

Rainbow of Grace and Law



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The old story of the slave auctions in old New Orleans, in the United States of America, is a good illustration of the rainbow of grace and the law. Two planters were bidding for an old Negro slave who kept shouting his rebellion from the auction block. Finally, one of the planters won the bid and took the slave in his wagon back to the farm. Throughout the journey the defiant black man declared that he would not work for the new owner.

By law, the planter was now the master of the new slave. By grace, when they arrived at the plantation, the planter dropped the shackles from the newly bought slave and said, "You are free to go. You are no longer a slave. I bought you in order to give you your liberty." According to the story, the old man fell at the feet of the planter and said, "Master, I will serve you forever."

Another old story is told of two brothers, the older brother a law-judge, and the younger a law-breaker. His younger brother was brought before him as a transgressor of the law. From all the evidence it was clear to all that he was guilty. The court was tense. Would the judge mete out justice in such a case?

The judge looked at his brother and sternly declared him guilty. Then he stunned the court by imposing the maximum fine. But immediately he left the bench and threw his arms around his brother and said, "I had to do it because you are guilty. I know you cannot pay the fine, but I will pay it for you."

At an infinite cost, Christ paid the price of sin to secure our freedom. The law had declared: "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). By paying the maximum penalty, death at the cross, Christ, like the judge in the story, not only did not abolish the law, but he greatly magnified it. Like the planter in the story, Christ sets us free from the bondage of sin. Our response must be, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:69), and like the slave, "Master, I will serve you forever."

Rainbow around the throne

In Revelation, John saw the rainbow encircling God's throne. "And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and *there was* a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald" (Revelation 4:3). As the bow in the cloud represents the union of the sunlight and the shower, so the rainbow encircling the throne represents the

combined power of grace and the law. In God's government, it is not justice alone that is to be maintained; for this would eclipse the glory of the rainbow of promise above the throne; man could see only the penalty of the law. But were there no justice, no penalty, there would be no stability to the government of God.

It is the mingling of grace and the law, mercy and judgment, which makes salvation full and complete. It is the blending of the two that leads us, as we view the world's Redeemer and the law of Jehovah, to exclaim, "Thy gentleness hath made me great" (Psalms 18:35). By this we know that the gospel is a perfect and complete system, revealing the immutability of the law of God. It inspires the heart with hope, and with love for God. Grace invites us to enter through the gates into the city of God, and the law is vindicated to accord to every obedient soul full privileges as a member of the royal family, a child of the heavenly King.

If we were defective in character, we could not pass the gates that grace has opened to the obedient; for the law stands at the entrance, and demands holiness, purity, in all who would see God. Were the law extinct, and were it possible for divine grace to open the gates to the whole race,

irrespective of character, there would be a worse condition of disaffection and rebellion in heaven than before Satan was expelled. The peace, happiness, and harmony of heaven would be broken up. The change from earth to heaven will not change men's characters; the happiness of the redeemed in heaven results from the characters formed in this life, after the image of Christ. The saints in heaven will first have been saints on earth.

The salvation that Christ made such a sacrifice to gain for man, is that which is alone of value, that which saves from sin – the cause of all the misery and woe in our world. Grace extended to the sinner is constantly drawing him to Jesus. If he responds, coming in penitence with confession, in faith laying hold of the hope set before him in the gospel, God will not despise “a broken and contrite heart” (Psalms 51:17). Thus the law of God is not weakened, but the power of sin is broken, and the scepter of grace is extended to the penitent sinner.

Grace breaks the hold of sin

It is this grace extended to the penitent sinner that enables him to break the hold of sin. And what is this sin that grace breaks? The Bible defines it: “sin

is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4). In other words, grace enables us to receive power from God so that we no longer transgress the law. Grace does not work in competition of or against the law.

The apostle Paul tells us, “where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” (Romans 5:20). Our condition through sin is unnatural, and the power that restores us must be supernatural, else it has no value. There is but one power that can break the hold of evil from the hearts of men, and that is the power of God on Jesus Christ. Only through the blood of the Crucified One is there cleansing from sin. His grace alone can enable us to resist and subdue the tendencies of our fallen nature.

The beloved apostle John tells us, “For 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). Satan is determined that men shall not see the love of God, which led Him to give His only-begotten Son to save the lost race; for it is the goodness of God that leads men to repentance.

When we understand God’s grace, we cannot but exclaim, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God” (1 John 3:1)! Seeing in Christ, the

evidence of God's grace, John said to his audience, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29)! Let us look at the cross of Calvary. It is a standing pledge of the boundless love, the measureless grace, of the heavenly Father.

Unsearchable riches of His grace

The child of God will not rest satisfied until he is clothed with the righteousness of Christ and sustained by His life-giving power. When he sees a weakness in his character, it is not enough to confess it again and again; he must go to work with determination and energy to overcome his defects by building up opposite traits of character. He will not shun this work because it is difficult. Untiring energy is required of the Christian; but he is not obliged to work in his own strength; divine power awaits his demand. Everyone who is sincerely striving for the victory over self will appropriate the promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee" (1 Corinthians 12:9).

Through personal effort joined with the prayer of faith the soul is trained. Day by day the character grows into the likeness of Christ. It may cost a severe conflict to overcome habits which have been

long indulged, but we may triumph through the grace of Christ. In the end, we can all, like Paul, say, "By the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Corinthians 15:10). If we are true to the promptings of the Spirit of God, we shall go on from grace to grace and from glory to glory until we shall receive the finishing touch of immortality.

The apostle Paul tells us, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, . . . and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:4-7).

We would never have learned the meaning of this word "grace" had we not fallen. God loves the sinless angels who do His service and are obedient to all His commands, but He does not give them grace. These heavenly beings know naught of grace; they have never needed it, for they have never sinned. Grace is an attribute of God shown to

undeserving human beings. We did not seek after it, but it was sent in search of us. God rejoices to bestow this grace on everyone who hungers for it, not because we are worthy, but because we are so utterly unworthy. Our need is the qualification which gives us the assurance that we will receive this gift.

But God does not use this grace to make His law of none effect or to take the place of His law. "The Lord is well pleased for His righteousness' sake; He will magnify the law, and make it honorable" (Isaiah 42:21). His law is truth.

God's grace and the law of His kingdom are in perfect harmony; they walk hand in hand. His grace makes it possible for us to draw nigh to Him by faith. By receiving it, and letting it work in our lives, we testify to the validity of the law; we exalt the law and make it honorable by carrying out its living principles.

How may we witness for God? By rendering pure, wholehearted obedience to God's law. If we will let Him, He will manifest Himself in us, and we shall be witnesses, before the universe of heaven and before an apostate world who are making void the law of God, to the power of redemption. There is but one power that can bring us into conformity to the likeness of Christ, that can make us steadfast

and keep us constant. It is the grace of God that comes to us through obedience to the law of God.

It is not because of any restriction on the part of God that the riches of His grace do not flow earthward to men. If all were willing to receive, all would become filled with His Spirit. Like the apostle Paul, we will count it grace to tell the story of redemption. Paul said, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Ephesians 3:8).

It is the privilege of every soul to be a living channel through which God can communicate to the world the treasures of His grace, the unsearchable riches of Christ. There is nothing that Christ desires so much as agents who will represent to the world His Spirit and character. There is nothing that the world needs so much as the manifestation through humanity of the Saviour's love.

As your soul yearns after God, you will find more and still more of the unsearchable riches of His grace. As you contemplate these riches, you will come into possession of them, and will reveal the merits of the Saviour's sacrifice, the protection of His righteousness, the fulness of His wisdom, and His

power to present you before the Father “without spot, and blameless” (2 Peter 3:14).

Grace establishes the law

Many religious teachers assert that Christ by His death abolished the law, and men are henceforth free from its requirements. There are some who represent it as a grievous yoke, and in contrast to the bondage of the law they present the liberty to be enjoyed under the gospel.

But not so did prophets and apostles regard the holy law of God. Said David: “I will walk at liberty: for I seek Thy precepts” (Psalm 119:45). The apostle James, who wrote after the death of Christ, refers to the Decalogue as “the royal law” and “the perfect law of liberty” (James 2:8; 1:25). And the revelator, half a century after the crucifixion, pronounces a blessing upon them “that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city” (Revelation 22:14).

The claim that Christ by His death abolished His Father’s law is without foundation. Had it been possible for the law to be changed or set aside, then Christ need not have died to save man from the penalty of sin. The death of Christ, so far from

abolishing the law, proves that it is immutable. The Son of God came to “magnify the law, and make it honorable” (Isaiah 42:21). He said: “Think not that I am come to destroy the law;” “till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law” (Matthew 5:17, 18). And concerning Himself He declares: “I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within My heart” (Psalm 40:8).

The law of God, from its very nature, is unchangeable. It is a revelation of the will and the character of its Author. God is love, and His law is love. Its two great principles are love to God and love to man. “Love is the fulfilling of the law” (Romans 13:10). The character of God is righteousness and truth; such is the nature of His law. Says the psalmist: “Thy law is the truth:” “all Thy commandments are righteousness” (Psalm 119:142, 172). And the apostle Paul declares: “The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good” (Romans 7:12). Such a law, being an expression of the mind and will of God, must be as enduring as its Author.

It is the work of conversion and sanctification to reconcile men to God by bringing them into accord with the principles of His law. In the beginning, man was created in the image of God. He was in perfect

harmony with the nature and the law of God; the principles of righteousness were written upon his heart. But sin alienated him from his Maker. He no longer reflected the divine image. His heart was at war with the principles of God's law.

“The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Romans 8:7). But “God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son,” (John 3:16) that man might be reconciled to God. Through the merits of Christ he can be restored to harmony with his Maker. His heart must be renewed by divine grace; he must have a new life from above. This change is the new birth, without which, says Jesus, “he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).

The first step in reconciliation to God is the conviction of sin. “Sin is the transgression of the law.” “By the law is the knowledge of sin” (1 John 3:4; Romans 3:20). In order to see his guilt, the sinner must test his character by God's great standard of righteousness, the law. It is a mirror which shows the perfection of a righteous character and enables him to discern the defects in his own.

The law reveals to man his sins, but it provides no remedy. While it promises life to the obedient, it declares that death is the portion of the transgressor.

The gospel of Christ alone can free him from the condemnation or the defilement of sin. He must exercise repentance toward God, whose law has been transgressed; and faith in Christ, his atoning sacrifice. Thus he obtains "remission of sins that are past" (Romans 3:25) and becomes a partaker of the divine nature. He is a child of God, having received the spirit of adoption, whereby he cries: "Abba, Father!" (Romans 8:15).

Is he now free to transgress God's law? Says Paul: "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" And John declares: "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous" (Romans 3:31; 6:2; 1 John 5:3).

In the new birth the heart is brought into harmony with God, as it is brought into accord with His law. When this mighty change has taken place in the sinner, he has passed from death unto life, from sin unto holiness, from transgression and rebellion to obedience and loyalty. The old life of alienation from God has ended; the new life of reconciliation, of faith and love, has begun. Then "the righteousness of the law" will "be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:4). And the

language of the soul will be: “O how love I Thy law! it is my meditation all the day” (Psalm 119:97).

By grace we obey the law

Often we hear this argument in an effort to belittle the law of God: “Well, since we are not under the law but under grace, we do not need to keep the Ten Commandments any longer.” Is this a valid point? The Bible certainly does say that we are not under the law, but does that imply that we are free from the obligation to obey it? The text is found in Romans 6:14, 15, and it says, “For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.”

It is the sophistry of Satan that the death of Christ brought in grace to take the place of the law. The death of Jesus did not change, or annul, or lessen in the slightest degree, the law of Ten Commandments. That precious grace offered to men through a Saviour’s blood, establishes the law of God. Since the fall of man, God’s moral government and His grace are inseparable. They go hand in hand through all dispensations. “Mercy and

truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other” (Psalms 85:10).

Each law of God is an enactment of grace, love, and saving power. These laws, obeyed, are our life, our salvation, our happiness, our peace. Obedience to His statutes and laws is the life and prosperity of His people. The influence of a gospel hope will not lead the sinner to look upon the salvation of Christ as a matter of free grace, while he continues to live in transgression of the law of God. He will reform his ways, become loyal to God through the strength obtained from his Saviour, and lead a new and purer life.

As the sacrifice in our behalf was complete, so our restoration from the defilement of sin is to be complete. No act of wickedness will the law of God excuse; no unrighteousness can escape its condemnation. The ethics of the gospel acknowledge no standard but the perfection of the divine character. The life of Christ was a perfect fulfillment of every precept of the law. He said, “I have kept my Father’s commandments” (John 15:10). His life is our example of obedience and service. God alone can renew the heart. “It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his

good pleasure.” But we are bidden, “Work out your own salvation” (Phil. 2:13, 12).

To the obedient child of God, the commandments are a delight. “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). Moreover, this faith must show itself externally. “Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone” (James 2:17).

When we speak of faith, there is a distinction that should be borne in mind. There is a kind of belief that is wholly distinct from faith. The existence and power of God, the truth of His Word, are facts that even Satan and his hosts cannot at heart deny. The Bible says that “the devils also believe, and tremble” (James 2:19); but this is not faith. Where there is not only a belief in God’s Word, but a submission of the will to Him; where the heart is yielded to Him, the affections fixed upon Him, there is faith – faith that works by love and purifies the soul.

Through this faith the heart is renewed in the image of God. And the heart that in its unrenewed state is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be, now delights in its holy precepts, exclaiming with the psalmist, “O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day” (Psalms 119:97). And the

righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:1).

Grace and faith do not cancel obedience. Paul ask and answers, “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law” (Romans 3:31). Faith is not an opiate, but a stimulant. Looking to Calvary will not quiet your soul into nonperformance of duty, but will create faith that will work, purifying the soul from all selfishness.

Unfortunately, the faith in Christ’s grace which saves the soul is not what it is represented to be by many. “Believe, believe,” is their cry; “only believe in Christ, and you will be saved. It is all you have to do.” While true faith trusts wholly in Christ for salvation, it will lead to perfect conformity to the law of God.

There are two errors against which the children of God – particularly those who have just come to trust in His grace – especially need to guard. The first is that of looking to their own works, trusting to anything they can do, to bring themselves into harmony with God. He who is trying to become holy by his own works in keeping the law, is attempting an impossibility. It is the grace of Christ alone, through faith, that can make us holy.

The opposite and no less dangerous error is that belief in Christ releases men from keeping the law of God; that since by faith alone we become partakers of the grace of Christ, our works have nothing to do with our redemption.

But notice here that obedience is not a mere outward compliance, but the service of love. The law of God is an expression of His very nature; it is an embodiment of the great principle of love, and hence is the foundation of His government in heaven and earth. Instead of releasing man from obedience, it is faith, and faith only, that makes us partakers of the grace of Christ, which enables us to render obedience.

Danger of cheap grace gospel

The paradox of Christianity is this: what we do absolutely does not save us but what we do not do can cause us to be lost. Our faith in Christ is demonstrated by our willingness to submit to His Lordship over our lives. If we are not willing to submit our finite will to His Divine will, we have not truly accepted His gift of salvation given graciously.

There is a cheap grace gospel that has become quite popular, teaching that salvation comes through

justification alone and that sanctification is simply a “fruit.” It is absolutely unbiblical and it will cause more people to be lost than perhaps any other teaching in the Christian world.

It is stunning to note a number of professed Christians who see nothing wrong with having “a glass or two of wine” or going out to restaurants or shopping on God’s holy Sabbath day. The answer to the question of why our standards have gone by the wayside is very simple: If what we do does not matter, then it does not matter what we do. Did you get that? If how we live our lives has no bearing on our salvation, then it does not matter what I do because I will still be saved by grace.

This is the essence of the cheap grace. If the sanctifying power of Christ is unnecessary for my salvation then I do not really need it. That is why the cheap grace “justification only” gospel so popular among some most Christian churches today is so dangerous.

The Gospel equation is not: Justification = Glorification. It is: Justification + Sanctification = Glorification. The grace of God that brings salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that we are redeemed from all iniquity, purified unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works, denying

ungodliness and worldly lusts, and looking for that blessed hope (Titus 2:11-14).

Others think that they can enter heaven whilst they live disobedient lives professing to be Christians. To them, Jesus says, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). He further declare, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matthew 19:17). To the obedient, Jesus is their salvation, for "He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9).

We must follow the heavenly path of grace and the law combined if we will enter heaven. "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14). If we hide under cheap grace and disobey the law, we do so at the peril of our souls. "But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death" (Proverbs 8:36). It is for our own good that God in His grace gives us the law. Moses explained it this way, "And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive" (Deuteronomy 6:24).

A person cannot live any way he wishes and still become godlike any more than a builder can ignore the blueprints for a house without running into trouble. This is why God asks all to follow the blueprint of the Holy Scripture. There is no other way to become like Him and thus be fitted for a place in His kingdom. And there is no other way to true happiness.

Grace calls us to obey His laws, and the only way is through the power in Jesus Christ. “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

Christians who embrace the cheap grace gospel that negates the law, in John’s words, are liars: “He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:4). Any serious Christian must hate lies, yet to John, any who disobeys the law whilst claiming to know God, is a liar. John could write this with such assurance because it is one of the most deeply established truths in the Bible. John summed it up in these words: “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:3).

Grace and victory over sin

No matter what your sin is, if you repent and seek the grace of God, you will be saved. By the grace of God we overcome sin. This is what Paul meant when he said, “But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” (Romans 5:20). Grace is not a license to commit sin, but rather an assurance that, “For 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). By the grace of God, all of heaven’s gifts are available to us through the promises of the Bible, and we receive them by faith. Peter describes the “exceeding great and precious promises” and assures us that “by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4).

Mighty power is stored within the promise to fulfil itself to all who claim it in faith. Why is it so hard to believe that God will do what He promises! Now let us come down to the very heart of victory and consider the four simple scriptural steps that any believer may take in claiming God’s power.

First, ask for God’s gift of victory: “But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:57). We do not earn it by our efforts, or deserve it because of any

supposed goodness. The only thing we need do is ask for it, and the victory will be given to us freely by Christ. He is the only one who has ever gained the victory over Satan, and if we ever possess the victory, it will have to come as a gift from Him.

Let me ask you something. Do you need victory in your life over some binding, miserable habit of sin? Some are slaves to appetite. Others are struggling helplessly against anger, lies, lust, bad language or worldliness. The Bible says you may have the victory as a gift through Jesus Christ.

Second, trust that it is God's will to give you the victory: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him" (Matthew 7:11). Is it a good thing when you ask for victory over sin? Of course it is! And you don't even have to ask if it is God's will! He has already told us in the Bible that it is His will to destroy the works of sin and the devil. If we pray for more money or a better job we should always ask according to His will, but the victory over sin is promised to every one who asks in faith.

Third, believe that victory is yours: "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our

Lord” (Romans 6:11). The word “reckon” means to believe, or to consider it done. Every particle of faith should be focused on that one request for victory and then it should be accounted as done.

Do you remember how Peter walked on the water? He asked Jesus if he could step out of the boat onto the raging sea, and Jesus told Peter to come. But how long did Peter do the impossible by walking on the water? The Bible says, “When he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me” (Matthew 14:30). What was Peter afraid of? He was afraid of sinking and drowning. In spite of Christ’s assurance that he could safely walk on the water, Peter began to doubt the word of the Master. That is when he began to sink. As long as he believed the promise of Jesus and acted in faith, he was safe. When he doubted, he sank.

Now, what is the impossible thing as far as you are concerned? It is not walking on water. It is overcoming that sinful habit. And Christ says, “Come to me. I will give you the victory.” As long as you believe that you have been delivered, you will have the victory. The very moment you ask for victory it will be placed in your life as a reservoir of power. You won’t feel it, but it is there. Usually, the

desire to sin remains, but in the moment of temptation, the power to walk past the temptation springs forth from within. Faith accepts the fact of deliverance and constantly claims the victory that is in the secure possession of the believer.

Fourth, make no provision for future sinning: “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Romans 13:14). So strong is the confidence in the appropriated power of God that no consideration is given to falling under the power of that sin again.

Victory does not depend on our strength but on God’s power. We might fail, but He cannot fail. All plans that might involve any degree of compromise should be abandoned. Someone might raise the objection that this could be discouraging. Suppose the person does fail, as did Peter when he began to sink? No, not discouraging at all! Peter’s sinking had nothing to do with the failure of divine power. It did not change Christ’s will for him to walk on the water. It only pointed out Peter’s need of stronger faith to enable him to obey Christ’s command.

Our faith could weaken. We might need to be reminded of our total dependence upon His strength. But this does not diminish the beautiful plan of God to impart power and victory through “exceeding great

and precious promises” of the Bible. Without faith by the receiver not even God’s promises can be appropriated. The limits are clearly defined in the words of Jesus, “According to your faith be it unto you” (Matthew 9:29). Jesus forgave the woman and told her, “Go, and sin no more” (John 8:11) – forgiveness for the past sins and victory over future sins!

What is holding you back from gaining the victory over sin? Is it the deceitfulness of riches? The love of riches has an infatuating, deceptive power. Too often those who possess worldly treasure forget that it is God who gives them power to get wealth. They say, “My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth” (Deuteronomy 8:17). Their riches, instead of awakening gratitude to God, lead to the exaltation of self. They lose the sense of their dependence upon God and their riches become a god to them. They forget that Christ has said, “Without Me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5).

Those that so regard their riches walk apart from Christ, their life is not pervaded by His grace, and the cultivated characteristics of self negate the use of their riches for God’s glory. Instead of developing in man the attributes of God, riches thus used are developing in him the attributes of Satan.

All habits of indulgence that weaken the physical powers, that becloud the mind, or that benumb the spiritual perceptions, are “fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (1 Peter 2:11).

When one is fully emptied of self, when every false god is cast out of the soul, the vacuum is filled by the inflowing of the Spirit of Christ. Such a one has the faith that purifies the soul from defilement. He is conformed to the Spirit, and he minds the things of the Spirit. He has no confidence in self, Christ is all and in all, and he lives a victorious life.

Conclusion

When we receive God's grace, we will be obedient to His law, we will live a life free from sin, and we will say like Paul, “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 the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

Christ was crucified for fallen man. But to many who call themselves Christians this event is nothing. In practice they deny the cross of Christ. They admit that Christ died on the cross, but because there is a crucifixion for them to experience, they will not

receive the lessons that lead to self-denial and self-sacrifice. They are Christians in name only. The central point of their faith is not a crucified and risen Saviour, who brings to all that receive Him the privilege of being sons and daughters of God.

Paul realised that his sufficiency was not in himself, but in the presence of the Holy Spirit, whose gracious influence filled his heart, bringing every thought into subjection to Christ. In the apostle's teachings, Christ was the central figure. "I live," he declared, "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Self was hidden; Christ was revealed and exalted. By faith Paul appropriated the grace of Christ, and this grace supplied the necessities of his soul.

Grace leads us to confess that we have no strength to live up to the perfect standard of the law, grace then tells us to invite Christ to fulfill the righteousness of the law in us, and we say with Paul, "Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

Finally, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

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