I do not see why they should be suffered to come to the communion table, any more than whoremongers, or murderers, or drunkards, or Sabbath breakers, or slave-holders.

11. There must be a great reformation in the Church upon this subject, before the business class of ungodly men will have much confidence in Religion. This reformation should begin immediately, and begin where it ought to begin, among the leading members of the Church of Christ. Ministers and Church Judicatories should speak out upon the subject--should "cry aloud and spare not, but lift up their voice like a trumpet and show Israel his transgressions and the house of Jacob their sins."

And now beloved, are any of you in debt? Then sin is upon you. Rise up, and show yourselves clean in this matter, I beseech you. Make every effort to meet and discharge your responsibilities. And beware that in attempting to pay your debts, you do not resort to means that are as highly reprehensible as to be in debt.

12. Let no one complain, and say that instead of preaching the gospel I am discussing mere business transactions. The truth

is, that the gospel is to regulate the business transactions of the world. Religion is a practical thing. It does not consist in austerities, prayers, and masses, and monkish superstitions, as Papists vainly dream. If religion does not take hold of a man's business operations--if it does not reform his daily life and habits, of what avail is it? Until in these respects your practice is right, you cannot expect to enjoy the influences of the Holy Spirit. You cannot grow in holiness any further than you reform your practice.

The perceptive part of the gospel therefore, is to be spread out in all its detail before you. And when you find it "convinces you of sin," I beg of you not to turn around, and say that this is preaching about business, and not about religion. What is business but a part of religion? A man that does not consider it so in practice, has no religion at all.

And now, dearly beloved, instead of suffering your heart to rise up and resist what I have said, will you not as I have often requested, go down upon your knees, and spread this whole subject before the Lord? Will you not inquire wherein you have erred, and sinned, and make haste to repent, and reform your lives?

## 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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## What the Bible Says About What Every Man Knows

"Let him that glorieth glory in this,  
that he understandeth and knoweth Me,  
that I am the LORD"

(Jeremiah 9:24).

by Tom Stewart

4-17-2001

What does every man know, according to the Scriptures?

"What saith the Scripture?" (Romans 4:3).

Man knows much more than he commonly admits.

*ABC. 1-2-3.*

- *God is.*
- *He ought to be loved supremely.*
- *We ought to love our neighbour as ourselves.*

First, man knows that *God exists*. "19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of Him from The Creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His Eternal Power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 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" (Romans 1:19-21).

Second, man comprehends that *God must be loved supremely*, for the Faithful Creator rewards those that diligently seek Him. "But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6). God implicitly rewards all wholehearted seekers of Himself. "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole Earth, to shew Himself strong in the behalf

of them whose heart is perfect toward Him" (2Chronicles 16:9). This, then, is the foundation of God's Moral Law, that "thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the First and Great Commandment." (Matthew 22:37, 38).

Third, and finally, every man knows that *he ought to love his neighbour as himself*. "And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:39). God specifically defines sin as the "transgression of the Law" (1John 3:4), which would be not loving God supremely, and not loving man as an equal and a neighbour. Therefore, the Just God can never unfairly burden man with the responsibility of loving his neighbour on penalty of sin, if that obligation was not already understood. "For this is the Love of God, that we keep His Commandments: and His Commandments are not grievous [literally, burdensome, severe, or unbearable]" (5:3). Organized religion may or may not admit to the universal necessity of loving all men equally as you would yourself desire to be treated; but, God's precedence in loving us first, i.e., "God is love... He first loved us" (4:8, 19), makes it impossible for us to claim that we have never seen that love or an even greater love exercised, nor that we did not know to reciprocate that love back to Him, or duplicate that love to our neighbour. "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" (4:7).

## Goodness Given to All and Known by All

God's faithfulness to His Creation demonstrates His love for the works of His hands. "The LORD is good to all: and His tender mercies are over all His works" (Psalm 145:9). The very ground we stand upon is testimony that God is watching out for us, e.g., God's law of gravity keeps us from flying off into outer space. "9 Thou visitest the Earth, and waterest it: Thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: Thou preparest them corn, when Thou hast so provided for it. 10 Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: Thou settlest the furrows thereof: Thou makest it soft with showers: Thou blessest the springing thereof. 11 Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness; and Thy paths drop fatness. 12 They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side. 13 The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing" (Psalms 65:9-13). If it were not for the loving faithfulness of God, the turning of the Earth that gives us the seasons, would cease. "While the Earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (Genesis 8:22).

But, the very fact that the existence of God is disputed, that loving obedience to Him is refused, and that man routinely abuses his neighbour, indicates that God is entirely justified in saying that "all have sinned, and come short of the Glory of God" (Romans 3:23). This is merely stating that those who have the capacity to understand, i.e., Moral Agents (and, *not* infants, toddlers, or mentally disabled), have sinned against the Little Truth that they have grasped. "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one" (3:10). Our sin is sad and dismal as it is wicked; but, in stark contrast, there is Good News that must yet be declared clearly, for it is difficult to believe it, even after it is heard. "**Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners**" (1Timothy 1:15). This is the Gospel that God has commanded to be preached to all the world, to give all men a Second Chance to repent before He shortly returns to judge the world for its sins. "19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto The End of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:19-20).

Unlike "Another Gospel" (Galatians 1:6) preached by too many Professed Christians today, the Truth is that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1Corinthians 15:3, 4); but, *He also rose again to restore us to obedience to His Moral Law of Love*. "3 And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His Commandments. 4 He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His Commandments, is a liar, and the Truth [Christ] is not in Him" (1John 2:3-4). Of course, the good works of keeping the Moral Law of Love do not and cannot save us, for **Jesus alone saves**, i.e., "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5); but, He saves us not merely to make us happy, but to make us finally useful, i.e., "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men" (3:8). The present lawlessness of the World is the same lawlessness in much of the Professed Church, which is a revulsion of obedience to the Moral Law of Love of the LORD Jesus Christ. "But His citizens hated Him, and sent a message after Him, saying, We will not have this Man [Christ Jesus] to reign over us" (Luke 19:14).

## Conclusion

What we do with the Truth that we understand, separates the wise man from the fool. "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished" (Proverbs 27:12). Acknowledging that we know what God says we know, "as the Truth is in Jesus" (Ephesians 4:21), is the "beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding" (Proverbs 9:10). Laying hold of the Truth will only be the beginning of an Eternity of learning about God. "33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put My Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jeremiah 31:33-34). And, the great glory of the Saints will be new discoveries about the "LORD that bought them" (2Peter 2:1). "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 9:24)

"The True Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world"  
(John 1:9).

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## What the Bible Says About Contentment

"Godliness with contentment is great gain"

(1Timothy 6:6).

by Tom Stewart

3-24-2003

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### Preface

Godliness and contentment are indeed rare gems, but since they can only be found inseparably combined, they are the rarest of gem to be found in man. "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in Faith, and heirs of the Kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?" (James 2:5). Unlike the covetous of the world, Christians are to be content with their lot in life-- rich or poor, pleasant ways or a difficult road-- since they understand their physical circumstances to be both God's opportunity to mold them and reach the world. "To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1Corinthians 9:22). Once it is fully realized that your physical circumstances ought to be treated only as secondary to your spiritual necessities, i.e., "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His Righteousness; and all these things [food, clothing, shelter] shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33), then it becomes *immediately* possible to be truly content. "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5).

This does not mean that Christians should pay no attention to their physical circumstances, for "no man ever yet hated his own flesh" (Ephesians 5:29). Attempting to improve one's pecuniary circumstances is in keeping with a Christian's stewardship or management of the talents given to him by the LORD, i.e., "it is required in stewards, that a man be found Faithful" (1Corinthians 4:2), so long as we understand that the wealth belongs to God and should benefit us only to the extent that it advances His Kingdom. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive Power, and Riches, and Wisdom, and Strength, and Honour, and Glory, and Blessing" (Revelation 5:12). Neither does it imply that True Christians cannot abide in the condition of being rich in worldly wealth. "If riches increase, set NOT your **heart** upon them" (Psalm 62:10). Instead, they must not put their confidence in riches, and they must continually be burdened with seeking the right opportunity to make the best use of their wealth to promote the Kingdom of God. "17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the Living God, Who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; 18 that they do Good, that they be rich in Good Works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; 19 laying up in store for themselves a Good Foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on Eternal Life" (1Timothy 6:17-19).

### What is True Christian Contentment?

True Christian contentment is a satisfaction with God in all of His Word, will, Providences, promises, and prophecies. "In Thy Presence is fulness of Joy; at Thy right hand there are Pleasures for evermore... a day in Thy Courts is better than a

thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the House of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Psalm 16:11; 84:10). The character of God is the great issue of Christian contentment. Are we truly satisfied with God? Do we really find our satisfaction in God's will for our lives? "From the end of the Earth will I cry unto Thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the Rock that is higher than I" (61:2). Can anyone actually show us a better way for our lives than what the LORD has already shown us? "4 Shew me Thy Ways, O LORD; teach me Thy Paths. 5 Lead me in Thy Truth, and teach me: for Thou art the God of my Salvation; on Thee do I wait all the day" (25:4-5). Do we truly find ourselves sufficient to question the decisions of the Almighty? "1 Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said, 2 Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct Him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it. 3 Then Job answered the LORD, and said, 4 Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer Thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. 5 Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further" (Job 40:1-5). After all, how can we be discontent with a God who loved us so much that He would send His Only Begotten Son to die for us, unless we do not feel that our sins were so bad or that His Gift was not so great? "Herein is Love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the Propitiation for our sins" (1John 4:10). If we have trouble with such basic thoughts about the LORD's Love and Faithfulness, then we will never be content with God without a metamorphosis or transformation of our hearts that comes with True Repentance. "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit" (Ezekiel 18:31).

Our physical circumstances of poverty or riches do not necessarily reflect our contentment or discontentment with God, for contentment is foremost a spiritual matter of satisfaction with God. "As for me, I will behold Thy face in Righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness" (Psalm 17:15). But, if riches come to your lot, use them to glorify God. "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will He pay him again" (Proverbs 19:17). And, be forewarned that *riches are more often than not the mark of those who do not enter into the Kingdom of God*. "And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto His disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God!" (Mark 10:23). Contentment with God is generally at odds with the possession of wealth. "For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God" (Luke 18:25). The "deceitfulness of riches" (Mark 4:19) is the tendency to put undue confidence in your capacity to purchase your way out of the difficulty or suffering that God intends to further sanctify you. "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered" (Hebrews 5:8). Certainly, we can use the riches at our disposal to deal with our difficulties, but we must counter the use of riches with an even greater weight of trusting God and continually acknowledging that it is the Almighty "that giveth thee power to get wealth" (Deuteronomy 8:18) and that He alone "delivereth [us] out of all [our] troubles" (Psalm 34:17).

Instead of an idle use of riches to promote self-vanity or simply fleshly pleasures, it is the burden, responsibility, and honour of the Saints, who have any of earthly riches, to study how to do the most good for God first and then man in promoting the Kingdom of God, i.e., "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required" (Luke 12:48). "37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the First and Great Commandment. 39 And the Second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37-39). This obligation, of course, is to be carried by *all* the Saints in this New Testament dispensation through the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ that redeems the sinner from the penalty of sin (Salvation) and power of sin (Sanctification), for if sin is not clearly and continually defeated, how can one rightly claim to know anything of the faith that is in Jesus? "3 And hereby we do know that we know Him, **if we keep** His Commandments. 4 He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His Commandments, is a **liar**, and the Truth is **not** in Him" (1John 2:3-4).

True Christian Contentment was well depicted by the Apostle Peter in 44 AD as he slept peacefully in a Jerusalem prison awaiting his martyrdom the next morning at the hands of King Herod Agrippa. "1 Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the Church. 2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. 3 And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) 4 And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions [sixteen] of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people. 5 Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for him. 6 And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison" (Acts 12:1-6). Surely, the Scripture, "Thou wilt keep him in Perfect Peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee" (Isaiah 26:3), aptly describes the Apostle Peter's faith in such dire circumstances. Peter knew that he would be martyred, because after the Resurrection, the LORD Jesus had told him, "When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not" (John 21:18). However, that was only twelve years earlier, and probably *not* a fulfilment of the prophecy, "when thou shalt be old." Nonetheless, beloved Brother Peter slept so soundly, when the "angel of the LORD came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: [that] he smote Peter on the side" (Acts 12:7), just to get his attention to inform him to leave. "It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so He giveth His beloved sleep" (Psalm 127:2). Thus, the LORD plucked Peter-- as He can us-- out of the hands of the executioner. "6 Blessed be the LORD, Who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth. 7 Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped" (124:6-7).

## How Much Is Enough to Be Content?

The question arises, How much is enough for us to be content? Does the culture in which we live or the age in which we were born dictate the minimum wage or conditions with which we are to be content? "Be content with your wages" (Luke 3:14). The neglected Law of Love, which has been in effect as long as there has been a God of Love, has made clear the responsibilities of both labor and management, tradesmen and their competitors, merchants and consumers, governments and their citizens, nations and their neighbours, that each is to give due and equal consideration to the interests of the other as they would for themselves, but above all to give the supreme consideration to the Almighty. "For all the Law is fulfilled in one Word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Galatians 5:14). But, the covetousness of both the employer and employee aside, contentment with God is more the issue than the terms of our earthly employment. "11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. 12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need" (Philippians 4:11-12). Never be afraid to act with the love demanded by God, for He will defend you and judge those who make abuse of your charitable conduct. "Whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house" (Proverbs 17:13).

Many would mandate for themselves a certain amount of food, clothing, and shelter for their contentment, but a Christian martyr would be willing to deny himself all of his food, clothing, and shelter, yea, his life also, if he may but witness a good confession of Jesus Christ. "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the LORD Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God" (Acts 20:24). Again, satisfaction with Jesus as our Saviour from sin and sinning is essential to True Christian Contentment, for if we have the physical means of survival, for which we already possess the Divine Promise of His Supply, i.e., "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His Righteousness; and all these things [food, clothing, shelter] shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33), then the issue of contentment is not truly a physical or material concern, but a matter of more fully comprehending, trusting, and finding satisfaction in the nature and relations of our God to us in all of His names, titles, offices, and capacities as revealed by His Spirit to us through the Scriptures to cause us to "walk in [His] Statutes, and [to] keep [His] Judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:27). "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption" (1Corinthians 1:30). [See "Relations of Christ to the Believer" -- <http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Voice/Relations.Christ.Believer.html> -- by Charles G. Finney -- <http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html> -- e.g., "No one can too fully understand, or too deeply feel, the necessity of taking home the Bible with all it contains, as a message sent from Heaven to him; nor can too earnestly desire or seek the promised Spirit to teach him the true spiritual import of all its contents. He must have the Bible made a personal revelation of God to his own soul. It must become his own book. He must know Christ for himself. He must know him in his different relations. He must know him in his blessed and infinite fulness, or he cannot abide in him, and unless he abide in Christ, he can bring forth none of the fruits of holiness. 'Except a man abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered.'"] After all, contentment, life, and eternity for the Saints must be an ongoing revelation of the Eternal God to His people of His limitless character, for which we cannot restrain unending love, confidence, admiration, and praise. "Thou art Worthy, O LORD, to receive Glory and Honour and Power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy Pleasure they are and were created" (Revelation 4:11).

## Middle Class Contentment

God did not give us His Word to promote economic warfare of the classes, for the "Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17). However, the phenomenon of the Middle Class-- a distinct grouping of society "occupying a socioeconomic position intermediate between those of the lower working classes and the wealthy"-- lends itself well to description by the Old Testament Scriptures. "8 Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient [Hebrew, *choq*, something prescribed by God] for me: 9 lest I be full, and deny Thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the Name of my God in vain" (Proverbs 30:8-9). The impression from Scripture is that God would appoint or prescribe enough to keep the writer of the Proverb-- Agur the son of Jakeh-- from cursing God due to poverty, but not so much that he would forget God. Admittedly, "food convenient" (30:8) for one may not be the same amount or quantity which God appoints for another; thus, making it difficult to describe the Middle Class phenomenon as a certain indicator of Christianity's presence in a nation's socioeconomic structure. For this reason, it is safer to rely on the sure revelation of Scripture that we are simply to rely upon God to appoint for us our "meat [Greek, *trophe*, food or nourishment] in due season" (Matthew 24:45). If we are content with God as a rich Solomon or a poor Lazarus, then we will be more concerned about our relationship to the LORD Jesus Christ than any demographic class description that we are poor, middle class, or rich. "3 Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. 4 Delight thyself also in the LORD; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart. 5 Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass" (Psalm 37:3-5).

## The Blessed Poor

It would be a grave mistake, as well, to conclude that impoverished circumstances necessarily indicates a poverty of spirit. "And He lifted up His eyes on His disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the Kingdom of God" (Luke 6:20). The familiar story of Job tells us how God removed all of the wealth from Job, the "greatest of all the men of the East" (Job 1:3). The All Wise God deemed it best to test Job with poverty to refine a man that He already considered upright. "And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the Earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?" (1:8). Satan, of course, accused Job of serving God only from the selfish motivation of what he could materially gain from God. "9 Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? 10 Hast not Thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. 11 But put forth Thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face" (1:9-11). The Almighty's purpose in testing Job with poverty was to magnify Himself, i.e., "Thus will I magnify Myself, and sanctify Myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD" (Ezekiel 38:23), to shame the Devil, i.e., "18 Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous. 17 Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish" (Psalm 31:18; 83:17), and to bring out even greater luster in the character of Job, i.e., "He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10). [See our editorial, "I Shall Come Forth As Gold" -- [http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Fellowship/Edit\\_Come\\_Forth\\_As\\_Gold.html](http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Fellowship/Edit_Come_Forth_As_Gold.html) -- for understanding and help for why *apparently* bad things happen to good people.]

Reading through the Scriptures, the cause of the poor Saint is always undertaken by the LORD. "For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him" (Psalm 12:5). Though poverty may be used by God to indict and judge a prodigal son's waywardness, i.e., "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" (Luke 15:17), the same pecuniary want is also a valuable tool in the hands of Omnipotence to teach us our necessity to trust in Jehovah Jireh. "But my God shall supply ALL your need according to His Riches in Glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). Though our circumstances cry out for immediate supply, God is more interested in what we learn about Him, as much as He desires to tenderly and faithfully supply our need. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear Him" (Psalm 103:13). How long before we take the hint that the Master is using every circumstance of poverty or riches to draw us to an ever increasing and sanctifying knowledge of Himself? "But grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our LORD and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2Peter 3:18). When will we be free from the trifling, worldly focus that consumes itself with the equitability of the distribution of capital or the means of production in the hands of labourers or controllers of wealth? "13 And one of the company said unto Him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. 14 And He said unto him, Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you? 15 And He said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth **not** in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:13-15).

Though it is clear that God is against the rich oppressing the poor, for the "LORD executeth Righteousness and Judgment for all that are oppressed" (Psalm 103:6), riches do not necessitate wickedness any more than poverty would signify righteousness. "The rich and poor meet together: the LORD is the Maker of them all" (Proverbs 22:2). Be it remembered that the rich do not have a monopoly on oppression. "A poor man that oppresseth the poor is like a sweeping rain which leaveth no food" (28:3). The True Gain in life comes when a man learns to seek the Upright God. "The way of the just is Uprightness: Thou, Most Upright, dost weigh the path of the just" (Isaiah 26:7). Only in uprightness is there any advantage in poverty. "Better is the poor that walketh in his Uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich" (Proverbs 28:6). Finding your satisfaction in God causes you to have compassion where God has compassion, i.e., "as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear Him" (Psalm 103:13), and you will be content with whatever disposition of His Law or Providence that finds its way to you, as well as whatever application it makes to the wicked around you. "He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor" (Proverbs 28:8). The All Wise God promotes the most appropriate circumstances for the rich and poor to find their contentment in Him, but when the "rich man is wise in his own conceit; [then] the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out" (28:11). Each of us has the opportunity to improve his own lot in life; but more importantly, we have the circumstance and obligation to prove the LORD by discovering Him through His Own Word, trusting Him, and finding continual and enduring contentment with Him, or we become guilty of the impropriety of selfishly seeking to "do evil with both hands earnestly" (Micah 7:3). "A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent" (Proverbs 28:20).

## Be Content or Be Judged!

God has providentially placed us in the wisest possible circumstances to secure our contentment in Him. "28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: 29 and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field,

which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not **much more** clothe you, O ye of little faith? 31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 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 6:28-34). He has pleaded that we make our peace with Him, trust in the name of His Son, and find our deepest satisfaction and contentment in Him. "27 All things are delivered unto Me of My Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him. 28 Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you Rest. 29 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. 30 For My Yoke is easy, and My Burden is light" (11:27-30).

If we refuse the implorings of the Gracious God to find our contentment in Him, then God in all justice must judge us as the implacable rebels that we are! "6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: 7 again, He limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear His Voice, harden not your hearts" (Hebrews 4:6-7). Why we have been spared this long without the ground opening and swallowing us up whole, is a testament to the merciful longsuffering of God; but, the final punishment of rebels testifies of the evenhanded justice of the Moral Governor of the Universe. "28 And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. 29 If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the LORD hath not sent me. 30 But if the LORD make a new thing, and the Earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD. 31 And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: 32 and the Earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. 33 They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the Earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation" (Numbers 16:28-33).

Witness from the prophecies the inevitable future of the Great Whore, whose name is Babylon the Great (Revelation 17:5). "4 God forbid: yea, let God be True, but every man a liar; as it is written, That Thou mightest be Justified in Thy Sayings, and mightest overcome when Thou art judged. 5 But if our unrighteousness commend the Righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous Who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man) 6 God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?" (Romans 3:4-6). Her judgment has been promised, because her repentance is impossible. "1 And after these things I saw another angel come down from Heaven, having great power; and the Earth was lightened with his glory. 2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. 3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the Earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the Earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. 4 And I heard another Voice from Heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. 5 For her sins have reached unto Heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. 6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. 7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. 8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for Strong is the LORD God Who judgeth her" (Revelation 18:1-8). [See our Revelation Commentary, "Chapter 18: The Destruction of Babylon the Great" -- <http://whatsaiththescripture.com/The.Holy.Bible/Commentary.Revelations.18.html> -- for more about the judgment that will be brought down upon one who did not find her contentment with the LORD Jesus Christ.]

## Scriptural Promises Concerning Contentment

The Promise, "**As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness**" (Psalm 17:15), is True Contentment and Satisfaction with God Himself, when we behold the face of God. Our desire is to obey God in spiritually beholding His face. "When Thou saidst, Seek ye My face; my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek" (Psalm 27:8). We understand that we can only find God with wholehearted seeking. "And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13). Your thoughts may be especially enabled to be directed to the face of God in the quietness of the morning before the rush of the day; but, *anytime* that you in faith "draw nigh to God... He will draw nigh to you" (James 4:8). And, we have been further shown that the same Holy Spirit that inspired and reveals the Holy Scriptures, is tasked with revealing to us Jesus Christ-- "the True God, and Eternal Life" (1John 5:20). "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).

**"And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt**

**be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not**" (Isaiah 58:11). This Promise of contentment is given especially to those who have fulfilled the condition named in the preceding verse of its context. "And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday" (58:10). Notice the beautiful mixture of spiritual and physical blessing promised to those who live their lives in an unselfish state of giving. "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6). As much as we are concerned about our own physical well-being-- "no man ever yet hated his own flesh" (Ephesians 5:29)-- our greatest concern should be that our heart is in the right place, and that our greatest satisfaction would be in God. "He hath done all things well: He maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak" (Mark 7:37). With whatever strength we can muster, if we will unrelentingly cast ourselves upon the LORD, we will find our greatest satisfaction and only then will we be truly content. "Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and He shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved" (Psalm 55:22). Remember, if you have been kept in a holy walk before God, then content yourself that the Great God that sustains the lilies of the field will continually be your secret spring bubbling up in your innermost soul, "like a spring of water, whose waters fail not" (Isaiah 58:11).

Another Promise for our contentment emphasizes the joy and blessing that we find simply from the Word of God that we already possess. "**Thy Words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the Joy and Rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by Thy Name, O LORD God of Hosts**" (Jeremiah 15:16). No doubt, the joyful blessedness described by Jeremiah is the same as the Psalmist, and is a promised picture of contentment for all those who presently meditate in the Law of the LORD. "1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. 2 But his delight is in the Law of the LORD; and in His Law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Psalm 1:1-3). Such strong attachment to the Law of the LORD for the Saints of the New Covenant is *not* a return to the expired-but-pedagogical Ceremonial and Civil Law of Old Testament Israel, which was onerous to even the best of Jews-- when they *impatiently* attempted to practice its precepts. "1 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved... 7 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the Word of the Gospel, and believe. 8 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us; 9 and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. 10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" (Acts 15:1, 7-10). And, though Jehovah still has a definite plan for the Nation of Israel, now "we [the Body of Christ] are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Philippians 3:3). Therefore, we-- who are the true "Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Romans 2:29)-- may content ourselves with appropriating all the blessings of the Old Covenant that our faith can lay hold of. "A faithful man shall abound with Blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent" (Proverbs 28:20).

Self-satisfaction for a Christian can never be a contentment with self that does not completely acknowledge that by the "Grace of God I am what I am" (1Corinthians 15:10). Selfishness and selflessness are rewarded with themselves, but the promised self-satisfaction of selflessness has the grand distinction of the Holy Spirit working in the Saint to "will and to do of His Good Pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). "**The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself**" (Proverbs 14:14). The Saint can and should practice the necessity of finding contentment-- be he rich or poor. "7 The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: He bringeth low, and lifteth up. 8 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the Throne of Glory: for the pillars of the Earth are the LORD'S, and He hath set the world upon them" (1Samuel 2:7-8). Christian contentment would only increase, if we could even understand in a small way the present blessedness that we possess. "The Blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it" (Proverbs 10:22). And, that blessedness can be enumerated only in a small way:

- (1) Faith in the Son of God is blessed, i.e., "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him" (Psalm 2:12),
- (2) A wholehearted walk of obedience is blessed, i.e., "1 Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the Law of the LORD. 2 Blessed are they that keep His Testimonies, and that seek Him with the whole heart... 11 Blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep It" (Psalm 119:1-2; Luke 11:28), and
- (3) Patient watching and waiting for the LORD, e.g., to fulfill His Promises, to return for His Saints, etc., always makes us happy, i.e., "And therefore will the LORD wait, that He may be Gracious unto you, and therefore will He be Exalted, that He may have Mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of Judgment: **blessed are all they that wait for Him**... 37 Blessed are those servants, whom the LORD when He cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come

forth and serve them. 38 And if He shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, Blessed are those servants" (Isaiah 30:18; Luke 12:37-38).

## Conclusion

As you can see, True Christian Contentment is primarily our heartfelt satisfaction with the person of God and not an estimation of our physical circumstances or our material worth. "1 O God, Thou art my God; early will I seek Thee: my soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; 2 to see Thy Power and Thy Glory, so as I have seen Thee in the Sanctuary. 3 Because Thy Lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise Thee. 4 Thus will I bless Thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in Thy Name. 5 **My soul shall be satisfied** as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips: 6 when I remember Thee upon my bed, and meditate on Thee in the night watches. 7 Because Thou hast been my Help, therefore in the shadow of Thy Wings will I rejoice. 8 My soul followeth hard after Thee: Thy right hand upholdeth me" (Psalm 63:1-8).

May we never be as the unsatiated rebellious. "Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied" (Proverbs 27:20). Instead, may we be as a Solomon, when he contented himself in seeking after the Living God, and concerned himself only with acquiring the wisdom, discernment, and judgment to obey Jehovah in shepherding his kingdom in fulfilment of his kingly duties. "11 And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern Judgment; 12 behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. 13 And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days" (1Kings 3:11-13).

"O taste and see that the LORD is Good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him" (Psalm 34:8).

Amen, and Amen!

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## What the Bible Says About False Teachers

"But there were False Prophets also among the people,  
even as there shall be False Teachers among you,  
who privily shall bring in damnable heresies,  
even denying the LORD that bought them,  
and bring upon themselves swift destruction"

(2Peter 2:1).

by Tom Stewart  
10-17-2003

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## Preface

God has promised that False Teachers and False Prophets will be among us, so we have the utmost reason to be thoroughly grounded in the Scriptures that we might rightly mark and avoid them. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the Doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Romans 16:17). And, before we become overly alarmed that the Great Shepherd would allow His Flock to come in contact with such wolves "in sheep's clothing" (Matthew 7:15), we should be reminded that God must prove and refine His people that we might better glorify Him, for He is worthy. "1 If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, 2 and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; 3 thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deuteronomy 13:1-3). Our part is to understand who is a False Teacher and take the appropriate action, while God's part is to sustain us by His Omnipotence, until He takes us Home to Heaven. "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the Presence of His Glory with exceeding Joy" (Jude 24).

## **Caveat: Potentially, Any Teacher Can Become a False Teacher!**

Every Christian *ought* to be a teacher of the Way of Jesus Christ, i.e., "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19); consequently, every Christian can potentially become a False Teacher, e.g., even the Apostle Peter taught by his wrong example the necessity to be "justified by the works of the Law" (Galatians 2:16), when he withdrew from eating with the Gentiles, because he feared the opinions of the legalists and Judaizers. "For before that certain came from James, he [Peter] did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision" (2:12). True, there is a Spiritual Gift of Teaching that specially enables certain individuals in the Body of Christ to teach, i.e., "And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers" (Ephesians 4:11); however, False Doctrine spreads inside the Professed Church and to the unchurched without observing the technical distinction that it was taught by a so-called specially gifted prophet, teacher, or ordinary Professing Christian. "My brethren, be not many masters [Greek, *didaskalos*, teacher], knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation" (James 3:1). We must determine in our heart that we will do whatever is necessary to stay our course as an ordinary or Spirit gifted teacher of the Way of Christ, and we, like Peter and Paul, will be blessed with the certainty of Heavenly Reward. "7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the Faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the LORD, the Righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His Appearing" (2Timothy 4:7-8). By Promise and Faith, we can avoid the pitfalls of becoming a False Teacher, i.e., "And the things that thou hast heard of Me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2Timothy 2:2); just as by Grace and Perseverance, we will not apostatize from our Faith in the LORD Jesus Christ, i.e., "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a Good Work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6).

## **Contending for the Faith Demands the Identification of False Teachers**

It is not for simply personal reasons that we must be able to identify, mark, and avoid False Teachers, but that we would obediently and "earnestly contend for the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints" (Jude 3). If the Gospel is to spread and take hold of mankind in all of its Power and Purity, then we must strive or contend valiantly "for the Truth" (Jeremiah 9:3) as it "is in Jesus" (Ephesians 4:21) against all that would hinder or destroy the Gospel and the Faith that all men should have toward the LORD, Who gave us the Good News of Redemption, Forgiveness of Sins, New Birth, Power Over Sin and Sinning, and Present Certainty of Eternal Life. In short, our "LORD Christ" (Colossians 3:24) has committed to us the defense and propagation of the "Truth of the Gospel" (Galatians 2:14) of the "Grace of God" (Acts 20:24), i.e., the "Gospel of your Salvation" (Ephesians 1:13), and *continually* gives us "all things that pertain unto Life and Godliness" (2Peter 1:3) by means of innumerable, "Exceeding Great and Precious Promises" (1:4), which *enables us to live like Christ*. "Whereby are given unto us Exceeding Great and Precious Promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature" (1:4). Remember that even the Apostle Paul had to face off with an erring and backslidden Peter, who was *temporarily* a teacher of False Doctrine, when Paul had to contend for the purity of the Faith that is necessary to justify and sanctify the Church. "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed" (Galatians 2:11). You will also notice that Paul's conduct was manifestly blessed by the Holy Spirit to regain and restore Beloved Brother Peter, for at a later time the Apostle Peter lovingly refers to Paul: "15 And account that the Longsuffering of our LORD is Salvation; even as our Beloved Brother Paul also according to the Wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; 16 as also in all his Epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction" (2Peter 3:15-16).

Ours must be primarily a contending *for* the Faith with the understanding that it will naturally and secondarily cause us to be *against* the false teachings and deceptive conduct of False Teachers, who are deceiving not simply the Flock, but a world of Lost Sinners. "29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29-30). The False Teachers that will arise among us *can* be:

- (1) Backsliders, e.g., the Apostle Peter (Galatians 2), that will certainly and ultimately repent, i.e., "1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are Spiritual, restore such an one in the Spirit of Meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. 2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ" (Galatians 6:1-2), or even

(2) Deceived and Never-Been-Saved Sinners calling themselves True Teachers, who eventually repent and become truly saved, e.g., former Catholic priest, Charles Chiniquy [read his memoirs, "Fifty Years in the Church of Rome" (1886) -- <http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Voice/Fifty.Years.Church.Rome.html> --], i.e., "1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: 2 the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him. 3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto Him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. 9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? 10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master [Greek, *didaskalos*, teacher] of Israel, and knowest not these things?" (John 3:1-10), however, most False Teachers will be

(3) Lost, Damned, Never-to-be-Saved Deceivers, e.g., "that woman Jezebel" (Revelation 2:20) of the Church of Thyatira that taught fornication and idolatry, who will play out their role as haters of God, opponents of the True Saints, only to be used by God to magnify Himself, i.e., the "wrath of man shall praise" (Psalm 76:10) His Name, when He judges them (and, He will), i.e., the "LORD is known by the Judgment which He executeth" (9:16).

## **Christian Parents Must Especially Be Teachers of Their Own Children**

Additionally, it is the Christian parents' greatest privilege to teach their own children how to live a godly, productive life; and even more importantly, they are required before God to train them in much the same way a vine must be directed on a trellis to fill out all of its potential. "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deuteronomy 6:7). The Way of Christ in this world would not only survive but flourish, if Christian parents would fulfill their jobs as the teachers of their children. "5 For He established a Testimony in Jacob, and appointed a Law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: 6 that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children... 25 And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob My servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and My servant David shall be their prince for ever" (Psalm 78:5-6; Ezekiel 37:25). Their children will go right, do right, and continue to do so even when they are old. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). The degree to which Christian parents perceive their responsibility to be teachers of their own children is the degree to which their children may begin their sojourn in this world with *more* than an even opportunity-- in fact, the certainty-- of succeeding in this world, and in the world to come. "18 Therefore shall ye lay up these My Words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. 19 And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deuteronomy 11:18-19). "8 This Book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Joshua 1:8). What truly Christian parent would thoughtfully deny their children this opportunity of being taught by themselves, even more, how could Christian parents disobey the LORD by refusing to teach their own children of the Way of Christ? "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the LORD" (Ephesians 6:4).

## **A Distinction: Teachers Teach Doctrine, While Prophets Prophecy Prophecy**

Why not simply lump together False Prophets and False Teachers, since both teach False Doctrine? "But there were False Prophets also among the people, even as there shall be False Teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the LORD that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction" (2Peter 2:1). As you can see from this Second Epistle of Peter, Scripture observes a distinction between teaching and prophesying, i.e., both False *and* True Teachers emphasize *indoctrination*, while False *and* True Prophets or Preachers are looking for a *particular action or response* to their message from the audience. "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it" (Habakkuk 2:2). Even the experience of most schoolchildren makes plain that only those scholars who have a willingness and

desire to learn, have a chance to learn. "If any man will do His Will, he shall know of the Doctrine" (John 7:17). For this reason, the teacher's first objective with his pupils is to secure their willingness to be taught, i.e., "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy Power" (Psalm 110:3), which is the prime function of the New Testament ministry of the Holy Spirit. "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). A True Teacher will do whatever is necessary to cultivate a right relationship with the Holy Paraklete, a True Teacher's most trusted ally. "And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, Whom God hath given to them that obey Him" (Acts 5:32). A False Teacher cannot obviously rely on the assistance of the Holy Spirit, but any Christian can detect a False Teacher with the help of the Spirit. "To the Law and to the Testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them" (Isaiah 8:20). It is the function of the Holy Spirit to illuminate the meaning of the Scriptures, and thus prevent False Doctrine. "But the Anointing [the Holy Spirit] which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same Anointing teacheth you of all things, and is Truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him" (1John 2:27).

The ability of the True Teacher to teach the Truth is based upon his prior experience with the doctrine he teaches, i.e., based upon the willingness and submission that he himself must have demonstrated to the LORD to master the Doctrine that he professes to teach. "9 Whom shall He teach Knowledge? and whom shall He make to understand Doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. 10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little" (Isaiah 28:9-10). In particular, we are to be careful of attaching ourselves to teachers who:

(1) do *not* teach what the Scriptures say, i.e., "20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. 21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not" (Revelation 2:20-21), or

(2) do *not* practice the Truth they profess to teach, i.e., "1 Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to His disciples, 2 Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: 3 all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. 4 For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. 5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men" (Matthew 23:1-5).

In contrast to the False Teachers that teach False Doctrine, False Prophets prophesy False Prophecy. "And many False Prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many" (Matthew 24:11). To prophesy (Greek, *propheteuo*) is:

(1) to speak forth God's Word by Divine Inspiration, i.e., "For the Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2Peter 1:21),

(2) often to give a prophecy, which is a foretelling of the certainty or prediction of the timing of a future event, i.e., "10 Of which Salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: 11 searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when It [He] testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the Glory that should follow" (1Peter 1:10-11), and

(3) *not* restricted to the *foretelling* of time sensitive events, but also embracing the *forth-telling* of Divine Counsel about every aspect of the Almighty's relationship to man, i.e., "For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted" (1Corinthians 14:31).

Obviously, not all that was divinely prophesied was recorded in the Canon of Scripture that we now receive as the Holy Bible, e.g., all that Jesus spoke during His earthly ministry was *not* recorded. "And there are also many other things which Jesus did [and said], the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the Books that should be written. Amen" (John 21:25).

A prophet (Greek, *prophetes*) is an individual chosen by God:

(1) to speak by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit the message from God that is to be received as His Very Word-- as with the inspired Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Thessalonians, i.e., "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in Truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1Thessalonians 2:13),

(2) which extends (with understandable caution and gravity) to the Uncommon Gift of Prophecy of Modern Prophets, who must *never* contradict the "More Sure Word of Prophecy" (2Peter 1:19) of the already established Canon of Scripture, i.e., "17 And it shall come to pass in the Last Days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: 18 and on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy" (Acts 2:17-18), but

(3) includes the More Conventional Concept of the Gift of Prophecy, as represented by Paul to be given sovereignly by the Spirit to selected individuals, specifically, to "some [as], evangelists; and some [as], pastors" (Ephesians 4:11), who are likewise enjoined by the same apostle, "Follow after Charity, and desire Spiritual Gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy [i.e., preach]" (1Corinthians 14:1).

### Prerequisites of Identifying False Teachers

Any True Christian has the ability to mark and avoid False Teachers and their False Doctrine, *if* they:

(1) Are Right With God-- which is implied in the title, True Christian-- "7 Nevertheless I tell you the Truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. 8 And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment... 13 Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all Truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come" (John 16:7-8, 13),

(2) Listen for the leading of the Holy Spirit, i.e., "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14), and

(3) Obey the voice of the Spirit of God, which is to be true to our honest understanding of the Word of God, i.e., "And thine ears shall hear a Word behind thee, saying, This is The Way, walk ye in it" (Isaiah 30:21), which produces in us actions that are consistent with the totality of Scripture, i.e., for the "Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35).

Though we could enumerate a list of the True Doctrines "which are most surely believed among us" (Luke 1:1), e.g., a statement of What We Believe -- <http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Fellowship/What.We.Believe.html> -- at WhatSaithTheScripture.com, it is more important for the honest and sincere Christian to compare "Spiritual things with Spiritual" (1Corinthians 2:13) for himself, and thereby arrive at a personal understanding and an accurate picture of what is and what is not False Doctrine, and who is and who is not a False Teacher. "For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2Corinthians 5:10). In the end, if we honestly doubt that a doctrine is taught in the Scriptures, or we are doubtful about the veracity of a Teacher, then we are obligated not to believe it or trust them. "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of Faith: for whatsoever is not of Faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). We will not only further establish our Faith, but we will also resist False Teachers and their doctrine, if we stand upon the certainty of the "more sure Word" (2Peter 1:19) that we *already understand*. "So then Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17).

### Characteristics of False Teachers

When examining the following list of "Characteristics of False Teachers," remember that it will require the hard work of godly thinking or Spiritual Discernment for you to apply those characteristics to the appropriate circumstances, i.e., "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:14). Also, it will take *only one* of those characteristics (accurately applied) to positively label a False Teacher, i.e., "Every tree is known by his own fruit" (Luke 6:44).

The following are *only a few* of the "Characteristics of False Teachers" that may help us to identify them:

(1) **False Teachers seek to captivate the affections of their audience.** In other words, they appeal most often to our fleshly senses and desires, i.e., sensuality, and not to the necessity of doing right because God said it.

- "They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them" (Galatians 4:17).
- "For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts" (2Timothy 3:6).
- "3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not... 18 For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error" (2Peter 2:3, 18).
- "14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication... 20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols" (Revelation 2:14, 20).

(2) **False Teachers most often desire to control us by advocating some peculiar action or tradition** (e.g., circumcision for the Early Church) which is only their glorying over us-- and, over God!

- "Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the Law: to whom we gave no such commandment" (Acts 15:24).
- "As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the Cross of Christ" (Galatians 6:12).
- "For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision" (Titus 1:10).

(3) **False Teachers are like clouds without water**. They are not what our physical eyes perceive, but they are Spiritual Death yawning its mouth to swallow us.

- "These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots" (Jude 12).

(4) **False Teachers are like clouds carried with a tempest**, in that they are like a whirlwind that attempts to break us away from what we already know and already have the certainty of believing.

- "These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest [Greek, *lailaps*, whirlwind]; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever" (2Peter 2:17).

(5) **False Teachers are deceitful**, which is demonstrable when they do not retract their False Doctrine in Light of the Truth that you have unearthed from the Scriptures and have honestly presented to them. [Warning: Do *not* attempt to argue anyone into submission to the Word of God. Instead, prayerfully, tactfully and meekly present the Truth of the Scriptures, if allowed; and, let God give the increase, "if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth" (2Timothy 2:25), for the "servant of the LORD must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient" (2:24)].

- "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ" (2Corinthians 11:13).
- "Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in My name: I sent them not, neither have I

commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart" (Jeremiah 14:14).

- "How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart" (Jeremiah 23:26).
- "For they that are such serve not our LORD Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:18).
- "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Ephesians 4:14).
- "And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you" (2Peter 2:13).

(6) **False Teachers attempt to destroy the Faith of some by the spread of False Doctrine**, because they are also deceived about its truthfulness, or from some other selfish motive. [Note: Honest mistakes about doctrine versus self-deception can be discerned from their willingness or lack of willingness in doing what they admit to be the known Will of God, i.e., "If any man will do His Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself" (John 7:17). Be as charitable as you can before marking them as a False Teacher, however, in any event, deny them whatever opportunity you rightly can from spreading their doctrine. "Let not an evil speaker be established in the Earth" (Psalm 140:11).]

- "Who concerning the Truth have erred [Greek, *astocheo*, to deviate from, miss (the mark), i.e., purposefully, therefore, sinfully], saying that the Resurrection is past already; and overthrow the Faith of some" (2Timothy 2:18).

(7) **False Teachers misrepresent the character and conduct of God through the spread of False Doctrine**, which can be seen by the fact that God hates their False Doctrine.

- "14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. 15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate" (Revelation 2:14-15).

(8) **False Teachers promote the unprofitable and vain through their spread of False Doctrine**, because they are wicked fools.

- "But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the Law; for they are unprofitable and vain" (Titus 3:9).
- "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with Grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein" (Hebrews 13:9).

(9) **False Teachers are avoided by the Godly**, because their False Doctrine demands the expenditure of Faith upon the endless, profane, deceptive, and vain.

- "Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in Faith: so do" (1Timothy 1:4).
- "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and

oppositions of science falsely so called" (1Timothy 6:20).

- "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Ephesians 4:14).
- "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Colossians 2:8).
- "Thus saith the LORD of Hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD" (Jeremiah 23:16).
- "For thus saith the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel; Let not your prophets and your diviners, that be in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed" (Jeremiah 29:8).

**(10) False Teachers are loved by the wicked, because they spread False Doctrine.**

- "3 For the time will come when they will not endure Sound Doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4 and they shall turn away their ears from the Truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2Timothy 4:3-4).

**(11) False Teachers are believed by the Wicked, because they spread False Doctrine.**

- "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie" (2Thessalonians 2:11).

**(12) False Teachers do not correctly understand, teach, nor abide in the Doctrine of Christ.** [Note: The Antichrist abides not in the Doctrine of Christ, because He claims to be the Substitute, Vicar, or Replacement for Christ on Earth; likewise, willful misrepresentations about the Person and Work of Christ come from False Teachers.]

- "7 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist... 9 Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the Doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the Doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. 10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this Doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed" (2John 7, 9-10).

**(13) False Teachers are known by the reproach they bring upon True Religion.**

- "And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the Way of Truth shall be evil spoken of" (2Peter 2:2).

**(14) False Teachers can be identified by the perverse things that they speak.** [Warning: You will *not* know what is perverse unless you know what is true from the Word of God-- and, *not* by studying what is perverse. "I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil" (Romans 16:19).]

- "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:30).

**(15) False Teachers may generally be identified by the large crowds that they attract.**

- "And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the Way of Truth shall be evil spoken of" (2Peter 2:2).
- "For many shall come in My Name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many" (Matthew 24:5).

(16) **False Teachers will especially be found in these Latter Times.** Conversely, True Teachers will be more the exception from the crowd.

- "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the Latter Times some shall depart from the Faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (1Timothy 4:1).

(17) **False Teachers pervert the Gospel of Christ,** thereby forbidding the Godly from entering the Kingdom of God, and inviting the Ungodly into Heaven without the need of repenting.

- "6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the Grace of Christ unto another gospel: 7 which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ" (Galatians 1:6-7).

(18) **False Teachers shall be known and exposed to all in the End;** but, in the meantime, their folly can be seen in that they "despise wisdom and instruction" (Proverbs 1:7), "hate knowledge" (1:22), and "make a mock at sin" (14:9).

- "But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was" (2Timothy 3:9).

(19) **False Teachers are cruel.**

- "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock" (Acts 20:29).

(20) **False Teachers are deceitful.**

- "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ" (2Corinthians 11:13).

(21) **False Teachers are covetous.**

- "Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake" (Titus 1:11).
- "And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not" (2Peter 2:3).

(22) **False Teachers are ungodly.**

- "4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the Grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only LORD God, and our LORD Jesus Christ... 8 Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities" (Jude 4, 8).

(23) **False Teachers are proud and arrogant.**

- "3 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to Wholesome Words, even the Words of our LORD

Jesus Christ, and to the Doctrine which is according to Godliness; 4 he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings" (1Timothy 6:3-4).

**(24) False Teachers are corrupt and reprobate.**

- "Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the Truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the Faith" (2Timothy 3:8).

**(25) False Teachers use flattery to control the deceived.**

- "For there shall be no more any vain vision nor flattering divination within the house of Israel" (Ezekiel 12:24).
- "For they that are such serve not our LORD Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:18).

**(26) False Teachers can be identified by their encouragement to forget God.**

- "Which think to cause My people to forget My Name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten My Name for Baal" (Jeremiah 23:27).

**(27) False Teachers promise, abuse, and try to destroy Christian Liberty.**

- "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage" (2Peter 2:19).
- "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the Grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only LORD God, and our LORD Jesus Christ" (Jude 4).
- "And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage" (Galatians 2:4).

**(28) False Teachers promise Spiritual Peace to the Wicked.**

- "They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jeremiah 6:14).

**(29) False Teachers most often shrink from persecution.**

- "As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the Cross of Christ" (Galatians 6:12).

**(30) False Teachers are characteristically proud.**

- "3 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to Wholesome Words, even the Words of our LORD Jesus Christ, and to the Doctrine which is according to Godliness; 4 he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings" (1Timothy 6:3-4).

**(31) False Teachers often explain away or minimize the Future Resurrection of the Righteous.**

- "Who concerning the Truth have erred, saying that the Resurrection is past already; and overthrow the Faith of some" (2Timothy 2:18).

(32) **False Teachers promote strife.**

- "When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question" (Acts 15:2).

(33) **False Teachers are thieves at heart.**

- "Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal My words every one from his neighbour" (Jeremiah 23:30).
- "1 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber... 8 All that ever came before Me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them... 10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have Life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:1, 8, 10).

(34) **False Teachers teach vanity.**

- "Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause My people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD" (Jeremiah 23:32).

## Conclusion

When we obey the Scriptures to mark and avoid False Teachers, i.e., "Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the Doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Romans 16:17), we must also be sure that we are observing the warning, "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matthew 7:1). Before we can help someone else with their problem, we must not be guilty of the same ourselves. "3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?... 5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye" (7:3, 5). Jesus did not tell us that we should never judge, only that we should "judge Righteous Judgment" (John 7:24). Our priorities in dealing with False Teachers should be:

- (1) Fidelity to the LORD Jesus Christ as He represents Himself in the Scriptures, i.e., "Let us hold fast the profession of our Faith without wavering; (for He is Faithful that Promised)" (Hebrews 10:23),
- (2) Maintaining our own Personal Holiness in a landscape that encounters False Teachers, i.e., "Having therefore these Promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God" (2Corinthians 7:1),
- (3) Preserving our Brethren in the Faith from becoming the prey of False Teachers, i.e., "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men" (1Thessalonians 5:14),
- (4) Reclaiming both the victims of False Teachers, and even the False Teachers themselves, when it is possible, "20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most Holy Faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, 21 keep yourselves in the Love of God, looking for the Mercy of our LORD Jesus Christ unto Eternal Life. 22 And of some have Compassion, making a difference: 23 and others save with Fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 20-23), and
- (5) Refusing to the end to give ground to those False Teachers, who steadfastly refuse to yield to the Truth, i.e.,

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the Faith" (2Timothy 4:7).

Maranatha!

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## What the Bible Says About Why Did Jesus Have to Suffer?

"Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust,  
that He might bring us to God,  
being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit"

(1Peter 3:18).

by Tom Stewart  
2-20-2004

### Preface

Jesus had to Suffer because the intrinsic value of the Atonement for our sins is both in His Death and Suffering that culminated on the Cross, but especially in His Suffering. "4 Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:4-6). After the Resurrection, Jesus reasoned with Cleopas and another disciple on the Road to Emmaus that it was necessary for the Messiah to have suffered in the fashion He did. "25 Then He said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: 26 ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His Glory?" (Luke 24:25-26). Paul later reasoned with the Jews of Thessalonica concerning the necessity of Christ's Sufferings. "2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, 3 opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, Whom I preach unto you, is Christ" (Acts 17:2-3). The word atonement in the Hebrew is cofer, which means cover, i.e., the cover of the Ark of the Covenant, which was the Mercy Seat. "And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an Atonement [Hebrew, cofer] for your sin" (Exodus 32:30). Scripture gives us to understand that the Atonement of Jesus Christ is a reconciliation to favor (Greek, katallaga) of the Sinner to God by means of a substitution, change, or exchange (Greek, katallasso). "And not only so, but we also Joy in God through our LORD Jesus Christ, by Whom we have now received the Atonement [Greek, katallaga]" (Romans 5:11). "The Atonement is the governmental substitution of the sufferings of Christ for the punishment of sinners. It is the covering of their sins by his sufferings" (from Lecture 34 "Atonement" -- <http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Voice/Systematic.Theology.4.html#LECTURE 34> -- of Lectures on Systematic Theology [1851] -- <http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Voice/Systematic.Theology.html> -- by Charles G. Finney -- <http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html> -). "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to Death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (1Peter 3:18).

**Suffering is the portion of the Godly.** "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2Timothy 3:12). Christ Jesus, being at the same time very God and very Man, suffered in the flesh that His Humanity would learn Obedience to the Moral Law of Love. "Though He were a Son, yet learned He Obedience by the things which He suffered" (Hebrews 5:8). This process of suffering to learn obedience is the Practical Sanctification that all Christians must learn, as well. "4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is One LORD: 5 and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deuteronomy 6:4-5). However, Christ's Suffering on the Cross was more than Practical Sanctification, for it was through the "Once For All" (Hebrews 10:10) Atonement of Christ "Our Lawgiver" (Isaiah 33:22) that "we are sanctified through the Offering of the Body of Jesus Christ" (Hebrews 10:10). In the Counsels of God, it was deemed that the "Sufferings of Christ" (1Peter 1:11) on the Cross of Calvary could most wisely be substituted for the Eternal Damnation of sinners, thus preventing an infinite amount of suffering in those who would repent. "Christ also suffered for us... Who His Own Self bare our sins in His Own Body on the Tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto Righteousness: by Whose Stripes ye were healed" (1Peter 2:21, 24). The Sufferings of Christ Jesus in the Atonement demonstrated the determination of Christ the King not to yield the Authority of His Law, but at the same time manifested the "Love of Christ" (Ephesians 3:19)

towards His undeserving, Hellbound, and rebellious subjects. "13 Greater Love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. 14 Ye are My friends, **if ye do whatsoever** I command you" (John 15:13-14).

The Natural Love that we have for ourselves is a Universal Truth, for "no man ever yet hated his own flesh" (Ephesians 5:29); and, Jesus the Son of Man was no different. "For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet **without** sin" (Hebrews 4:15). He had no special enjoyment of suffering, just as we do not enjoy suffering. "Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a Merciful and Faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make Reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Hebrews 2:17). It is difficult for the Righteous to watch the Guiltless and Innocent suffer, because their suffering is our suffering. "Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body" (Hebrews 13:3). Further, we have been advised by the Scriptures to remain "simple" concerning the specifics of the sufferings that evil men inflict. "For your Obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple [Greek, akeraion, harmless] concerning evil" (Romans 16:19). It was only the Providence of God that allowed the human mother of Jesus to be at the scene of Christ's Crucifixion, and one can only imagine the impression upon Mary as she beheld the Agony of her Son upon the Cross! Perhaps it was at that moment that Mary recalled the prophetic words of Simeon from the dedication of Jesus. "34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary His mother, Behold, this Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a Sign which shall be spoken against; 35 (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (Luke 2:34-35). For those we love, suffering and even death for ourselves would be more desirable than to watch them suffer. But, Jesus **willingly** set His face **like flint** to suffer the Cruel Death of the Cross for friend and foe alike, e.g., the Roman centurion in charge of His Crucifixion exclaimed about the events and manner of Christ's Death on the Cross, "Truly this was the Son of God" (Matthew 27:54).

**Imagine the situation from God's point of view.** He created Humankind as Moral Agents, whose necessity is to always obey the Moral Law of Love, e.g., "35 Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked Him a question, tempting Him, and saying, 36 Master, which is the great Commandment in the Law? 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the First and Great Commandment. 39 And the Second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 22:35-40). But, man has characteristically disobeyed God's Law. "For all have sinned, and come short of the Glory of God" (Romans 3:23). The problem: How can God preserve respect for His Law of Love, which requires that all lawbreakers must be punished, i.e., "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20), while manifesting Love to the same lawbreakers? Unless there was an Atonement, God could not pardon Sinners without announcing to the world that His Law was worthless, since a law without a commensurate penalty is only advice. "6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure. 7 Then said I [Christ], Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me,) to do Thy [the Father's] Will, O God. 8 Above when He [Christ] said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin Thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the Law; 9 then said He [Christ], Lo, I come to do Thy Will, O God. He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second. 10 By the which Will we are Sanctified through the Offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:6-10). An Atonement was necessary to Justify God in His Pardoning of Penitent Sinners, if the object is to save the Sinner and return the ex-Rebel to a continual Obedience to the Moral Law of Love. "24 Being justified freely by His Grace through the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a Propitiation through Faith in His Blood, to declare His Righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 to declare, I say, at this time His Righteousness: that He might be Just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Romans 3:24-26).

**The value of the Suffering of Jesus Christ the Son of God** is primarily in the subduing effect that it has upon the Rebellious, when they understand that it was for them that He suffered and bled and died. "He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:19). Charles G. Finney [1792-1875] -- <http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html> -, in his Lectures on Systematic Theology -- <http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Voice/Systematic.Theology.html> -, enumerated twenty-four reasons "why an atonement in the case of the inhabitants of this world was preferable to punishment, or to the execution of the divine law."

- First, "God's great and disinterested love [love given by God to all without regard to their moral character] to sinners themselves was a prime reason for the atonement." "God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life" (John 3:16).

- Second, "His great love to the universe at large must have been another reason, inasmuch as it was impossible that the atonement should not exert an amazing influence over moral beings [e.g., angels], in whatever world they might exist, and where the fact of atonement should be known." "10 Of which Salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the Grace that should come unto you: 11 searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when It testified beforehand the Sufferings of Christ, and the Glory that should follow. 12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven; which things the angels desire to look into" (1Peter 1:10-12).
- Third, "Another reason for substituting the sufferings of Christ in the place of the eternal damnation of sinners, is, that an infinite amount of suffering might be prevented. The relation of Christ to the universe rendered his sufferings so infinitely valuable and influential, as an expression of God's abhorrence of sin on the one hand, and his great love to his subjects on the other, that an infinitely less amount of suffering in him than must have been inflicted on sinners, would be equally, and no doubt vastly more, influential in supporting the government of God, than the execution of the law upon them would have been. Be it borne in mind, that Christ was the lawgiver, and his suffering in behalf of sinners is to be regarded as the lawgiver and executive magistrate suffering in the behalf and stead of a rebellious province of his empire. As a governmental expedient it is easy to see the great value of such a substitute; that on the one hand it fully evinced the determination of the ruler not to yield the authority of his law, and on the other, to evince his great and disinterested love for his rebellious subjects." "Which in His times He shall shew, Who is the Blessed and Only Potentate, the KING of kings, and LORD of lords" (1Timothy 6:15).
- Fourth, "By this substitution, an immense good might be gained, the eternal happiness of all that can be reclaimed from sin, together with all the augmented happiness of those who have never sinned, that must result from this glorious revelation of God." "In Thy Presence is fulness of Joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Psalm 16:11).
- Fifth, "Another reason for preferring the atonement to the punishment of sinners must have been, that sin had afforded an opportunity for the highest manifestation of virtue in God: the manifestation of forbearance, mercy, self-denial, and suffering for enemies that were within his own power, and for those from whom he could expect no equivalent in return. It is impossible to conceive of a higher order of virtues than are exhibited in the atonement of Christ. It was vastly desirable that God should take advantage of such an opportunity to exhibit his true character, and show to the universe what was in his heart. The strength and stability of any government must depend upon the estimation in which the sovereign is held by his subjects. It was therefore indispensable, that God should improve the opportunity, which sin had afforded, to manifest and make known his true character, and thus secure the highest confidence of his subjects." "Who is like unto Thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like Thee, Glorious in Holiness, Fearful in Praises, doing Wonders?" (Exodus 15:11).
- Sixth, "Another reason for preferring atonement was, God's desire to lay open his heart to the inspection and imitation of moral beings." "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children" (Ephesians 5:1).
- Seventh, "Another reason is, because God is love, and prefers mercy when it can be safely exercised. The Bible represents him as delighting in mercy, and affirms that 'judgment is his strange work. Because he so much prefers mercy to judgment as to be willing to suffer as the sinner's substitute, to afford himself the opportunity to exercise pardon, on principles that are consistent with a due administration of justice.'" "Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His Heritage? He retaineth not His Anger for ever, because He delighteth in Mercy" (Micah 7:18).
- Eighth, "In the atonement God consulted his own happiness and his own glory. To deny himself for the salvation of sinners, was a part of his own infinite happiness, always intended by him, and therefore always enjoyed. This was not selfishness in him, as his own well-being is of infinitely greater value than that of all the universe besides, he ought so to regard and treat it, because of its supreme and intrinsic value." "Thus will I magnify Myself, and sanctify Myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD" (Ezekiel 38:23).
- Ninth, "In making the atonement, God complied with the laws of his own intelligence, and did just that, all things considered, in the highest degree promotive of the universal good." "For as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are My Ways higher than your ways, and My Thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:9).

- Tenth, "The atonement would present to creatures the highest possible motives to virtue. Example is the highest moral influence that can be exerted. If God, or any other being, would make others benevolent, he must manifest benevolence himself. If the benevolence manifested in the atonement does not subdue the selfishness of sinners, their case is hopeless." "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His Glorious Body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Philippians 3:21).
- Eleventh, "It would produce among creatures the highest kind and degree of happiness, by leading them to contemplate and imitate his love." "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17).
- Twelfth, "The circumstances of his government rendered an atonement necessary; as the execution of law was not, as a matter of fact, a sufficient preventive of sin. The annihilation of the wicked would not answer the purposes of government. A full revelation of mercy, blended with such an exhibition of justice, was called for by the circumstances of the universe." "Justice and Judgment are the habitation of Thy Throne: Mercy and Truth shall go before Thy face" (Psalm 89:14).
- Thirteenth, "To confirm holy beings. Nothing could be more highly calculated to establish and confirm the confidence, love, and obedience of holy beings, than this disinterested manifestation of love to sinners and rebels." "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be Holy and without blame before Him in Love" (Ephesians 1:4).
- Fourteenth, "To confound his enemies. How could anything be more directly calculated to silence all cavils, and to shut every mouth, and for ever close up all opposing lips, than such an exhibition of love and willingness to make sacrifices for sinners?" "8 And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the Death of the Cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name: 10 that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in Earth, and things under the Earth; 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the Glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:8-11).
- Fifteenth, "A just and necessary regard to his own reputation made him prefer atonement to the punishment of sinners. A desire to sustain his own reputation, as the only moral power that could support his own moral government, must have been a leading reason for the atonement. The atonement was preferred as the best, and perhaps only way to inspire an affectionate confidence in God. It must have been the most agreeable to God, and the most beneficial to the universe." "Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive Glory and Honour and Power" (Revelation 4:11).
- Sixteenth, "Atonement would afford him an opportunity always to gratify his love in his kindness to sinners, in using means for their salvation, in forgiving and saving them when they repent, without the danger of its being inferred in the universe, that he had not a sufficient abhorrence for their sin." "Wherefore [Jesus] is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make Intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25).
- Seventeenth, "Another reason for the atonement was, to counteract the influence of the devil, which was so extensively and powerfully exerted in this world for the promotion of selfishness." "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from The Beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1John 3:8).
- Eighteenth, "To make the final punishment of the wicked more impressive in the light of the infinite love, manifest in the atonement." "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the Second Death" (Revelation 21:8).
- Nineteenth, "The atonement is the highest testimony that God can bear against selfishness. It is the testimony of his own example." "6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth His Love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6-8).
- Twentieth, "The atonement is a higher expression of his regard for the public interest than the execution of law. It is, therefore, a fuller satisfaction to public justice [justice concerned with the well-being of the public good, not

retributive]." 15 But not as the offence, so also is the Free Gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the Grace of God, and The Gift by Grace, which is by One Man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. 16 And not as it was by one that sinned, so is The Gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the Free Gift is of many offences unto Justification. 17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of Grace and of the Gift of Righteousness shall reign in Life by One, Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:15-17).

- Twenty-first, "The atonement so reveals all the attributes of God, as to complete the whole circle of motives needed to influence the minds of moral beings." "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 9:24).
- Twenty-second, "By dying in human nature, Christ exhibited his heart to both worlds." "14 I am the Good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine. 15 As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down My Life for the sheep. 16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My Voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. 17 Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My Life, that I might take it again. 18 No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have Power to lay it down, and I have Power to take it again. This Commandment have I received of My Father" (John 10:14-18).
- Twenty-third, "The fact, that the execution of the law of God on rebel angels had not arrested, and could not arrest, the progress of rebellion in the universe, proves that something more needed to be done, in support of the authority of law, than would be done in the execution of its penalty upon rebels. While the execution of law may have a strong tendency to prevent the beginning of rebellion among loyal subjects, and to restrain rebels themselves; yet penal inflictions do not, in fact, subdue the heart, under any government, whether human or divine." "Mercy rejoiceth against judgment" (James 2:13). "As a matter of fact, the law was only exasperating rebels, without confirming holy beings. Paul affirmed, that the action of the law upon his own mind, while in impenitence, was to beget in him all manner of concupiscence. One grand reason for giving the law was, to develop the nature of sin, and to show that the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. The law was therefore given that the offence might abound, that thereby it might be demonstrated, that without an atonement there could be no salvation for rebels under the government of God." "Moreover the Law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound" (Romans 5:20).
- Twenty-fourth, "The nature, degree, and execution of the penalty of the law, made the holiness and the justice of God so prominent, as to absorb too much of public attention to be safe. Those features of his character were so fully revealed, by the execution of his law upon the rebel angels, that to have pursued the same course with the inhabitants of this world, without the offer of mercy, might have had, and doubtless would have had, an injurious influence upon the universe, by creating more of fear than of love to God and his government. Hence, a fuller revelation of the love and compassion of God was necessary, to guard against the influence of slavish fear." "16 And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the Voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. 17 And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. 18 And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. 19 And when the Voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a Voice. 20 And the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up. 21 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish. 22 And let the priests also, which come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them" (Exodus 19:16-22).

## Conclusion

As distasteful as Suffering is to our Natural Love of ourselves, we ought certainly to be grateful that the All Wise God felt that our Salvation was worth the Suffering of His Only Begotten Son. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Romans 5:6). How can we not love Him, serve Him, obey Him, and worship Him for now and forever, as we gaze upon the face of Him Who loved us so? "We love Him, because He first loved us" (1John 4:19). Until He comes for us, may we walk worthy of Him. "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to Escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36).

[Read Charles G. Finney's Lecture 34 on the "Atonement" -- [http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Voice/Systematic.Theology.4.html#LECTURE 34](http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Voice/Systematic.Theology.4.html#LECTURE34) -- from his Lectures on Systematic Theology -- <http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Voice/Systematic.Theology.html> -- for a better appreciation of the suffering of Jesus Christ in the Atonement for our sins.]

**END OF COLLECTION**