Ezekiel - Commentaries by Unknown Author

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, Words Translated "Altar"

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Question: Ezek. 43:15. According to the margin two very different and highly significant words are translated “altar”: Harel, mount of God, and Ariel, lion of God. Is the A. V. correct? And if so, what spiritual meaning underlies those singular words? W. R. K.

Answer: It may be well to notice first that the regular word for altar is neither of these terms, but Mizbeach, derived from the verb zebach, to slay, especially as a sacrifice. Hence this is the word in verses 13, 18, 22, 27. The words questioned are figurative. The former, Harel, designates the upper altar, naturally flowing from its etymology; the latter, though capable of meaning “lion of God,” rather signifies “hearth of God,” in this scripture, the whole upper surface of the altar. But “Ariel” in Isa. 29:1, as applied to Jerusalem, makes good sense as “lion of God,” though some prefer there as here “hearth of God,”

Scripture Queries and Answers, Scripture Queries and Answers: The Hour of Temptation

Will you do me the favor of clearing up one or two of my difficulties?

Q. 1. The hour of temptation (which you take to embrace a longer period than the crisis of the great tribulation) is to come upon all the world (the whole habitable world) to try them that dwell upon the earth (apostate Christendom): why upon the whole earth if only to try Christendom?

Again, the " great multitude" are of "all nations, kindred, people and tongues:" do you judge that Christendom has no representation in this that is, that she comes into the tribulation, and is utterly cut off thereby

Do you think the expression, "the great tribulation" embraces the whole Apocalyptic judgments, and judgments of every kind (pre-millennial of course), and touches every member of the human family on earth, save the ten tribes who are brought under the Lord's rod in the land?

In what form does the great tribulation come upon the heathen nations-being far away from the seat of the beast?

May the " great multitude" of Rev. 7 be substantially identified with " the righteous" of Matt. 25:37?

Also will you kindly say whether the Jews will rebuild the temple, or a certain part of it in unbelief, to be destroyed after the abomination of desolation has been setup therein? If not, are we not driven to conclude that Ezekiel's temple will be erected by unbelieving Jews, on the divine pattern (somewhat a difficulty), and the idolatrous image be sustained there before the glory of the God of Israel comes into it? Does Ezek. 43:7, 8, 9, throw any light on this, " the place of the soles of my feet they shall no more defile, nor their kings, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places. In their setting of their threshold by my thresholds, and their post by my posts, and the wall between me and them, they have even defiled my holy name by their abominations?"

What countries are "Gower and all his bands, the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands?" Being in confederacy with the king of the north, I suppose they are Eastern powers. But in Smith's Bible Dictionary the writer seems to identify them with the Cimbri of the north and west of Europe during the Roman Empire (Denmark, between the Elbe. and the Rhine, and Belgium), the whole of the British Isles at one period, and now the Gael of Ireland and Scotland, and the Cymry of Wales. W. R.

A. 1. I consider that " they that dwell' on the earth" is here, at least, rather a moral expression than a designation of apostate Christendom. It is opposed to dwellers in heaven, and not merely a distinction from some other part of the world.

Christendom seems to be not included in the vague and general mass of nations on whom "the great tribulation" is to fall, having its own special description and judgment, as Babylon, &c., just as it also is distinct from the Jews and from Israel in this chapter. The Jews will pass through a tribulation severer than this, but also more circumscribed, as we may gather from Matt. 24 and Mark 13, compared with Jer. 30 and Dan. 12 The scourge is the Assyrian, or king of the north, rather than the beast who is the support of the false prophet, king in Palestine. But it is plain that the Apocalyptic period as a whole is a time of trouble increasing in intensity and over many spheres, extending to Gentiles as well as Jews; and as the everlasting gospel will go out far and wide, so I think the surviving fruit of that last mission will be seen in " the righteous" or sheep of Matt. 25, when the Son of man comes and reigns over the earth. That apostate Christendom will have the sternest doom of all, is plain from 2 Thess. 2:10-12.

Undoubtedly the Jews will build in unbelief the temple in which the lawless one or Antichrist is to sit as God. But we have no reason to suppose that God would deign to own it, or that the temple as described by Ezekiel is not distinct. We must remember that it is the habit of scripture to regard " the house" as having a continuity of character, however often destroyed and rebuilt. In Haggai it is not "the glory of this latter house," but " the latter glory of this house."

" Gomer and all his bands" are north-eastern; but Possibly the Cimbri, &c., may be some of the race that migrated westward. " The house of Togarmah" of the north quarters I presume to be the Armenian stock, as the latter people say themselves. They will follow Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshed], and Tubal, that is, the last head of the Russian Empire. (Ezek. 38; 39)

Whither Bound?, ?Danger! Keep Out!?

One bright summer afternoon in 1892 two young men, Charles and Walter, were cautiously hiking down a steep mountain trail near Pike's Peak. They were only casual acquaintances, having only recently met at a Manitou Colorado health resort. As they rounded a curve, they came upon the entrance to a cave. It was boarded up, and over it was a large sign: "DANGER! KEEP OUT!" Charles stopped to peer between the boards into the darkness, exclaiming, "I should like to explore this cave! Will you go with me?"

"Most assuredly not," replied Walter, and begged him not to attempt it. But Charles was determined!

How typical of those of this world! "Men loved darkness rather than light" (John 3:19). God has plainly posted his danger signs: "The wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23); "after this the judgment." (Hebrews 9:27). "I have set before you life and death ... therefore choose life." (Deuteronomy 30:19). "Oh that they were wise ... that they would consider their latter end!" (Deuteronomy 32:29).

At the foot of the trail Charles obtained a lantern, said, "Good-bye" to his friend, and returned to the cave. Lighting his lantern and pushing aside the barriers, he boldly entered the deep dark cavern. At first his feeble light seemed barely to penetrate the dense darkness, but as his eyes became more accustomed, he could discern jagged rocks and walls, and a path, down which he cautiously moved. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12). All seemed to go well for a time, until suddenly he stepped off into space, and fell down a precipice, where he lay unconscious.

How many there are who grope by the flickering light of reason, and at death take a "leap into the dark!"

"He that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth" (John 12:35). When Charles came to, he found himself bruised and sore, engulfed in thick darkness, and with his lantern in pieces at his side. In his pocket he found a few matches, which he struck, one by one, only to have them flicker and go out. Their light had shown him the precipice over which he had fallen, but which was impossible to climb. Trembling with cold and terror, he scarcely dared move, for fear of falling again, so he crept carefully along on hands and knees until his trousers were worn through and his knees bleeding. Dreading being buried alive, he felt sure he must die!

In his despair and anguish, the sins of his past life came before him, and he cried to God for mercy, not for the salvation of his body, for that seemed impossible, but to save his never-dying soul! Scriptures which he had often heard, but never heeded, came flooding into his soul with living power. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3:36). These precious truths, like warm sunshine, illuminated his dark cold heart, and he accepted the Saviour as having died for his sins.

Still his bodily plight was unchanged, and he decided to keep moving as long as his strength lasted. He had no idea of the passage of time, as he painfully and hopelessly dragged himself over rocks and stones. He thought of his mother, and finding a piece of paper and a pencil in his pocket, he scribbled a note to her as best he could telling her not to mourn for him but to rejoice, because this dreadful experience had been the means of bringing him to his blessed Saviour, who loved him and had given Himself for him, and he was happy in the thought of soon being with Him. He gave her address, asking that his body be sent to her.

Still creeping wearily about, he felt a rope, which he followed with wondering hope until something — was it fresh air? — touched his cheek! On he went; then a pale glimmer of light appeared, which gradually increased until he could dimly discern in the distance an opening! At last he reached it and emerged into the light! The sun was shining brightly. He had entered the cave at four p.m. and it was now noon of the next day.

When picked up by a search party, he was a sight — ragged, bleeding, dirty and weak! He soon recovered from that ordeal, but his spiritual change could never be erased from his soul, for he was turned "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God" (Acts 26:18).

Listen! "Woe unto them ... to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." (Jude 11,13)

"As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked ... turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" (Ezekiel 33:11)

Correspondence, Correspondence: The Comission of Ezekiel

Ques. 168. Is the commission given to Ezekiel the prophet, in Chapter, 2 and 3, also given to us?

L. C.

Ans. It is of great importance to rightly divide the word of truth. The Hebrews were unskillful in the word of righteousness, (Heb. 5:13.) that is, what was of direct application to themselves. There is much profit in studying the whole Word of God, but we must distinguish what is written to the Jew or Gentile, from what is addressed to the saints in Christ Jesus who compose the Church of God.

If we look at our place in Christ we see that we are not under law but under grace. (Rom. 6:14.) There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. (Rom. 8:1) We are accepted in the Beloved. (Eph. 1:6.) And as He is so are we in this world. (1 John 4:17.) We are children, the family of God. (Eph, 2:19. 1 John 3:1.) Our service to the Lord is in keeping with this grace. We are not compelled to serve; if we serve the Lord, it is, if right, the expression of our heart's joy and not compulsion from fear of penalty. If I were held responsible for anyone's soul, I should be lost: I could not be responsible for my own salvation. My Great High Priest Hoes that for me. We are the subjects of grace and in this law of liberty we must walk and serve.

God may apply scriptures directed to Ezekiel, Jeremiah and others, to us to stir us up to more earnest devotedness to Christ and here we may see the living character of the Word of God. But in all our service we must bear in mind our heavenly calling and the true grace of God in which we stand. We serve in the joy and gladness of children, and thus express our gratitude to God. We must not think that the Lord's work

among men is dependent upon us, but further that in condescending grace He gives us fellowship in what He is doing and if in any small way we may be used, we have to say "yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." (1 Cor. 15:10.) In Luke 10, Martha had service so much before her, she could not sit at Jesus' feet and hear His Word. She blamed the Lord and Mary, her sister for not helping her. She could tell the Lord what His duty was; such service has no happiness in it. The Lord gently rebukes her, as careful and troubled about many things: her work might be right, but her spirit was wrong. "But one thing is needful and Mary hath chosen that good part, (not better part, Martha's part was not good) which shall not be taken away from her." Many now are so busy working for the Lord, they have no time to hear His Word, and they blame others who do not go in their ways. The Lord says to the Philadelphian assembly, (Rev. 3:8.) "I know thy works." He says it approvingly, as if to confirm them and bid them be satisfied with the sense of His approval, no matter what others might do or say. And like the man who was blind, (Mark 10:52,) to whom Jesus said, "Go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole," and immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way. So we now, through grace, find it our delight to serve and follow Him.

Original Sin: The Fallen Nature of Man, Original Sin: the Fallen Nature of Man: No. 1

To one accustomed to read the scriptures, the words, " original sin/' have a strange sound. There is not only not such an expression in scripture, but also, strictly speaking, it is not a correct expression. Original sin would imply sin as the original condition of a creature as created; indeed it would charge it as the work of the Creator. We need scarcely say this is not the case.

Even as to Satan, this was far from being so. lie is described under the figure of king of Tyrus, thus: " Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God.....Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.....Thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God..... Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty; thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness/' &c. (Eze. 28:12-17.) Whether we look, then, at Satan, or at man, both were perfect as created of God. Satan used his very beauty and perfection for his fall.

We will now look, not at Adam as originally a sinner, but at the way in which sin was introduced by Satan; or, the way by which man became a sinner.

In Genesis we have no account of the creation of Satan or of his fall, but how he deceived the woman, and thus introduced sin and evil to the human race.

Here we would notice, as has often been observed, that it was not God that gave up man for the trifling thing of eating an apple; but just the opposite, man gave up God for an apple, on the ground of what Satan said: or, in other words, the woman listened to, and then believed, Satan the father of lies, and distrusted God. The serpent suggested unkindness in God, that He was withholding what was for man's good. The woman listened to this foul lie. Then the serpent, point blank, denied the truth of the word of God—"Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil."

The woman believed Satan; sin thus entered—it conceived, and brought forth all its fruits. She lusted for the fruit: she took it, she ate; and she gave to Adam, and he did eat. Oh, how terrible the consequences! They were naked—they knew it. They might try to hide it from themselves—they could not hide it from God. They had given up God for the lie of Satan, and they were afraid of God. They tried to hide themselves from God. But had God given them up because they had so sadly sinned? Nay, He came to seek them, He said, "Adam, where art thou?" Nay, it was not until God had given the germ of the promise concerning the woman's seed in the sentence on the serpent; and not until the Lord God had made coats of skins, and clothed them, both Adam and his wife, that He then really drove them forth from the garden of Eden. " So he drove out the man: and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden, cherubims, and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." That is, it was real mercy thus to prevent man, in his now fallen, sinful state, from eating of the tree of life, and living forever.

Surely we must see, however man had sinned against God, yet God is love, and what God did to man was love; but not love at the expense of righteousness. What a change in Adam! And notice, there was no promise of any improvement or restoration to Adam. What promise there was, all pointed to the Seed of the woman.

Here, then, is God's account of the fall, and the introduction of evil into this world; and there is no other account in existence worthy of a moment's notice.

Neither can it be denied that the whole human tace is in the very sinful state here described. The same distrust of God, the same doubt as to His goodness to man, the same effort to hide man's shame and sin from God, and the same tender love of God come down to seek him, saying, " Where art thou?" And though God has devised, and is righteous in providing, a perfect covering for man, yet it is a fact that man in his natural state, as descended from Adam, is not in Eden; he is driven out, and he, as a child of Adam, cannot live in the body forever. "Dying, thou shalt die;" and dying, he does die. This is, to say the least of it, a remarkable fact, that the account given to us in Genesis exactly describes the condition of the whole of Adam's posterity, or the human race.

How is this? Another scripture will explain. " As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. 5:12.) It is not correct to do as some do, alter the end of this text, and say, " in whom all have sinned." " For that all have sinned" is the unanswerable proof of the extent of the fall. Sin, then, was not man's original condition; but we have seen how it entered into the world, and we have seen, as to man, how death came by sin. It is also a fact that death so passed upon all men; and all the wisdom, and efforts, or unbelief of the whole world, can neither do away with sin, nor shut the mouth of the all-devouring grave. Every policeman, and every funeral we meet, is a proof of this—nay, almost everything and person you meet is proof of this. The doctor, the magistrate, the mourning dress, &c, all tell of sin and death.

And what are all the places of man's amusements, but proofs of his desperate effort to hide from God? And what are all the efforts of these same men to work out some sort of a religion to cover their sin and shame? Is it not the story of the fig-leaves over again? Oh, that men did but know the love of Him who still says, " Where art thou?" Yes, the God of love, who is rich in mercy to such as were t fulfilling the lusts of the

flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." (Read Eph. 2:2-4.)

What is man's state by nature (called the flesh), that in which he is born? Let another inspired writer answer: " Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Psalm 51:5.) Ye have seen how sin came into the world, how it passed upon all men; we know, too, that all have sinned—this proves it is so. But here, in this psalm, we have the exact statement how it affects us at our very birth.

Now the law could not improve this sinful nature, called flesh. " For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death." " For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin." Such, then, is the result of Adam's sin to Adam's race—such is the sinful condition of every child horn in this world. Such have we all found it to be as we have grown to years of knowledge. Such we are born, such we are by nature. To say it is not so, is a most serious fundamental mistake.

What is meant, then, by the term, " original sin/' is not that man was made, or created, a sinner, but that, having become a sinner, all his posterity are born in sin—sin is their very nature. We will use the expression in this sense.

Now it is evident this cannot mean that we have committed sins before we were born, which would be impossible and absurd. That is a thought evidently connected with the old Eastern idea of transmigration of souls.

We now, with these remarks, ask attention for a moment to that strange delusion, that original sin is washed away in baptism. First, the child is baptized for the remission of sins it never has committed. Then it is held " that all that which has the true and proper nature of sin" is taken away by baptism; and thus the baptized are made innocent, immaculate, pure, harmless, and beloved of God, heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ. It is almost impossible to believe that the professing church could have fallen into such error—but it did, and also cursed all who did not agree with this strange delusion. It could not, however, be denied that, when the child grew up after baptism, a sinful nature—call it what we will—still existed; but the professing church flatly contradicted the word of God, and said that though the apostle called it sin, yet it [the church] did not understand it to be properly sin in those born again by baptism, as they called it. (Rom. 7:8.) See the full statement in Council of Trent, sec. v. 5. This was pretty bold work, to curse all who said what the apostle taught was true.

That all children dying in infancy are saved, is certain; for Jesus came to save them, and of such is the kingdom of heaven. (Matt, xviii. 10, 11.) " For the Son of man is come to save that which is lost."

But we must go a little further than this delusion of the dark ages of baptismal regeneration; and ask, Do the scriptures teach that in truly being born anew, original sin, or the sinful nature in which we are born, that that has the true and proper nature of sin in us, is taken away? Where is this taught? Does the Lord, when speaking of the new birth, say that which is flesh is taken away, or improved, or made pure? He says the opposite: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." And the apostle distinctly recognizes this evil nature—the flesh—in the believer. " For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot [or may not] do the things that ye would." It may be said, This cannot possibly mean that the believer, who is born of God, still has sin in him! The apostle John says, " If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us," Does it not, then, follow, that if we say sin was taken away by baptismal regeneration, and that we—the baptized—have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us? Nothing can be more certain than that if we hold that doctrine the truth is not in us.

But is it not equally so if we hold that the death of Christ, or the work of the Holy Spirit in being born anew, has taken away original sin, or our sinful nature, and that therefore we have no sin? In this case also the truth is not in us, equally as in the former case. We are assured that many who understand pretty clearly that we have forgiveness of sins committed, through the blood of Jesus: yet are in great confusion as to original sin, or sin the root in us. We know the common thought is, that in some way this root may be pulled up, sin may be eradicated, so that the sinful flesh is changed, and made holy—yea, in some sinless. There is no such thought in scripture, no such fact in experience down here. If we say so, we simply deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. Nothing is more common than this mistake, that the new birth means a change of the old man; or, if not so that sanctification will perfect the change, and altogether change the original sinful nature in which we were born. What a sad mistake! Does not the man who is born of God find that nature still in him? though he can say, "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind," &c. Here, in the quickened soul, there are two distinct natures. And the lesson must be learned, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not."

And cannot the law, or our efforts to keep it, help us in this dilemma, when we find, after all, there is still sin in us? Not in the least. "But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence (or lust). What pen can describe the misery of thousands thus seeking in the flesh to keep the law; or, by the law, as a rule of life, seeking to improve the flesh? " What, then/' said a person the other day; " Is sin still on the believer all his life here, after Christ has died for him, and he is born of the Spirit?"

Let us look into the scriptures for the remedy and the answer. C. S.

You never really get rid of yourself except in the presence of God.

Original Sin: The Fallen Nature of Man, Original Sin: the Fallen Nature of Man: No. 2

Our friend's question was this—"Is sin still on the believer all his life, while he lives here?" What is the answer of scripture? If sin be still on him he is eternally lost, for there can be no more offering for sin; and without shedding of blood there can be no remission of sin. (Heb. 9:22.)

Sin, or the flesh, the old nature, is still in him—he is deeply conscious of this. The scripture does not say, Blessed is the man in whom there is no sin; but, " Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." (Rom. 4:8.) If sin, then, is still in the believer, how is it true that it is not on him? In other words, if sin, as a fact, is in the believer, how is God righteous in not reckoning it on him, or to him? This is not the question of God forgiving our sins for Christ's sake, but the deeper question, How has God dealt with what we call original sin, the root of all the sins? We do not read that He has, or does, forgive this, the flesh, or sin in the flesh. What then? Did not Jesus die to put away sin? Truly the word says that " he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." " Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the

world." " For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." Most surely that work is accomplished on the cross by which all this shall be effected. But to see the full effect in result, we must wait for the new creation—the new heavens and the new earth. Is sin put away from the world? Are the works of the devil yet destroyed?

Now as to the believer. First, it is all-important to know the ground of the righteousness of God in not reckoning the sin that is in us. It has been not forgiven, but judged; condemned, according to all the claims of infinite holiness, and righteous wrath against sin. " For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. 5:21.) " God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin [or by a sacrifice for sin] condemned sin in the flesh." What wondrous grace this is to us, and what righteousness! Since my sin has been condemned in the person of my Substitute, it cannot in righteousness be reckoned to me, or on me. Thus is that word fulfilled, " Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."

Now, if we see that sin has thus been judged in the person of our Substitute, the Son of God in the likeness of sinful flesh, we see that God does not reckon it to exist before Him: then we can say, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Can you look back at the cross, and not only say, He was delivered for my offenses—sins which I have committed; but can you also say, "I am crucified with Christ"? Then will you also understand that word, " Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 6:3-14.) This, then, is how scripture deals with sin, the root, or evil nature. It is there. It is not changed. The Lord says, " That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit," That which is born of a sinful nature remains a sinful nature. Why is it not condemned in me? It has been, in my Substitute. " I am crucified with [him] Christ." It is not on me, though in me—cannot be imputed to me; because I am not reckoned alive in the flesh, or sin, but dead with Christ, and alive to God, If Christ, then, bare our sins, was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification; and if sin, the root, has also been condemned, and we accept this judgment of death on the old man, as an accomplished fact; what is there left to judge or condemn in those who are dead with Christ, and in Him alive to God? Plainly " There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 8:1.)

Sins all forgiven, to be remembered no more. Sin not imputed. And all this eternal redemption, immutably the same. If this is not so, if either a single committed sin, or the sin still in us, be reckoned to us, how can we be saved? or, in that case, how could it be true that the worshippers once purged should have no more conscience of sins? (Heb. 10:2.) Are we not quite conscious that we do sin, and that we still have sin in us, and that we need the mighty power of God to keep us every hour? How is it, then, that we have no more conscience of sins—that is, that sins are no more between us and God? Because we are justified from sins by the death and resurrection of Christ. We are dead with Christ. Thus sins, and sin, can never be imputed unto us. And in no other way could we understand those remarkable words: "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God..... For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." This is the truth which has been lost for centuries. The two things are equally true. Whilst Jesus sits there, the believer sanctified through the offering of His body is thus perfected here. That is, as to sin being reckoned to him, or on him, or on his conscience, between God and his soul, the Holy Ghost bears witness that God will remember, his sins no more. Oh, blessed witness of the Holy Spirit! Why should we doubt Him?

It is in this sense we understand, if in the light "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." That is, it is not that sin is eradicated, that we can say we have no sin as a fact: if we do, we deceive ourselves; but that sin is not imputed to us. The context proves this. (1 John 1:7.) Indeed we have distinct instruction, both if any man sin, and also on the confession of our sins, forgiveness and restoration. We will look, however, a little further into the question of sin, the fallen nature.

If, says the inquirer, grace has so abounded, both over our sins and over sin; if salvation is so entirely the work of Christ; would not this make us indifferent about sin? Is it so even amongst men? If a friend has shown you great kindness in deep distress, does the depth of your need, and the vastness of the unexpected kindness, make you the more indifferent about pleasing him? Nay, is it not the opposite? Does not the half-and-half gospel which men believe only produce halfhearted obedience and lukewarmness to Christ?

If a sinner is brought, through grace, to believe that God has loved him from eternity, given His Son to die for him whilst he was a sinner, that -there is now nothing between his soul and God, that God loves him with infinite and everlasting love—will not the effect be, that he loves God because God first loved him?

And more, the scripture says, "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" It may be said that death alone is not power. Quite true; but we are dead to sin, and alive to God in Christ, that we should not serve sin; that it should no longer be our master. That we should yield our members unto another master, even unto God, as those that are alive from the dead. On this follows the great delivering truth, " For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." As born of the Spirit, we learn, in one way or other, the terrible nature of " the law of sin which is in my members/é But now, having the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, we are free from the law of sin and death. Therefore, though the flesh is still in us, we are not debtors to it, to fulfill its lusts, or to live after it. The flesh is still there, for it lusteth against the Spirit; that is, against the Spirit of God dwelling in us. "I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." (Gal. 5:16, 17.) Thus, whilst we see distinctly that the power of deliverance is the law of the Spirit of life, yet these scriptures plainly imply that the flesh is there, and unchanged, though no longer master.

There is one point more. Many a reader will say, This is very different from what I have been taught. I thought our old sinful nature, or original sin in us, that in which we were born, had been done away somehow, either by baptism, regeneration, or sanctification—when shall we be pure and sinless, have no sin? Is our own death to do more for us than the death of Christ?—more than our redemption?

This shows most sadly the effect of the loss of the true knowledge of the coming of the Lord, without which we cannot hold the true, complete gospel of God. Death is made the great event, the climax of the Christiana hope, in modern teaching. Not so in scripture. To be absent from the body, and present with the Lord, is far better. But are all the effects of sin actually gone in death? Death is the effect of sin, by sin it came. Is the day of our death the day of our redemption, for which we hope? Is it in death that we shall be like the risen and glorified Christ? As to our bodies, we could not be more unlike His body; His body incorruptible in glory, ours a loathsome mass of corruption in the grave. No, it is not for death that we wait as the day of our redemption from original sin, and its effects. No, the very opposite, we are " waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of our body."

Let us, then, pass on to that glorious consummation, the resurrection of those that are Christ's at His coming. To faith redemption is sure. We are sealed by the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption. (Eph. 4:30.) But it is not until that blessed day of redemption that the full results of redemption will be seen in us. Never till then shall we bear the image of the heavenly. When we see Him, we shall be like Him. Can anyone in this present state say that he is sinless as Christ is pure? He would only deceive himself, and the truth would not be in him. Then, oh, blessed fact! we shall be pure, as He is pure—we shall be like Him; and he that hath this hope in Him, purifieth himself, as He is pure. Away, then, with the mistaken thought that our death will do more for us than the death of Christ. We have no right to look for death at all. We may not have to die, but be alive when He comes. But shall we not, when we in His glory shine, ascribe it all to His death on the cross? Yes, and onward still; when the untold numbers are saved, and sealed during days of tribulation; yes, and the teeming multitudes of millennial days, when scattered Israel shall be born in a day; yea, when the new heavens and the new earth shall appear.

Then, and now, would we ascribe

No pen can describe, no tongue can tell, the full results of the cross of Christ. God has surely proved His acceptance of that infinite atonement in raising Him from the dead. Now, there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ. Sins forgiven, sin judged, and we justified from all things. And soon, very soon, to see Him, and to be like Him, when He appears. " Behold the bridegroom." He says, " Surely I come quickly." Every desire of the heart will be far more than realized in that blissful moment. Then shall we be actually perfect in the fullest sense at the resurrection from among the dead. For this, may we, with the apostle, be able to say, " I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." He did not press on to attain to death; but, any way, by death asleep in Jesus, or alive when He comes; that in any way he might arrive at it, or, " If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead." (Phil. 3:11.) Then shall sin and its effects with us be no more. For the present it is not imputed to us. We have also the delivering power of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and we wait for the coming of the Lord. C. S.

Keeping the Spirit's unity is not confined to the truth of the " one body;" but when any of its members go on together with the "one Spirit," then its unity is being so far kept.

Correspondence, Correspondence: Devil a Man? Better/Lower than Angels?

Ques. Please explain Ezek. 28:2. In verse 2 the devil seems to be called a man.

Ans. Ezek. 28:2 is a description of the King or prince of Tyrus, and the parallel, or symbolism to Satan does not begin until we get to the 12th verse. Here the Spirit of God evidently seizes on the proud monarch of Tyrus to clothe him with a description that evidently goes far beyond the king personally, but gives us a view into the past history of that august, but sinister being-Satan. Another has remarked,

“The higher we climb in the ranks of the great in this world, the nearer we get to the one who is the god and prince of this world,-Satan.”

Ques. Why is Christ said to be "better than the angels" in Heb. 1, and "lower than the angels" in Heb. 2:7.

Ans. God had spoken in the past by prophets, and in these last days by His Son. What a wonderful Person He is! What depths there are to each of the sentences in those chapters.

In the first chapter, we see Christ in deity, and as such He is higher than the angels.

In the second chapter, we see Him in humanity, and there we see Him in a place lower than the angels. What grace! As God, higher than the angels; as Man, lower than the angels.

In chapter 2, redemption is brought in. Had He been only a Man, He could not have redeemed us, but being God He could, but He became a Man.

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, New Heart, A

Question: Is it scriptural to teach that the believer in Christ has “a new heart” now?

K.T.

Answer: The context in which these words are found (Ezek. 18:30, 31; 36:25-27) describes the great moral or spiritual change to be effected in the house of Israel in a day still future.

Similar expressions in the New Testament, such as, God “purifying their hearts by faith,” “having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience” (Acts 15:9; Heb. 10:22), etc., reveal the change now wrought in Jew and Gentile who, believing “the gospel of our salvation,” have been given to rest on the Savior’s atoning death and resurrection. Hence, we have new affections, new desires, being born of God—made partakers of a Divine nature—and have the abiding in-dwelling Spirit of God. Yet have we the old sinful nature still. It is unchanged and unchangeable (that which is born of the flesh is flesh); but “condemned” in the cross of Christ— “our old man is crucified with Christ,” and the believer is now called to reckon himself dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.” But sin is no longer to reign in our mortal body that we should obey it in the lusts of it. And if we walk in the Spirit we shall not fulfill the flesh’s lusts.

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