

Sin Shall Not have Dominion over You

The Life and Christian Experience of Charles Fitch

Preface

Fitch, Charles (1805-1844). Congregational and Millerite preacher. In 1838 he accepted the message of a soon advent upon repeated reading of Evidence from Scripture by William Miller. Throughout the Christian churches at large he was well known, and counted many prominent leaders as friends, such as William Lloyd Garrison, Phoebe Palmer, and Charles Finney. After giving up preaching the message due to intense pressure from his fellow ministers, he again surrendered to his convictions in 1841 and became a leading preacher of the advent. To assist in conveying the prophetic message he produced what is called the "1843 chart."

By January 1844 he accepted the view of conditional immortality.

If William Miller can be credited with the beginning of proclaiming the first angel's message, Fitch easily was responsible for starting the preaching of the second, as churches began to close their doors to the advent message after the spring of 1844, and the message was given that "Babylon is fallen," calling advent believers to leave their churches. He fell ill after baptizing new converts in the cold waters of Lake Erie in the early fall, and died but a few days before the passing of the time, October 22, 1844. Ellen White later saw him in vision with the saved.

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF CHARLES FITCH

Next in our list of ministers, that became closely associated with the Millerite movement is Charles Fitch who lived from 1805-October 14, 1844. He was born in Hampton, Connecticut. After graduating from Brown University, Fitch was ordained to the Congregational ministry and served at Abington, Connecticut, Warren, Massachusetts, and Hartford, Connecticut, successively. In 1836 he went to the Marlboro Congregational Chapel in Boston, and later to Newark, New Jersey, and Haverhill, Massachusetts. Fitch's greatest contribution was made at Cleveland, Ohio, after he became the western proponent of the advent message. His other interests included his membership in the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

He was a strong opponent to slavery as revealed by a pamphlet he produced entitled, *Slaveholding Weighed in the Balance of Truth, and Its Comparative Guilt Illustrated*. In it he stated, "Every man has a tongue, and he can use it; he has influence, and he can exert it; he has moral power, and he can put it forth. Up my friends and do your duty, to deliver the spoils out of the hands of the oppressor, lest the fire of God's fury kindle ere long upon you." *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, 534.

In 1838, while he was pastor of the Marlboro Street Congregational Church in Boston, he was given a copy of Miller's Lectures, containing his views on the Second Advent. Fitch wrote to Miller, in March, confessing his "overwhelming interest such as I never felt in any other book except the Bible." *Ibid*. After carefully studying the book and comparing the message with Scripture, Fitch stated that he came to believe in the correctness of Miller's views. On March 4 he preached two sermons on the Second Advent, creating a deep interest among his hearers. He proposed to present the whole subject of the Second Advent to a meeting of the Ministerial Association on March 6. He secured a dozen copies of Miller's Lectures for distribution stating, "I trust that I may thereby do something to spread the truth." *Ibid*.

Life and Christian Experience of Charles Fitch

The Association's reaction was so negative and accompanied with so much searing ridicule and contempt that Fitch lost confidence in the advent message and he lapsed into his former views of the world's conversion.

But his mind could not rest. He thirsted for truth and longed for holiness of life. While serving as pastor of the Free Presbyterian Church of Newark, New Jersey, in 1839, he wrote his Views of Sanctification. This was his statement of faith and he stressed sanctification by divine grace through Scripture. This prompted the appointment of a committee by the presbytery to counsel Fitch on his views on perfection. This meeting resulted in the passage of a Resolution of Censure, declaring his views to be a dangerous error and asking him to preach his views no more. Fitch replied in a Letter to the Newark Presbytery in 1840, wherein he defended his views. He stated that ... I cannot regard your admonition,' and offered his reasons." *ibid.*

"After years of unsatisfactory living, he had found, personally and experimentally, the enabling grace of Christ. He had learned the secret of reckoning himself dead to sin. The world had lost its charm, and his heart was filled with joy. He had entered into a new life-and supported his position with an imposing array of texts. He took this stand, he adds, 'in view of an approaching judgement.' Then he avers, 'if you still adhere to that opinion, I must consider myself as no longer of your number.' The presbytery must do to him as they think our Lord requires. This he soon followed with his Reasons for Withdrawing from the Newark Presbytery, the title page adding, 'By Charles Fitch, Pastor of the Free Presbyterian Church, Newark.' The Preface states that he felt called to preach the 'blessed doctrine of sanctification by faith in Christ.' He recognized that if he did not withdraw he would be excommunicated. So he states, 'I do hereby withdraw from you.' Thus he bade adieu to his Presbyterian brethren." *ibid.*

When Fitch explained his perplexities to Litch the latter said, "What you need is the doctrine of the second advent to put with the doctrine of holiness." Fitch again studied Miller's teachings comparing them with the Bible while studying all other available writings on the subject of the Second Advent. After pursuing this course of study for a time and reviewing the Lord's leading since leaving Brown University, he brought all this before the Lord in fasting and prayer. He stated:

"When Dear Bro. Litch named the second advent, I went to the Lord; I read my Bible, and all the works that I could obtain. I possessed myself of all the evidences in the case that I could; and then with fasting and prayer I laid them and myself with my all before the Lord, desiring only that the Blessed Spirit might guide me into all truth. I felt that I had no will of my own, and wished only to know the will of my Saviour. Light seemed breaking in upon my mind, ray after ray, and I found myself more and more unable to resist the conviction that it was indeed the truth, that the coming of the blessed Saviour was at the door." *ibid.*, 537.

Having made his decision, Fitch threw all his energies into the proclamation of the advent message. He now found doors opening wide on every hand as he joined Miller, Litch and soon Himes, along with a steadily growing number of Adventist preachers.

"And now so soon as I was ready to come out on the Second Advent, the door before me was thrown wide open, and I have been wholly unable for the last 8 months to meet one half the calls which I have received. Wherever I have been God has been with me. Since the first of Dec. last, I have preached as often as every day and about sixty times besides. I have been in all the New England States, congregations have been large in all places. Wherever I have been I have preached holiness. My usual practice has been to preach on Holiness in the afternoon, and on the Second Advent in the evening. I have seen saints sanctified and sinners led to Christ." *Ibid.*

Life and Christian Experience of Charles Fitch

While some rejected the message and turned against Fitch, many others accepted the advent truth. Among them were Dr. and Mrs. W. C. Palmer that wrote many advent hymns, including, Watch Ye Saints, number 549 in the old Church Hymnal.

One of Fitch's most notable productions, at least as far as Seventh-day Adventists are concerned, was his famous "1843" prophetic chart (1842) with the able assistance of Apollos Hale, who usually attended Fitch's church.

Fitch presented his chart to the Boston General Conference in May, chaired by Joseph Bates. Plans were laid to proclaim the "Midnight Cry" more vigorously. Three hundred copies were authorized for use by the Adventist preachers.

Fitch received more calls to preach than he could fill. Wherever he spoke, large crowds gathered to hear him. The following is his own description of a typical speaking trip: "I reached this place (Montpelier) at about half past twelve o'clock on Wednesday. I had then preached thirteen times in a week, and attended many prayer meetings and then at the end of it instead of taking rest I had had a most fatiguing ride of 75 miles. A meeting however was appointed for me here on the evening of my arrival. Accordingly I went to bed, and after sleeping two hours and a half, I arose exceedingly refreshed, and preached in the evening. The audience was tolerable for numbers—though by no means such as I had left at Claremont. Yesterday I preached twice, and the audience in the evening was much increased. The spirit of the Lord was present, and truth had power." *ibid.*, 540.

Toward the end of 1842, Fitch carried the advent message to Cleveland, Ohio, and to Oberlin College near Cleveland. He reveals how the faculty reacted to his messages: "I have never seen the glorious truths of the Bible, teaching the kingdom and coming of Christ, met with more determined opposition, contempt and scorn, than they have been by the Oberlin Faculty; and never, in all my life have I felt such anguish at my heart's core, or shed such bitter, burning tears as I have at their rejection of the Word of the Lord." *ibid.*, 541.

In the spring of 1843, Fitch preached a sermon entitled, "Come Out of Her My People." He "contended that Babylon was no longer limited to the Roman Catholic Church, as held back in Protestant Reformation days, but now included also the great body of Protestant Christendom. He maintained that, by their rejection of the light of the advent, both branches of Christendom had fallen from the high estate of pure Christianity. Protestantism was either cold to the doctrine of the second advent or had spiritualized it away." *ibid.*, 544.

"But Fitch did not have much longer to live and labor. He was in Buffalo, New York, in October, 1844, when a large number of new believers requested baptism. Others had not yet fully made up their minds. Arrangements were made, and the company who were ready went with him to the lake shore and were baptized in the chilly autumn water. A cold wind was blowing as Fitch started for home in his wet garments—for they had no protective baptismal robes or waterproof waders in those days. But just then he was met by another company of tardy candidates, on their way to the lake, who similarly desired baptism. So, cold as he was, Fitch went back with them and immersed them. And then came a belated third company who had at last made their decision. At their request he turned back a second time, and baptized them also. But Fitch was seriously chilled.

"Ill as he was from the effects of this prolonged exposure, he nevertheless rode several miles the next day in the cold wind to meet another appointment. This proved too much for him and he was stricken down with fatal illness which speedily brought on his death at the early age of thirty-nine. His last triumphant words on October 14, shortly before the day of expectation, were, 'I believe in the promises of God.'

It may confidently be said that none of the Adventist preachers were more widely loved than Charles Fitch. Courageous and resourceful, helpful and hopeful, he interpreted the love of God in word and deed, in the light of the second advent, to the thousands to whom he ministered." Ibid., 545.

Views of Sanctification

By Charles Fitch, Pastor of the Free Presbyterian Church,
Newark, NJ, Guide to Christian Perfection,
Vol. 1, No. 8, Feb., 1840

Preface

THE Lord Jesus Christ "whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Peter 1:8), has of late made good to me, vastly unworthy as I am, His own assurance, "he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and I will manifest myself to him." John 14:2 1.

I feel that it would be base of me not to acknowledge that through the amazing condescension of my Redeemer, He has made me to enjoy rich manifestations of His love. I speak of it to His praise. He has taught me to "be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, that passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7.

Out of the abundance of my heart, my mouth has spoken (see Luke 6:45), and I have given those who attend on my ministry to understand that it is my belief that God has and will continue to "create in me a clean heart O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10), that He has made me to know something of the blessedness of "the pure in heart." Matthew 5:8. Some have thought that I was "bringing strange things to their ears," and such a report went abroad.

At a late meeting of the Presbytery, the brethren, with perfect propriety, and with the utmost kindness, desired of me that I would tell them "what this new doctrine is." I gave them a brief statement of my feelings and views, and answered as well as I was able, several inquiries. The Presbytery, then, with perfect propriety, in my apprehension appointed a committee to confer with me further on the subject. Of all this I fully approve. Soon after, I received a note from one member of the committee, in which, in a kind and christian like manner, he proposed the following questions, and requested an answer:

1. Do you believe that the Bible teaches that men are perfect in holiness in this life? (I ask no more than yes or no.)
2. What cases or characters were without sin in Bible history, except Christ? (Merely name them.)
3. Of all among the martyrs, whose memoirs have come down to us, how many do you find perfect?
4. In modern times, have not the best of men evidently been sinful more or less, and have they not thought themselves to be so?
5. In the circle of your acquaintance, have those who claimed perfection, generally turned out as well as those who feared always?
6. Are those around you who claim this more meek and heavenly than others?
7. Do not perfection people very frequently run into some palpable inconsistencies?
8. Do you avow the belief that you are generally without sin, in thought, desire, word, deed, or defect?

9. And have you made up your mind to publicly teach and defend the position that there are men among us who are without sin?

I have taken this way to lay myself fully open to my brethren and to the world, because I believe it to be in all respects the easiest and the best, and do greatly rejoice in the opportunity afforded me to testify to others of "the riches of the glory of this mystery; ... which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Colossians 1:27. I wish, by the grace of God to be a living "epistle... known and read of all men." 2 Corinthians 3:2. It is my prayer that God will enable others, as He has me, to say, "Behold God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is MY strength and my song; he also is become my salvation" and thus with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation," and say, "Praise the LORD." Isaiah 12:2-4. And "die redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mounting flee away Isaiah 51:11 The "joy of the LORD is your strength." Nehemiah 8: 10.

Charles Fitch

Letter to a Church Brother

Dear Brother,

In compliance with your request and my promise, I will now endeavor, in the fear of God, and under sense of my accountableness to Him, to give you my views in full respecting the points embraced in the questions which you proposed to me. I hope you will not consider it in any sense improper that I give you my views at large on the whole subject, instead of a mere categorical answer to your interrogations. I prefer the course I here take because I wish to present you with a view of the subject somewhat at large, as it lies before my own mind. Besides, I consider the subject too great and the interests pending too important to be disposed of in this summary way. I have no desire to conceal or evade anything concerning which you or the Presbytery may wish to know of my views. My design is, as far as in me lies, to be full and explicit.

However, I fear that I might suffer much through the misapprehension of others respecting my own impressions of truth, if I were not to do something more than you propose in your communication.

Allow me, therefore, to open my whole heart to you as a Christian brother should, and having done so, I will most cheerfully and gladly leave the event with Him on whom I have learned to cast all my cares (see I Peter 5:7), and whose glory is the only object for which I wish to live. On His guidance, who has said, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye" (Psalm 32:8); and, "who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (I Corinthians 1:30), and who has said, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraided not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5); I now cast myself while I write. I shall give you such views of truth, and only such, as I feel most willing to meet in the great and dreadful day of account.

I shall also give them, as far as possible, in scripture language, that it may be seen on what I rest my faith, and whether I do, or do not, pervert the Word of God.

Permit me then to commence by saying that I find myself, in my natural state, a transgressor of God's most holy and righteous law; so guilty as to deserve to be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." 2 Thessalonians 1:9. I also find myself totally unable to make the least atonement for one of all my ten thousand sins, or to find for one of them the least excuse or palliation [relief or soothing]. In myself, I stand, and must ever stand before the universe, a hopeless reprobate, irrecoverably bound over the damnation of hell. However, I learn in the

gospel that the Lord Jesus Christ, by His atoning sacrifice, has rendered full satisfaction to the justice of God for my sins, and thus opened a way whereby the punishment of my sins may be escaped, provided I have that "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Hebrews 12: 14.

The all-absorbing question with me, then, so far as my own eternal interests are concerned, is this: How shall I become obedient to that high command of the Most High God, "Be ye holy; for I am holy!" I Peter 1:16; see Leviticus 11:44. I have, I can have, I ought to have no expectation of dwelling where God dwells--of being an object of His love forever, and a sharer of the eternal blessedness which He only can give, unless I have a character fully assimilated to His--unless I love, with a full and undivided heart, what He loves, and hate what He hates, and all that He hates, with a hatred, full, entire, uniform, perpetual, like His own. There must not be in me an approach to any thought or feeling which is not in perfect, full-hearted and joyous agreement with everything that God is, and with everything that God does. This must be my character, or I will never see God's face in peace.

Yet how shall I come to possess such a character? Every feeling of my heart, in my natural state, is entire opposition to God--there is in me the carnal mind, which is enmity against Him. How shall this hatred be made to give place to adoring, enraptured love? There are in me by nature all the elements of hell. Kindled by the touch of God's deserved wrath, they will burn in an unquenchable fire. How shall I have a nature fit for heaven? I acknowledge my full obligation to cease hating God instantaneously, and to love Him at once and forever with a full and undivided heart. "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. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 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, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Romans 7:18-19, 21-24.

This is my case. Christ has died for my sins. The government of God is ready to set me free--but who shall save me from "an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God?" Hebrews 3:12. With such a heart, influenced by the temptations of the devil, and the allurements of a sinful world, I am just as sure (left to myself) to sin eternally, as Satan is, and must take up my abode with him forever.

What I need then, what the exigencies [predicament] of my fallen nature cry out after with an exceedingly loud and bitter cry, is a Savior from sin. It avails me nothing that Christ has atoned for my sins, if I am then cast on my own resources. Holy beings fell before the wiles of that subtle tempter, who, "as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8), and my evil heart will surely make me a willing prey. I am eternally damned unless I can find a Savior from sin.

I shall never save myself from sin. My spiritual foes stand ready to devour me, and my own evil heart will thrust me into the lion's mouth--into the wide open jaws of hell. Help! Help! O help! is the cry that comes up from my inmost soul. Is there, in the universe of God, any way to save a poor, lost sinner from his own love of sin? Any way to cleanse his polluted heart and fill it with holiness--pure, perfect holiness, without which such a one can never be received into heaven?

With this inquiry, my dear brother, I approach the Bible. Has God revealed any such thing as a way of salvation from sin? If such a salvation can anywhere be found, it must be in the Bible, and, if I cannot find it in the Bible, then every ray of light goes out from the horizon of my soul, and the eternal night of despair shuts in upon me.

I am indeed told that I may be saved from sin at death; but that is the hope of the Universalist. I may be told that the Universalist has never been born again, and that he who has been born again will surely be saved from sin when he leaves the world; but I know of nothing on which I can safely rest the belief that

death is to be regarded as the means, or the time, of sanctification. I believe that, "where the tree falleth, there it shall be" (Ecclesiastes 11:3), that "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" (Ecclesiastes 9:10); and that if a man leaves the world in his sins, he remains a sinner forever. I believe that this is my only probation, that I must here be saved from sin, or never see God's face in peace. I believe, therefore, that my everlasting interests are pending on the questions of whether God has made provision to save me from sin before I leave this world. (All emphasis supplied by author unless otherwise noted.) To prevent all misconception, I will here say that I am very far from believing that the regenerate man, with the remains of sin, is in the same condition with the Universalist who has never been renewed, but that neither has any reason to believe that death will make any change in his character. If there is no salvation from sin before death, I expect to be lost. Here then, to make the whole subject as plain as possible in the light in which it is apprehended by my own mind, I will make three inquires:

1. Has God, in the economy of His grace, made provision to save His people from their sins?
2. If such provision has been made, can Christians avail themselves of it in this life?
3. In what way may the provisions of God's grace become available to save His people from their sins?

Has God, in the Economy of His Grace, Made Provision to Save His People From Their Sins?

I find it said to Joseph, by the angel, in relation to the promised Messiah, Matthew 1:21: "Thou shalt call his name JESUS:" (i.e. Savior) "for he shall save his people from their sins." For this very purpose, then, He is my Savior to save me from my sins, and this is just the Savior that I need.

When John the Baptist pointed out Christ, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29. This is what I need, a Savior to take away my sins. We read also in the Epistle to the Ephesians that He has "chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before him in love" (Ephesians 1:4), that He "loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word, that he might present it to himself, a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Ephesians 5:25-27.

In the Epistle to Titus, we read that "the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Titus 2:13-14. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, we find Christ presented as the Mediator of the New Covenant, which is this--quoted from Jeremiah 31:33: "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they be my people." "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Hebrews 10:17. In the third chapter of the first Epistle of John, we find it thus written: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins," i.e. to take away our transgressions of the law, and leave us in a state of obedience. "And in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him." 1 John 3:4-6.

Now, my dear brother, I believe that Christ came to "save his people from their sins" "that we should be holy and without blame before him in love" "to present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" "that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" "to put my laws into their hearts" (Hebrews 10:16); and "to take away our sins. . . . Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not." This, therefore, I believe to be the salvation of the gospel--that Christ came, according to the words of the angel to Daniel, "to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness" (Daniel 9:24), on the ground of which we might

have deliverance from the punishment which sin deserves. I do find then, most clearly and satisfactorily to my own mind, that God, in the economy of His grace, has made provision to "save his people from their sins." I hail this salvation, therefore, as a salvation exactly adapted to my necessities as a fallen being, and while I utterly despair of ever saving myself from sin, I hail the Lord Jesus Christ as a Savior, manifested to take away my sins, to write His law in my heart, to redeem me from all iniquity, to make me holy and without blame before Him in love, to sanctify and cleanse me with the washing of water by the Word, that He may present me to Himself, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish.

I have found, therefore, the Savior and the salvation I need, plainly revealed to me in God's Word; and on that Savior I cast my soul, my being, for time and eternity; in myself, a hopeless, helpless sinner, but trusting in a Savior "in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead," and who has made me "complete in him" (Colossians 2:9-10), so that I may expect through His salvation to "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." Colossians 4:12. This is my hope of everlasting life that Christ Jesus, my Redeemer, will save me from my sins: and in comparison with this hope, the whole material universe is to me of less value than the "small dust of the balance." Isaiah 40:15. Take away this hope from me, and you blot out the light of my soul, and leave me in the blackness of darkness forever.

I believe, then, that full provision is made in the gospel to save God's people from their sins.

I Am Now To Inquire Whether Christians Can Avail Themselves of This Provision of the Grace of God So As To Be Saved From Sin in This Life.

In the first chapter of Luke I find that Zacharias, being filled with the Holy Ghost, prophesied, saying:

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; the oath which he swear unto our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, All THE DAYS OF OUR LIFE." Luke 1:68-75. Now I believe that we who serve God "without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life, " is saved from sin all the days of our life.

I believe that God swore unto "Abraham that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life;" and that He hath raised up a horn of salvation for us to perform this mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember this holy covenant, this oath which He swore. I believe all this on the testimony of a man filled with the Holy Ghost. Since, therefore, I believe that God's oath can be relied on, especially since Christ came on purpose to fulfill that oath, and since that oath does pledge the grant of walking before God in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life, I am bound to believe it. I dare not sin against God by believing that God is not ready to be faithful to His oath; an oath, too, which Christ came on purpose to fulfill. I read that "he that believeth not God hath made him a liar." I John 5:10. I must not make God a liar by saying He is not true to His oath.

Again, when the disciples of Christ said, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1), He directed them to pray, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Matthew 6:10. If God's will is done in heaven by sinless obedience, we are taught to pray for the same thing on earth, and I cannot believe that Christ has taught us to pray for a thing which He is unwilling to grant. Again, you are taught to pray that "the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ;" and you are assured that "faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." I Thessalonians 5:23-24. Again, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to

forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." I John 1:9--as faithful, I suppose, in the one case as in the other. I know of no reason for waiting for forgiveness or cleansing till death.

In the further proof of the position that Christians may avail themselves of God's grace so as to be saved from sin in this life, I will here speak directly in reply to your question, "Who besides Christ, mentioned in Bible history, were free from sin?" I have quoted the words of one who exclaimed, in view of his bondage to the law of sin and death, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me?" In reply to his own interrogation, he answers, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 7:24-25. He says, moreover, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Romans 8:1-4.

Paul, therefore, found a way to be free from the law of sin and death and to have the righteousness of the law fulfilled in him. This could be nothing less than loving God with all the heart and his neighbor as himself, for he who does less than this is a transgressor. The law could not do this in consequence of the weakness of the flesh, but God did it through Christ--fulfilled in him the righteousness of the law, and thus made him free from that law of sin under which he had before groaned in condemnation. He was now free from condemnation, but how can those be free from condemnation who are continually sinning against God? It is impossible for me to understand. He hath found that to those in Jesus Christ there was no condemnation, and John tells us that those who abide in Christ sin not.

Paul also says in another place that "he that is dead is freed from sin." Romans 6:7. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe we shall also live with Him. If we die unto sin after the likeness of Christ's death, we shall walk in newness of life after the likeness of His resurrection. "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him" (Romans 6:9) --neither if we be dead to sin, will sin any more have dominion over us. Hence, the injunction of the apostle--"Likewise reckon ye also, [i.e. as well as I], yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ." Romans 6:11. Reckon yourselves to be dead unto sin by trusting in Christ to keep you thus alive.

It may perhaps be said that a person may reckon himself dead to sin who has once repented, though he now continues to sin every day. However, if I should find a man every day intoxicated, I should not regard him as dead to that sin, whatever he might say respecting past repentance--and the same is true of every other sin in thought, word, or deed. No man is dead to sin who commits sin--and as Christ who died once, dies no more, so he, who is dead to sin, sins no more. If he falls into sin, he is no longer dead to sin. Such were the sentiments of Paul, and as I cannot accuse him of the gross inconsistency of preaching what he did not practically must believe that he was dead to sin and alive unto God, and that being free from condemnation in Christ Jesus, he did so abide in Him that he sinned not.

Again we hear this apostle saying in another place, "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. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." Galatians 2:20-21. I cannot conceive that a man could use such language as this who was living day by day in sin. If a man is crucified with Christ, he must be dead to sin, and such a one the apostle has already told us "is freed from sin." No man can say, I am fully persuaded, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," who knows himself to be living in sin. Nor can one who lives in sin say, "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." Paul says, "I do not frustrate the grace of God." I do not expect to work

out a righteousness by my own unaided efforts to obey the law. I rely on the faithfulness of Christ who loves me to keep me.

Peter also learned that "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: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." 2 Peter 1:3-4. I cannot doubt that Peter had experienced in his own heart what he wrote, and I believe, therefore, that in being made a partaker of the divine nature through the exceeding great and precious promises of God, and having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust "whosoever abideth in him sinneth not."

John also declared, in his First Epistle unto those to whom he wrote, "that which ... we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life." 1 John 1:1. He wrote that, therefore, which was to him a matter of experience. He had seen and felt in himself, "that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5); and that when we walk in the light—in fellowship with God, "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin!" 1 John 1:7.

John had also seen and felt that "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." John had also learned from his own experience that "he was manifested to take away our sins,"—he had heard, and seen with his eyes, and handled this truth. He had also learned that "whosoever abideth in him sinneth not"—that "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." 1 John 3:9. I cannot doubt that John was a man who reduced his own principles to practice, especially as he wrote only what he had heard, and seen, and handled of the Word of Life, and, therefore, that he did so abide in Christ that he sinned not.

Thus, dear brother, I have shown you, conclusively, to my own mind at least, that in the economy of God's grace there are provisions available to enable us as Christians to walk before God "in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life," and "whosoever abideth in him sinneth not." In doing so, I have given you my views in full respecting the attainableness of holiness in this life, and the question whether any have actually attained it.

I Am to Consider How the Provisions of the Grace of God Become Available to the Christian. Our Savior's prayer was—"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." John 17:17.

By what truth is the Christian sanctified?

1. Not by any precepts of the Bible through his own unaided efforts to obey them. So long as any man attempts to become sanctified by this means, I will surely "see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin;" and will constantly find occasion to say, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me?"
2. The Christian may be sanctified through the promises of God's truth. "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." 2 Corinthians 7:1. "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: 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. 2 Peter 1:3-4.

Let me be fully understood then that no man is ever sanctified who relies on his own efforts to obey the law. Such a one frustrates the grace of God. He would indeed be holy, if he loved God with all his heart,

and his neighbor as himself, but this he surely will never do by any unaided efforts of his own. It must be done by the grace of God, and he most surely frustrates that grace who does not live the life he now lives in the flesh by the faith of the Son of God. We are, therefore, to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit by the promises of God. These contain the truth through which we may be sanctified according to our Savior's prayer.

Two inquiries here arise:

1. What has God promised?
2. How shall we gain the fulfillment of the promises?

I remember that it is said in Galatians 3:16, "Now to Abraham and to his seed were the promises made," and that in verse 29 "if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." When I find a promise in the Bible adapted to the necessities of my case, as I am one of Abraham's seed, if I am Christ's, I am one of those to whom that promise was made, and I am an heir to all the good which God in that promise has pledged Himself to bestow. With this assurance I look to the promises and inquire with eager interest, What has God my Redeemer promised to give me? Here I may look through the whole Bible, for to Abraham and his seed were the promises made, and I am one of them, because I believe in Christ.

Deuteronomy 30:6: "And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." It is very plain that he who did thus love God would not sin. The reason why this and other exceeding great and precious promises have not been fulfilled to all God's professing people in every age, will appear when I shall come to show how we may gain the fulfillment of the promises.

Ezekiel 36:25-27, 29 "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 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. I will also save you from all your uncleanness." If it should be said that those promises were made to the Jews, I reply, "to Abraham and his seed were the promises made," and of these I claim to be. No one among them can have a need to be cleansed from all his filthiness, from all his idols, and to be saved from all his uncleannesses more than I do. I do, therefore, regard myself as an heir to the good here promised.

Jeremiah 32:38-40: "And they shall be my people, and I will be their God: and I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good: but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." Should it again be said that these promises were made to the Jews only? I utterly deny that any natural descendant of Abraham has any right, title, or inheritance in these exceeding great and precious promises which does not equally belong to me as a disciple of Christ. Should it be said that these promises are connected with the literal return of the Jews to their own land? I reply that God has said, "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Psalm 84:11); and that "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. Since no lost sinner more needs the good here promised than myself, I urge my humble claim through Christ to all the good here brought to view, and regard it as my inheritance.

Again, it is said in Jeremiah 31:31-33: "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt;

which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband to them, saith the LORD: 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." This is the same pledge of being brought to love God with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength, and of this pledge and benefit of the new covenant I cannot be deprived.

In this new covenant Christ is the Mediator, as we are told by Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews, so that to fulfill this new covenant is the very thing which Christ came to do. His own blood, Christ Himself called the "blood of the new testament," or covenant (Mark 14:24), and Paul said of himself and his fellow apostles, God "hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." 2 Corinthians 3:6. This new covenant therefore which puts God's law in the hearts of His people, and by that means takes away their sins, should be regarded as the great and glorious theme of them that preach in the name of Christ. It is the fulfillment of this covenant which Christ has in view, when He says, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." Matthew 5:6. "He that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.... As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." John 6:35, 57.

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh; receiveth; and he that seeketh; findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Matthew 7:7-8. "If a son ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Luke 11:11-13.

That these promises refer to the blessings of the new covenant, I infer from the fact that there is no good which you so much need as to have God's law put into your hearts so that you may truly love Him "with all thy heart, and with all thy soul." Matthew 22:37; Deuteronomy 10:12. Since He has made this covenant and sent Christ to be the Mediator of it, and has thus assured us of His utmost readiness to give every good thing, I see the way wide open for Christians to be cleansed "from all unrighteousness."

It is in the fulfillment of this new covenant that that will be accomplished for which our Savior taught us to pray--"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" for when God's law is put into the hearts of His people, of which you are one, so that you truly love Him "with all thy heart, and with all thy soul," then His kingdom is come within you, and then His "will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." To the blessings of this new covenant we may also apply other great and precious promises of our Savior. "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." Matthew 21:22. "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." John 16:24.

When you as a Christian find your sins taken away, and the new covenant fulfilled in you, so that you do love God "with all thy heart, and with all thy soul" (Matthew 22:37), then your "joy may be full," and it never can be full until then. Accordingly, John, in writing his Epistle, says, "these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." I John 1:4. And what does he then write to give Christians fullness of joy? Why, that "the blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth us from all sin If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness that he was manifested to take away our sins; ... whosoever abideth in him sinneth not." These are the very things to give the Christian fullness of joy, and nothing short of these can do it.

One more passage I will now quote, and then on this point I shall have done. It is that passage in relation to which Paul says to the Corinthians, "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." 2 Corinthians 7:1. The passage is this: "For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Corinthians 6:16-18.

Here, in my view, the apostle means to teach that in the promises, "I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God and they shall be my people," there is the promise of being cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and of perfecting holiness in the fear of God. If, then, we can find a way to secure to us the fulfillment of these exceeding great and precious promises, we shall, as it seems to me, attain to the highest possible good. I shall therefore now inquire:

2. How shall we gain the fulfillment of God's promises?

On this point I remark that there is a passage which has served me as a key to unlock the rich treasures of God's Word, and which, for some years, has been opening to me more and more "the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints" (Ephesians 1:18), and which has done very much to bring me where I am, "by the grace of God," today. It is found in 2 Corinthians 1:20: "For all the promises of God in him [Christ] are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." By this I understand that, while no promise of God is ever fulfilled to us except for Christ's sake, we may have the fulfillment of every promise for the fulfillment of which we trust in Christ, and that when we trust in Christ, and receive for His sake the fulfillment of God's promises, God is glorified by us. Take then the promise, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." Isaiah 43:25. To whom is that promise fulfilled? To him, and to him only, who trusts in Christ to have it fulfilled to him for Christ's sake. Such a one always receives pardon, and none else.

Take now the promises, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.... I will also save you from all your uncleanness" "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thessalonians 5:23. To whom are those promises fulfilled? Like the promises pledging forgiveness of sin, they are all yea and amen in Christ to the glory of God by us. Hence, when we come to Christ, and trust in Him to have these promises fulfilled to us for His sake, God will glorify Himself by sprinkling clean water upon us, by cleansing us from all our filthiness and from all our idols, and by sanctifying us wholly, and preserving our whole spirit, and soul, and body blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Through the promises of God then we cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of God when we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ that these promises will be fulfilled to us for His sake. Herein, it seems to me, there is in these last days a great departure from the faith--and that when the church of Christ will learn to cleanse herself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God by trusting in Christ for the fulfillment of those exceeding great and precious promises, which pledge to her salvation from all her uncleanness, she will put on her beautiful garments, and arise and shine, her light having come, and the glory of the Lord having arisen upon her. See Isaiah 52:1; 60:1.

And now, dear brother, I will look directly to your questions. You have already had abundant reply as to the question, whether men are, or may be holy in this life. While I believe that there is little holiness in the world, I believe there is abundant provision made in God's grace by which Christians may "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God," and I believe that in the days of Paul, Peter and John, this grace was fully available through the faith in Christ for the fulfillment of God's promises--and no less so now to all who will in the same way avail themselves of it.

As it respects the martyrs—I believe that no man ever became a martyr for Christ who was not actually cleansed from all sin, because the giving up of the whole world and life itself for Christ's sake, fully evince [demonstrate] that such a one must have loved Christ with his whole and undivided heart, and must therefore, have been free from sin. Men may have become martyrs to other things with no regard to Christ, as millions have done to the mad passions of men, but no man, in my apprehension, ever could become a martyr for Christ's sake whose heart was not purified and filled with love to Christ. I believe, therefore, that every real gospel martyr was cleansed from sin before he left the world.

In modern times, many godly men have seemed not fully to apprehend all the riches of the grace of God, and have maintained that no Christian ever did on earth "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and perfecting holiness in the fear of God." However, if a man can be cleansed from sin by faith in Christ for the fulfillment of God's promises a moment before death, why not a day, a year, or twenty or fifty years?

You ask my views respecting the general character of those who have embraced the doctrine of entire sanctification in this life. I answer, I have no doubt that some professing a belief in this doctrine have been licentious—so have some who profess to believe in the doctrine of the new birth, but I do not see that in either case their licentiousness is in any sense chargeable upon the doctrine which they profess to believe. I can no more conceive that a man should become licentious as a direct consequence of trusting in Christ to be kept by the grace of God from all sin than that a man should sink to hell in consequence of trusting in Christ to save him from hell. In either case, in my apprehension, the evil must result from want of faith in Christ, and not from the exercise of it.

And now, as to the greater safety of those that fear always—I answer, that he who trusts in Christ to be kept from sin is the man and the only man that does fear always. He not only fears, but knows that he never shall in any instance keep himself, and therefore always flies to Christ, while he who does not fear always, does not trust in Christ, and therefore falls into sin. I do therefore most fully believe that he who fears always is most safe provided his fears are sufficiently great to drive him to the Lord in whom alone he has righteousness and strength. This fear hath no torment—it is a sweet reliance in Christ.

I do not, therefore, think that any man's absurdities, irregularities, inconsistencies, or crimes are in any sense chargeable upon the doctrine which I advocate. The more precious the coin, the more desirable the counterfeit to a wicked man. That the blessed doctrine of being kept from all sin by faith in Christ will be counterfeited by unholy men for licentious purposes, I have not a doubt, but shall I, therefore, cast away the coin—the most precious that ever fell down to lost man from the exhaustless mint of heaven? No, my brother. The Word of God assures me that my Redeemer was called "JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" "that he was manifested to take away our sins.... Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not" and to that Savior I must cleave as with the grasp of death; for I see a moment's safety nowhere but under the shadow of His wing. "I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth in the fulfillment of His own exceeding great and precious promises shall be thy shield and buckler." Psalms 91:2-4.

And now, brother, I believe there are those who do embrace this great salvation fully so that their characters are formed by it. Who can say, "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"? I do believe that they are not only decidedly, but eminently more meek and heavenly than any other class of men. I ought here to say, however, that nothing in my apprehension is holiness which falls short of the fulfillment of that promise, "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul." The children of God are not, in my apprehension, "whited sepulchers." Matthew

23:27. Holiness is that "the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." Romans 8:4. With any view of sanctification which does not make it consist in loving God with all the heart, and our neighbor as ourselves, I have no fellowship. If a man expresses to me his belief that, through the operations of the Holy Spirit upon his heart received by faith in Christ for the fulfillment of God's promises, he is enabled to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, . . . and thy neighbor as thyself" inasmuch as I know that God has promised to circumcise his heart, to love the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul. I have no right to doubt that the promises of God are thus fulfilled in him, unless I see that in his life he does depart from the right way of the Lord, as it is revealed in His Holy Word. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not [or act not] according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:20.

I am fully aware, however, that there are those who claim to be "perfect in Christ Jesus" (Colossians 1:28), who do fall into gross mistakes in this very point, and in this way do in a very grievous manner cause "not then your good be evil spoken of." Romans 14:16. By laying aside the plain written Word of God as the rule, and the only rule by which they are to govern their faith, try their feelings, form their opinions, shape all their conduct, and take up the belief that the Holy Spirit so dwells in them that they need not resort to the Bible as their only guide, but that they may follow whatever impulse arises within them, they step at once on the broad ground of fanaticism. They become what Christ would have been if at the suggestion of Satan, He had thrown Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple—temples of God.

While God has promised me in His Word everything requisite to meet all the real necessities of my being, even to the full accomplishment of my highest good both on earth and in heaven, He has nowhere given me license to transgress either His physical or moral laws with the expectation that He will meet a necessity that I thus presumptuously create. If I were to leap from an eminence with the expectation that God would save me from death by counteracting the law of gravitation, or by giving me wings, or, if I were voluntarily to abstain from food with the expectation that God would preserve my life without eating, or if I were to venture to sea in a leaky ship with the confidence that God would save me from a watery grave, I would be tempting God by a willful transgression of physical law. I have no right to expect any miraculous assurance before hand, as He did to Moses, that He will be with me in a miraculous manner.

No more am I to transgress moral precepts by casting myself into the way of temptation unnecessarily, thinking that God will keep me there from being overcome, or by doing an act which God's Word plainly forbids through the presumption that the Holy Spirit guides me to it, and that it, therefore, is not sin. I know there are those who have ventured on this ground, and by so doing have brought amazing reproach on Christ and His cause. I am to "believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God." 1 John 4:1. But by what rule am I to try every spirit? Plainly by the revealed Word, I have no other rule, and I need no other. If I feel an impulse then to do a thing contrary to the plain Word of God, I need not mistake the source from whence such an impulse comes. I know the devil is the originator of such an impulse just as infallibly as though I were to see his snaky head, his forked tongue, his glaring eyes, or hear the hissings of his hellish throat.

I know there are those who are accustomed to say, "Whatever the Lord should tell me, I would do." However, I know the Lord will never tell them to do a thing contrary to the Bible and when led to anything of this sort, they are surely led by Satan. Besides, I do not expect to influence the conduct of my fellow men unless I can show them good and sufficient reasons for the course I wish them to pursue. Much more may I expect that where the Holy Ghost would lead me, He will show me the best of reasons for following Him, and for these reasons I am to look into that Word which He has inspired.

From this very error of following impulses instead of the Word of God have grown up much of the inconsistencies, and in some cases, as I do not doubt, licentious practices of some called perfectionists. Instead of cleaving closely to the Word of God, making it their only rule of life, writing it on their hearts, and setting it always "as frontlets between thine eyes" (Deuteronomy 6:8), they have imbibed the idea that the Holy Spirit so dwells in them as to be an infallible guide without any reference to God's plainly revealed will. Moreover, when a man steps on that ground, he may well expect, like he who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves, to find himself wounded, stripped of his raiment, and left, at least, half dead. He throws himself defenseless among mortal foes; for the Word of God should be to him a sword and a shield. He might as well cast away rudder, compass, chart, quadrant, and chronometer in mid-ocean, and expect God to guide him to his desired haven. Or as well, wandering among pitfalls in black midnight, cast away his oil lamp, and think to walk safely by faith. The Holy Spirit has indeed been given to guide us into all truth, but all the truth we need to know is in the Bible; and all the guidance we need is to a right understanding and practice of what the Bible contains.

However, when God has plainly revealed to you that He is ready to "sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you." "I will also save you from all your uncleannesses" when I inquire of Him to do it for me, and when He has sworn that He will grant unto me that "we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of my life." "And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us." "To perform the mercy ... and to remember his holy covenant, the oath which he swore to our father Abraham." And has assured me that "all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us" do I follow impulses and not the Bible when I fully trust in Christ that these promises and this oath of God will be fulfilled to me for Christ's sake? Can I be in danger of going astray by thus cleaving to my own horn of salvation whom God has raised up for me, and by just trusting in Him that He will perform in me the very thing that He came to do?

On this point, my brother, my heart is oppressed, and labors for words to express its gushing emotions. I seem to myself to be standing in a position whence two ways diverge. In the one, I see a class of persons walking who cry out, "Away with the sabbath days, ordinances and the written Word of God—away with all the laws and rules of conduct, both human and divine. We need no law, no rule of faith or practice, no means of grace, no private devotion and communion with our Father in secret, no domestic altars, no earnest, wrestling prayer, and faithful, preserving effort to convert a lost world to God. We dwell in Christ and He in us, and therefore we cannot sin; and whatever impulse we feel, we know to be the influence of the Holy Ghost who cannot err, and we may therefore safely follow wherever such an influence leads." In the ears of such I would cry out at the top of my voice, Danger, danger, danger! Beware, beware! Go not in such a path! Avoid it—pass not by it—turn from it and pass away! Here are the class of men called perfectionists. Can I walk with them upon such ground? Not a hair's breadth. So far from forsaking the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, the Bible tells you to "submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake" (1 Peter 2:13), that "the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God." Romans 13:1-2.

With such men on such subjects, I have, I can have, no sympathy. I believe there are some truly converted souls who fall into these errors, and are dreadfully led astray. I believe that others take up these notions, in whose hearts no fear of God ever for a moment had a place, and follow them out into all manner of licentious and criminal excess. Such become the most perfect and accomplished servants of Satan that he ever raised up to do his work. I cannot conceive that the arch deceiver can ever originate a worse set of principles than these. I could as soon sympathize with any form of infidelity that ever cursed the earth.

However, on the other hand, and in the other path, I see a multitude of professed believers walking who, through fear of going astray, dare not believe God when He tells us that He will cleanse you "from all your filthiness, and from all your idols" and when He swears to them that He "would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." Luke 1:74-75.

Can I sympathize with the unbelief of such? I believe that it is their privilege, and my privilege that we who "abideth in him sinneth not"—that "the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever." "All who thus believe in Christ shall dwell in a peaceful habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." Isaiah 32:17-18. I long to have God's people know and enjoy their high privilege of thus abiding in Christ, for I fully believe that it will redound [contribute] in the highest degree to God's honor and their good. This view of sanctification, I claim, has nothing to do with the essential element of what is termed perfectionism. Their name and their principles I utterly disavow, and declare to the world that no man has a right to charge them upon me.

However, when I look around upon the professed followers of my Savior, and see how little they know, apparently, and how little they seem to enjoy of this great salvation of our God, I feel like lifting the prayer. "Every weary, wandering spirit, Guide into Thy perfect peace."

And when I see how many bearing the name of Christ seem wandering among doubts and fears, and groping in thick darkness at noon-day, falling before spiritual enemies whom they know not how to vanquish, and weeping over repeated commission of sins which they know not how to overcome, I long to say to such—"Watchmen! let thy wandering cease, Hie [go quickly] thee to thy quiet home, Traveler! Lo! The Prince of Peace—Lo! The Son of God is come!"

Look no longer like scattered unbelieving Israel for a Savior yet to come. Say, with believing Zacharias, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant; the oath ... that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." Luke 1:68-75.

You ask me, finally, concerning myself. Here, dear brother, I speak with unfeigned diffidence [timidity]. I love to look at my Savior, and to hold Him forth in all His fullness to my needy, perishing fellow men. However, in myself, aside from what the grace of God has done, and shall do for me, I find nothing but the dark and perfect lineaments [characteristic features] of Beelzebub, the prince of devils. I speak sincerely, my brother. I know that, if God should withdraw His grace from me and leave me to myself, there is not a sin within reach of my powers which I would not instantly commit and practice forever.

And now, having told you what I think of myself to my own shame, permit me to tell you what I think of the grace of God to His praise. God has promised to "dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God" and this I consider a pledge of every possible good which He can give me. "Having therefore these promises," I expect, by trusting in Christ, that they will be fulfilled to me for His sake, to be cleansed "from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

My God has sworn that He will grant me that I, being delivered out of the hand of my enemies, may serve Him without fear in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of my life, and He has raised up Jesus Christ to be my horn of salvation, to perform to me this mercy promised to our fathers, to remember this holy covenant, this oath which He swear. I do therefore expect through the strength and faithfulness of my Lord Jesus Christ in performing to me this holy covenant and oath of God, to be delivered out the hand of my enemies, and to serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of my life. I expect that He, according to His own promise, will be faithful to sanctify me wholly, and to preserve my whole spirit, soul, and body blameless, unto the coming of our

Lord Jesus Christ. In myself I am nothing but a miserable, lost sinner, but in my Savior "dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;" and He has made me "complete in him." I therefore expect to abide in Him, and "whosoever abideth in him sinneth not."

And now, my brother, as to what I expect to preach, I have only to say that I expect to uncover to my fellow men just so far and just so long as my God shall enable me, "a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." Zechariah 13:1. I expect to do all in my power to make my fellow men acquainted with "his holy covenant; the oath which he sware ... that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life;" and that Christ is our "horn of salvation" to perform this covenant. This oath of a covenant-keeping God, that His, and every other promise of God "are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." That He who hath called them is faithful to sanctify them wholly, and to preserve their whole spirit, soul, and body blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ gave Himself for us, that He might sanctify and cleanse us with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present us to Himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that we should be holy and without blemish and that they have only like Paul to "believe God, that it shall be even as it was told them." Acts 27:25. Like Abraham "staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that what he hath promised he was able also to perform" (Romans 4:20-21), and like Sarah to judge Him faithful that hath promised (Hebrews 11:11), and by placing this confidence in their Savior, they shall so receive the fulfillment of God's exceeding great and precious promises as to "be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust, that having these promises and this faith in Christ for their fulfillment "let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

This, my brother, I regard as the glory, the crowning excellency of the gospel, the brightest star in the whole firmament of revealed truth and with my Savior's permission, I expect to point my fellow men to this Day Star of hope until the hand that points them is given to the worms. It is to my soul a fountain of living waters, a wellspring of life, and I expect to say to my fellow men, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isaiah 55:1); and cease not until the lips that are allowed the high privilege of uttering such an invitation can speak no more.

And now, my dear brother, you have my whole heart laid open without reserve, and to God I commit myself, and His truth, and the cause of the Savior dearer to me than life. "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 ever. Amen." Jude 24-25.

Your servant in the gospel,

Charles Fitch

Letter to the Presbytery of Newark

By Charles Fitch Found in Guide to Christian Perfection

Vol. 1, No. 10, April 1840, 217-234.

"To the Presbytery of Newark"

Dear Brethren:

After being made acquainted with my views and feelings on the subject of sanctification, you have passed a resolution declaring them to be important and in dangerous error, admonishing me to preach them no more. I must therefore say, brethren, and I hope to do it with all meekness and humility and in lowliness of heart, that I cannot regard your admonition for the following reasons:

REASON ONE

It is now several years since after a season of spiritual gloom and sadness, I came fully to the conclusion that there was something in the religion of Jesus Christ to which I had been a stranger. I had seen myself to be a sinner before God, richly deserving His everlasting indignation. I had seen that God would be holy, just and good, and worthy of universal and eternal adoration, while punishing me with everlasting destruction from His presence and from the glory of His power. I had also seen in Christ, a Savior who, after atoning for all mankind on the cross, was able on the merits of that atonement to save to the uttermost all that come to God by Him, and on that Savior I had cast myself as my only hope, and trusted in Him, and Him only, as my Deliverer from the wrath of God.

Trusting thus in Him—my crucified Savior—for my salvation, I was for a time filled with great joy and peace in believing, and went on my way rejoicing. However, years passed away, and to these lively emotions of joy in the Lord I had been almost an entire stranger, except for a short season immediately succeeding my first conversion to Christ—when I did taste in a good degree the peace which those are sure to find who come with a heart penitent for sin, and trust in the merits of a crucified Savior for pardon and everlasting life. However, I had come now to the full conviction that my religious state was very far from what it ought to be. This arose partly from what I had learned in the Bible respecting "the riches of the glory of this mystery ... which is Christ in you the hope of glory," "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus," "whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" and partly from what I learned about that time of the experience of some Christians to which experience I knew myself to be a stranger.

I came then to a settled determination to know, with the help of God, more of spiritual things. Since that time, which is now some years, I have as never before, "criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." Proverbs 2:3-5. I have sought for spiritual bread and for the water of life with an earnestness which I know I have never felt for any of the possessions of this world. I have sought these in the Bible, in the experience of eminent Christians which have gone to their reward, and in the writings of living Christians who seemed to know most of spiritual things. I have sought them in personal conversation with those who seemed to know most of the deep things of God, and I have sought them on my knees with many tears, and with earnest wrestlings in the name of Christ for the teachings of the Holy Ghost.

For a long time there was no definite blessing that I had in my mind as the object of pursuit, except that I might have more of the Holy Ghost, and be far better prepared than I had ever been to live to the glory of God. However, I was made acquainted in the providence of God with some of those Christians who believe that it is the privilege of all disciples of Christ to be, through the "great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works," and we "through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ" "sanctify You wholly; and I Pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be

preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it"—to be cleansed "from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, Perfecting holiness in the fear of God" "for all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us" and thus through the "exceeding great and precious Promises: that by these ye might be made partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

When I first knew this class of Christians, and first read their writings, I was greatly opposed to their views of truth, and from what I had learned of the mistakes and excesses of some who had professed to hold this truth, and to enjoy the experience of it. I was led to regard the whole subject with very great aversion. Yet, I have learned that truth is not (to) be held accountable for the excesses into which these mistakes may lead them, nor for the sins of those who hold the truth in unrighteousness.

While I was thus crying after knowledge, and lifting up my voice for understanding, the Lord began to teach me more and more of the love of Christ, so that I was not only restored to my first love, but made to know in my own experience that "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Proverbs 4:18), and that "he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." The "peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" "with joy unspeakable and full of glory," of which the Bible speaks, became realities to my mind; and I had learned the blessed truth that all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us" that it is the Christian's privilege by trusting in Christ for the fulfillment of the promises to enjoy the fulfillment of every one of them, just as the awakened sinner has fulfilled to him the promise of pardon, when, and only when, he believes for this on Christ.

I had then inquired, What has God promised, and what is He willing to do for me, if I believe for it in Christ? I examined the Bible with this principle in view, and found that God had said, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye." Psalms 32:8. This promise I knew to be yea and amen in Christ unto the glory of God by me, and I therefore prayed and trusted in Christ that God would instruct me, and teach me in the way that I should go, and guide me with His eye into all truth respecting the doctrine of sanctification. When I read the promises on this subject, I found them full and explicit. "God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul." "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.... I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh, . . . 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. . I will also save you from all your uncleanness." "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." "This is the covenant that I will make them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." I also found that Christ, our Redeemer, was called Jesus because "He shall save his people from their sins" that "He was manifested to take away our sins. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not." I also found many other scriptures equally full and explicit.

However, after all this, unbelief triumphed in my mind, and I could not see how it should ever be to me reality in this life that "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." Yet, as I prayed more and more for the teachings of God's Spirit, and searched after the truth, I found that, "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." He is as faithful to cleanse as He is to forgive. I found also that Christ was raised up an horn of salvation ... to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; the oath which he sware to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of

our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life. When I inquired why are not these promises—so rich and full—made good to God's people, I saw that as they were yea and amen only in Christ, they were to be fulfilled like the promises pledging the pardon of sin to those, and only those, who believed in Christ for their fulfillment. This led me to see that if I would be cleansed from all unrighteousness, as well as have my sins forgiven, I must believe for that cleansing in Him of whom it is said, "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

On Him, therefore, I now endeavored oftentimes to cast myself by trusting simply in His faithfulness that He would cleanse me from all unrighteousness. However, I had yet no evidence on which I could rest a belief that I was thus cleansed. I went on thus continuing to pray, endeavoring to trust in Christ for this cleansing gift of the Holy Spirit, and desiring above all things to be cleansed from all unrighteousness. In this state of mind, I had one day taken my Testament and a little work on "Christian Perfection" by Fletcher, and given myself up to reading, meditation and prayer on this subject. I opened Fletcher at the following passage:

"My heart strings groan with deep complaint—My flesh lies, panting, Lord, for Thee, and every limb, and every joint, stretches for perfect purity. But if the Lord be pleased to come softly to thy help; if He make an end of thy corruptions by helping thee gently to sink to unknown depths of meekness; if he drown the indwelling man of sin by baptizing, by plunging him into an abyss of humility; do not find fault with the simplicity of His method, the plainness of His appearing and the commonness of His prescription.

Nature, like Naaman, is full of prejudices. She expects that Christ will come to make her clean, with as much ado and pomp and bustle, as the Syrian general looked for, when he was wroth, and said, 'Behold, I thought He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.' 2 Kings 5:11.

Christ frequently goes a much plainer way to work, and by this means disconcerts all our preconceived notions and schemes of deliverance. Learn of me to be meek and lowly in heart, and thou shalt find rest to thy soul (see Matthew 11:29), the sweet rest of Christian perfection, of perfect humility, resignation and meekness. If thou wilt absolutely come to mount Zion in a triumphal chariot, or make thine entrance into the New Jerusalem upon a prancing horse, thou art likely never to come there. Leave then all thy worldly misconceptions behind, and humbly follow thy King, who makes His entry into the typical Jerusalem, meek and lowly, riding upon an ass, yea, upon a colt, the foal of an ass."

These remarks were particularly blessed to me. It seemed to me, indeed, a most delightful thing to sink into the meek and lowly spirit of the blessed Savior. I had before been laboring to rise above my sin, and thus leave them. However, now I felt willing to sink below them into a depth of humility, where the proud, unhumiliated spirit of sin would not be willing to follow, and it seemed a delightful thing to sink in the arms of my Savior below the reach of all my spiritual foes, when I had long been seeking in vain to escape them by soaring above. I felt then in my spirit a most sweet and heavenly sinking into the arms of my Redeemer, such as I had not before experienced, and it was followed by a calm, unruffled, blissful peace in Christ—such as I need not attempt to describe to those who have tasted it, and such as I cannot describe to the comprehension of those whose hearts have never felt it. It was attended with such a full and delightful submission in all things to the will of God; such a joy of heart in the thought of being for life, and for death, and forever, altogether at God's disposal; such a gladness in giving up earth in all its possessions and pleasures for Christ's sake; such an overflow of humble, penitential, grateful love to my Redeemer; such a satisfaction in the thought of having Him as my only everlasting portion; such praise to His name that I might possess Him as the portion of my soul forever; such full-hearted and unshrinking confidence in all His promises, and such a readiness to do and suffer all things, even to the laying down of life for His name's sake, that I felt constrained to say, this is purity of heart.

I knew that nothing but the Holy Spirit could ever fill such a heart as mine had been with such feelings as these, and I therefore believed it to be the work of the Holy Spirit, cleansing my heart from the defilement of sin. I know that some persons are ready to say, All this may be the delusion of Satan leading you to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think. Yet, I do not think that the devil ever yet attempted to fill the heart of any man with the love of God. Christ said to His disciples, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." The true disciple, therefore will know the Comforter.

I know that the feelings I have now described were a blessed reality; that there was nothing left in my will or affections in opposition to them, and I do therefore believe that the Savior gave me to know at that moment something of the blessedness of being redeemed from all iniquity, and purified unto Himself. For some length of time I continued in that blessed state of mind. The glory of my Redeemer shone upon my soul without a cloud. He had before seemed to shine upon me with a brightness like the noonday sun, but now, instead of shining from a particular part of the heavens, He seemed to fill the whole firmament, and—to shed His mild, sweet, heavenly, life-giving, joy-inspiring radiance upon me from every point. Above and around me all was light and gladness, and praise to the name of my Redeemer seemed the language of every breath. I cannot but feel that in that state of mind sin had no dominion over me. I feel that God at that time gave me the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

However, I had yet one lesson to learn, and there was probably but one way by which I could learn it—by drinking, like Peter, of the cup of sorrow, that I might in the future beware. I had been accustomed to say that if persons believed that they had reason to regard themselves as fully sanctified, there was no necessity for making it known, and the enemy of my soul doubtless knew enough of me to commence his attack where I was most likely to be overcome. I was therefore led to say within myself, This need not be mentioned; it never shall be said of me that I go about boasting of my own goodness. To boast of my own goodness I certainly felt no disposition, for I clearly saw that all which had been wrought within me was the work of the Holy Spirit, and that of my own I had nothing of which to boast.

However, I came to the conclusion not to say, even to my dearest friends, that I had ever thought myself to be cleansed from sin even for a moment. I would enjoy it alone with God and let my life bear witness. The consequence was that when brought where I feared another might suspect me of thinking this of myself, I was led for the purpose of giving him a better opinion of my humility to say that I entertained no such opinion.

Herein I fell into sin. By denying what I had believed to have been wrought in me by the Spirit of God, I was now made to feel what I had lost. I had been told that I could not remain in the delightful state in which I had found myself without confessing to the honor of Christ what I believed He had done for me by His Spirit, but I believed it not. I accordingly made the attempt and fell into the snare of the wicked one. I now found the same sins besetting me as before, bringing me into bondage, and my state [became] precisely what it was previous to what I believed the Lord had shown me of the blessedness of a pure heart. I know that by denying that blessed work which the Lord did in me, and by denying it that I might have a reputation for humility with man, I brought leanness and darkness into my own soul.

In this state, however, I was led to desire most earnestly, and to pray most fervently that I might be made like Christ. The burden of my petition was that I might be made as much like Christ as it was possible for a soul to become while in the body, and I felt that I could be satisfied with nothing short of this. After praying thus for a time, I saw most clearly that there was nothing which God was more willing to do than to make me thus like Christ, and I felt a sweetness of assurance in Him that it should be granted me.

Life and Christian Experience of Charles Fitch

Now it was that the Lord showed me what must be the consequence of being like Christ, and that I could not possibly have the likeness of Christ without meeting these consequences. I saw that if I would live godly in Christ Jesus, I must suffer persecution, and that I could not be like Christ without being willing to share in His reproach. The Holy Spirit now showed me the sin which I had committed in denying what God had done for my soul, and I now saw that while with "the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10), from being again led into sin. This I had not done. With my heart I had believed unto righteousness, but instead of making confession with my mouth of the grace which God had shown me, and thereby being saved from the sin of denying it, I had refused to make the confession, and by so doing fell again into the hands of my spiritual foes.

I now saw that to continue in the enjoyment of that blessing, I must confess the whole and take the consequences. These I knew would not be small. I knew that almost every friend I had on earth would regard me as almost utterly fallen the moment I should make such a confession, and that my brethren in the ministry, whose confidence I had valued above all earthly goods, would withdraw their confidence at once, and in all probability cast me out from among them. I had now come truly to the plucking out of the right eye and the cutting off of the right hand—to the point where I must "forsake brethren or sisters, father, or mother, or wife, or children or lands for my name's sake." Matthew 19:29.

Could I make the sacrifice? Could I become an outcast from my brethren, and an alien from my mother's children? Could I become as lost to the friends I had loved most dearly, and have my name cast out as evil by those whose kind regards I most wished to retain in order to please my Savior and enjoy His love as for a little while He had permitted me to do? The struggle was severe. It cost me as much to make these sacrifices as it would cost any one of my brethren, but I could not long hesitate. I had prayed that I might continually enjoy the Savior's love, and He had now shown me what it would cost me—and, blessed be His name, He gave me strength to make choice of His love at the sacrifice, if necessary, of everything that I held dear on earth.

I was enabled to pray, Lord, restore me again to that blessed state of conscious purity and peace, and love to Thee, and blessedness in Thee which I once enjoyed, and I will confess thy faithfulness to the world, and let my worthless name be reproached as it may. Save me, Lord, from my sins—redeem me from all iniquity, and give me evidence of it on which I can rely, so that I can go before the world with no hypocritical pretensions to something which I do not possess—let me in deed and in truth be cleansed from all unrighteousness, and have full and satisfactory evidence that Thou hast done this for me, and I will declare Thy faithfulness, and in Thy strength meet all that shall follow.

In this state of mind, I took up the Word of God, and came to the following passage in the words of Paul to the Romans: "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

I had before thought of this passage, and it had seemed to me that there was a meaning in it which I did not understand. I had said in my thoughts, What if I do think myself dead to sin? How will just thinking myself dead to sin make me thus dead? How will any change be wrought in the state of my heart before God by my laboring to think so? Again, I had thought of the injunction—"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin," and I said in my heart I will endeavor so to do. However, I found myself wholly unable to do so in any way that even began to satisfy me that I was in truth dead to sin. It was not the comfort of a sincere mistake respecting my own character that I desired. "As the hart panteth after the water brooks" (Psalm 42:1), so panted my soul after a full conformity to the will of God. I felt that nothing would satisfy me for a moment, but "to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God."

Nor was it my ambition to have others think me free from sin that I was seeking to gratify, for if I could have made the whole universe believe me to be free from sin while it was not a fact, it would not have begun in the least degree to satisfy the longings of my soul. Could I have possessed all the wealth, and received all the honor, and enjoyed all the pleasure which the whole universe could have lavished upon me, and have been thought by every creature of God in earth and heaven to have been as pure as the spirits that wait continually before the eternal throne, all this would have done nothing to fill the desires which burned in my heart, to "cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Still, however, with my eye on the injunction, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord," I was not able to see how I should do this, so that it should be indeed and in truth a reality in the sight of God—nothing short of that would satisfy me for a moment. I now remembered that blessed promise of our divine and glorious and loving Savior, "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." John 16:13. "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." John 14:26. I now cast myself down before the Lord, and prayed in the name of Christ that the Holy Spirit might guide me into all truth respecting the passage before me, and teach me how to reckon myself dead to sin and alive to God so that it would be a reality, and not a thing of imagination. Having made known my request, I trusted in Christ that the teachings of the Spirit would be given me. "Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you." John 15:16. I therefore placed my confidence in the Savior, and believed that for His sake the Holy Spirit would show me how to "reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Instantly, while I was even on my knees with the blessed Bible open before me on those words, there seemed shed upon them a flood of heavenly light, and my very soul was filled with unutterable gladness with "joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Peter 1:8) with the thought that seemed clear as the brightness of a thousand suns that I was to "reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin," by trusting my Lord Jesus Christ to keep me dead to sin; "but alive unto God." by trusting my Lord Jesus Christ to keep me alive to God. This I saw would be reckoning myself to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ my Lord. It was to cease forever from placing my confidence in my own strength, and to rely altogether upon the strength and faithfulness of my blessed Lord Jesus Christ to "make and keep me pure within," to make and keep me "dead indeed unto sin," to make and keep me "alive unto God."

And now, if I had found myself that moment monarch of the world with its crown on my head, its scepter in my hand, its accumulated treasures at my feet, and every individual among all its multitudes ready to do my bidding, it would not have begun to afford me the joy which I felt when I saw, as I then did, the privilege which a God of infinite love had granted me to reckon myself dead indeed unto sin by trusting my Lord Jesus Christ to make and keep me thus alive. How glorious and lovely did my Savior then appear! "Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib." Song of Solomon 6:12. If the crown and the scepter and the riches and the homage of the world had been mine, I should have leaped for joy and run to give Christ the scepter and the crown, the riches and the homage; and to lay myself in the dust at His feet to be His humblest, lowliest servant forevermore. Oh, since I have known my high privilege to reckon myself dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ my Lord, "thy name is as ointment poured forth." "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine. Draw me, we will run after thee: the king hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine: [by His strength] the upright love thee." Song of Solomon 1: 3, 2, 4.

When the Holy Spirit thus enlightened me respecting my privilege of reckoning myself dead indeed unto sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ my Lord, He that moment enabled me to avail myself of the

privilege, and I instantly found myself more than restored to that blessed state of conscious purity of heart before God from which I had fallen by refusing to confess before men what my Savior had done for me.

The love of the world was gone; no sinful indulgence had any charm for me. My whole heart was won by Christ, and filled with overflowing love to Him, and I feel that a thousand hearts, had they been mine, would have been most joyfully consecrated to His service. I had no will but His, and no desire of life or death or eternity, but to be disposed of in that way which would secure the highest possible praise to my Redeemer. I was now delivered from the fear of man, and as I had covenanted with the Lord to confess His faithfulness to the world, when He should give me evidence on which I could rely that I was redeemed from all iniquity, and as I had now found myself, and in a way so glorious and delightful beyond everything I had ever before conceived, made "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." I had been so abundantly enlightened respecting the privilege of every Christian to be kept in that state by the faithfulness of the dear Redeemer, I could not for a moment hesitate. It was my duty to declare to the world that by the power of the Holy Spirit given me by my own blessed Savior, I was made "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Besides, I had once known the bitterness of denying my Savior here, and the blessed work which He had wrought in me, for the purpose of retaining the good opinion of man; the Holy Spirit had set that sin before me, and I had opened my mouth to the Lord that if He would restore me, I would bear His reproach. And now He had enabled me once more in His infinite and abounding mercy, "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness," and it remained that "with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" from falling again into the snare of the devil. Romans 10:10.

I have been enabled to make this confession to the world—That "the great God and my Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purified me unto Himself" (Titus 2:13-14); that I am dead unto sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ my Lord, that the God of peace is faithful to sanctify me wholly, and to preserve my whole spirit, soul, and body blameless unto the coming of my Lord Jesus Christ; that the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, does "through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." I felt that in making this confession, I was laying myself and my all, a sacrifice on the altar of my God and Savior; but that Savior had led me by His own amazing love, and given me a heart that could deny Him no more, and that was ready and glad at all hazards to confess His faithfulness and power and love to the world.

I knew that the world would reproach me. I knew that God's professed people would cast out my name as evil. I knew that the friends whom I loved most dearly would, many of them perhaps, weep over me as lost. I knew that the confidence of the churches with which I stood connected would be withdrawn from me, and perhaps all my past prospects of a maintenance of myself and my household be entirely cut off, but I knew that my Redeemer lived—and that all power was given unto Him in heaven and on earth, and that I had only to "seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33), nothing doubting, but "consider the lilies of the field, how they grow ... even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these" (Matthew 6:28-29), would surely feed and clothe me and mine.

In this state of mind I did, at the altar of my God, make confession of what God had taught me of His truth, and of what I had been made to feel of His purifying, sanctifying grace in Jesus Christ, and thus I discharged a duty to which I am sure I never could have been led by anything, but a once crucified and now glorified Savior's love, manifested to me by the Holy Ghost. I have no more doubt that I was constrained to this step by the love of Christ, than I have that Christ or my own soul has a being. I know

Life and Christian Experience of Charles Fitch

I was not led to it by a love of the world, for I never could have done it until the last vestige of the love of the world had been taken from me. I know that until I had made of the whole world an entire sacrifice to Christ, I never could have thus held myself up to scorn.

On the morning of the day which immediately followed the Sabbath when I first "witnessed this confession" before men, I had a season of communion with God of which I will speak because I think it may do good. I was alone in my chamber, and meditating upon some passages of scripture which made mention of the faithfulness of God.

They were as follows: "God is faithful by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ." I Corinthians 1:9 "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." "God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." 1 Corinthians 10:13. "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True." Revelation 19: 11.

His name is also called the Word of God. "And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." Revelation 19:16. While reflecting thus upon the faithfulness of my God and Savior, my whole soul seemed heaved with inexpressible emotions, and poured out in floods of gushing love at my Redeemer's feet. I felt that I had forsaken all for Him, and could now only leave myself in His hands, and commit all my interests to His disposal. And now in view of the safety of trusting my all with Him, my soul exulted with amazing gladness, and I could only walk from my room weeping aloud for joy, and pouring out my tears of overflowing delight as I uttered again and again the single expression—my faithful God—my faithful God.

Since that time I have had various conflicts with Satan, but I have never for a moment doubted the faithfulness of my Redeemer in saving all His people from their sins who will believe on His name for that blessing. I see most clearly that the only reason why any Christian is not saved from sin is "because of unbelief." Romans 11:20.

I have by no means been all that I hope or expect to be, for I see that it is the privilege of the Christian that has been redeemed from all iniquity, still "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before" (Philippians 3:13), and "be holding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Corinthians 3:18. I believe that to be cleansed from all unrighteousness is by no means the height of the Christian's privilege on earth, that beyond that he may go on "to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge," and be filled more and more "with all the fullness of God." Ephesians 3:18 -19. Even then, we may still say to Him with the apostle, "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, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus through-out all ages, world without end. Amen." Ephesians 3:20-21.

You will now see, brethren, in what I have related to you of the readings and teachings of God's Spirit with my own soul why I cannot regard your admonition, and desist from preaching the doctrine of entire sanctification by faith in Christ. I could not do it without regarding myself as a traitor to my blessed Lord and Master, who has made to me—a miserable, unworthy, hell-deserving worm of the dust—manifestations of His presence and love, bright and glorious, far beyond anything which I once could have conceived.

I believe "the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." I feel that "necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not this gospel." I Corinthians 9:16. Like Jonah fleeing to Tarshish, I once

attempted to escape the discharge of the duty. Like Jeremiah, "I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay." Jeremiah 20:9. Once I denied the faithfulness of my Redeemer; but He forgave me, and has restored me to the enjoyment of His love, and has, as I firmly believe, in faithfulness to His own promise, "circumcise thine heart, . . . to love the LORD with all thine heart, and with all thy soul." I must speak it to the world, Let Him have the glory, and let me bear the reproach which I must bear for His sake. I must confess it to the world for the purpose of making known, as far as I am able with His blessing, to all God's people their high privileges in Christ Jesus. "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Galatians 1:11-12. And now, "whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." Acts 4:19 -20.

REASON TWO

2. I cannot desist from preaching the doctrine of sanctification, and from testifying to my own experience of it, for the very same reasons that you cannot desist from preaching the doctrine of regeneration, and testifying to your own experience of that. Suppose that you were to insist that "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3), but when asked whether you or any one else had enjoyed that blessing, should say, "By no means. It is an important and dangerous error for any man to think so; it never takes place until death." How much influence would such preaching exert? How many would be born again through such instrumentality?

You feel yourselves under necessity, therefore, on that subject, to maintain that regeneration is a matter of experience, and that you and many others do enjoy it. But while you tell your people that they ought to be free from sin, and are wholly inexcusable for not being so, and while you pray that they may be redeemed from all iniquity, they know perfectly well that you have no expectation that it will take place while they live, and hence all your exhortations and prayers are wholly lost. Your people know that you expect that they will live along in sin until death, and that while you exhort them to be free from sin, you show them no way by which they may become so, and maintain that it would be an important and dangerous error for them to expect to be so until they die. Hence, all your efforts for the sanctification of God's professing people, are rendered perfectly nugatory.

For myself, therefore, I feel bound to tell professing Christians that there is a way whereby they may "cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1), that it may be done through the promises of God, which "are all yea, and Amen in Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 1:20).

When, therefore, with the apostle, "I labour, striving according to God's Spirit, which worketh in me mightily, by warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Colossians 1:29, 28), I feel that I am not urging them to chase a phantom, which, however earnestly and laboriously sought, will elude their grasp till death; but that I am leading them to the enjoyment of a blessed and glorious reality, which is treasured up for them in Christ, and which they may every one of them secure and most richly enjoy.

And when I am permitted, through the exceeding riches of God's love in Christ Jesus, to say that I have experienced of the grace which I present to their acceptance, I have left them stripped of all excuses and palliations for their sins, and may therefore hope that God's Spirit will attend His truth, and lead them in the way of knowledge and understanding. I can say to Christians, "This is the will of God, even your sanctification" (1 Thessalonians 4:3). "God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness" (1

Thessalonians 4:7), while you by your own principles are obliged to tell them, that they are shut up, in some measure at least, to a life of sin. Brethren, I cannot stand on such ground, and therefore I must disregard your admonition.

There seems to me to be a wonderful and strange inconsistency, in urging Christians to holiness of heart and life, and at the same time telling them that they never can be without sin while they live, and that if they think that Christ, who was manifested to take away their sins, will ever do it till He takes away their breath, they have embraced important and dangerous error. I feel constrained to say, in faithfulness to Christ and His dear people, though some may think it unkind, that those who attempt to maintain such ground, seem to me to be, and in a very important sense "shutting up of the kingdom of heaven against men: neither entering themselves, nor suffering those who would enter to go in" (Matthew 23:13).

When the watchmen of Israel cry out in the ears of the people, that no man ever did or will abide in Christ and sin not, on earth, that God who has sworn to do it, and raised up Christ our horn of salvation to perform the oath, never will "grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life" (Luke 1:74-75), what can we expect, but that many who desire deliverance from sin, will despair of attaining it, and submit in despondency to the will of their spiritual foes, and groan away their lives in grievous bondage, when they might be enjoying the liberty wherewith Christ would make them free; and that others, glad to have such an excuse for their sins, will comfort themselves in their worldliness, and their unhallowed indulgences by the feeling that they are not expected, while they live, to be free from sin.

I will not attempt to conceal it, that this looks to me like a subtle and dangerous snare of the great enemy of Christ and His church. Herein it seems to me lies the "important and dangerous error," and not in telling Christians that their Redeemer "is faithful to sanctify them wholly, and to preserve their whole spirit and soul and body blameless to His coming" (1 Thessalonians 5:23), when they will believe in Him for that blessing.

REASON THREE

3. I cannot regard your admonition because those Scriptures on which you rely as testimony that no Christian ever does so "abide in Christ as to sin not," seem to me to have no bearing that way.

Take, for example, the single passage quoted in the report of your committee, and adopted by you as ample proof of the correctness of your views.

"There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Ecclesiastes 7:20). Let us apply this to the experience of Paul. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7). What arrogant, presumptuous language has Paul here used! He must have been puffed up with spiritual pride! Did he not know that the Bible expressly declares "There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not?" How dare he say, "I have fought a good fight?"

But suppose Paul were allowed to step forth in his own defense, and taking the ground ascribed to him by those who regard the doctrine of entire sanctification by a faith in Christ as "an important and dangerous error," should begin to say, "I acknowledge that there is much sin in my heart, and that my best actions are defiled with it, but still I think I have had some love of God, some desire to glorify Him by doing His will, some readiness to spend and be spent in His service, and that I have in some things sincerely labored for the advancement of His cause." We may come forward still and say, Paul, you are certainly mistaken; you think of yourself more highly than you ought to think; for it is a positive undeniable declaration of God's own Word that "There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not," and, therefore, Paul, your assumption that there is any good thing in you is forever silenced.

Your text, therefore, brethren, stands just as entirely and fully opposed to your views of truth as to mine; and in my apprehension has nothing to do either with the one or the other. The truth is this. There is a large class of Scripture texts which are designed to set forth the truth, that by nature and by practice until regeneration, all mankind are "evil, only evil, and that continually" (Genesis 6:5). But "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, and all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). The character of such a one is precisely what it was not before; and those passages of Scripture which described his character before, cannot describe it now.

Consequently we find that the Scriptures used to describe the two characters, stand in direct opposition to each other. Accordingly, while it is said that "There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Ecclesiastes 7:20), it is also said, that those who "were sometime alienated and enemies in their minds by wicked works" (Colossians 1:21) shall be presented "holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight, if they continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel" (Colossians 1:22-23), that in fulfillment of the oath of God through Christ, their horn of salvation, it shall be "granted them, that they being delivered out of the hand of their enemies might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of their lives" (Luke 1:74-75); that those who "abide in Christ sin not" (1 John 3:6), and that "He who hath called them is faithful to sanctify them wholly, and to preserve them wholly, and to preserve their whole spirit, and soul and body, blameless, unto the coming of Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

"All the promises of God pledging their sanctification, are yea, and Amen in Christ, unto the glory of God by them" (2 Corinthians 1:20), and when they believe in Christ for the fulfillment of these promises they cannot fail. Most clearly therefore, to my mind, these passages of Scripture which are relied on to prove that God's people never will be "presented perfect in Christ Jesus" (Colossians 1:28), while they live, are designed to set forth the characters of the unrenewed, and not the characters of such as are "in Christ Jesus" (Romans 6:1), and who are therefore "NEW CREATURES, OLD THINGS HAVING PASSED AWAY, AND ALL THINGS BECOME NEW" (2 Corinthians 5:17). In the nature of the case, what is true of the one class, cannot be true of the other, for they are designedly set forth in the Bible as perfect opposites.

But again. Suppose we admit, that among the saints of the Old Testament not a man lived without sin; although it was said of Isaiah, after he had made confession of his uncleanness, and his lips had been touched with a live coal from the altar of God, "Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged" (Isaiah 6:7). But admit that the Old Testament saints were at all times defiled with the guilt of actual transgressions, is there no privilege granted to God's people now, that was not afforded to the early saints?

"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you. 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. 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" (1 Peter 1:8-12).

What is this end of faith, even the salvation of the soul? Of which salvation the prophets inquired and searched diligently? What is this grace of which they prophesied, coming unto the saints scattered abroad, to whom Peter wrote? What was the glory that was to follow the sufferings of Christ? What were the things which the prophets ministered, not unto themselves, but to those to whom the gospel was afterwards preached by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven? What did Christ mean when He said, "This is My blood of the New Testament" (Matthew 26:28)? What did Paul mean by that new and

better covenant of which Christ was the mediator and surety? And what did Christ mean when He said, "He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John the Baptist, than whom there had never been, up to his day, a greater prophet" (Luke 7:28)? And what did Zacharias mean, when he said, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation, to perform the mercy promised unto the fathers, the covenant, the oath which He swore" (Luke 1:68, 69, 72, 73)? What is all this but the blessing of the new covenant spoken of by Jeremiah, and repeatedly spoken of by Paul to the Hebrews:

"I will, (since they brake My old covenant), make a new covenant," "I will put My laws into their hearts and in their minds will I write them" (Hebrews 10:16), "I will (and with an oath the mighty God hath said it) grant unto you that ye being delivered out of the hand of your enemies may serve Me without fear, in holiness and righteousness before me all the days of your life" (Luke 1:73-75). This, then, is the peculiar covenant privilege of New Testament saints—SALVATION FROM THEIR SINS.

This explains all the Scriptures which I have quoted, and therefore whatever might have been true of Old Testament saints, it is now the peculiar privilege of God's people to be redeemed from all iniquity, and for this they have only to believe in the Mediator of this new covenant, for this is God's covenant with them, when He shall take away their sins. It is, therefore, the privilege of the new covenant that I am to hold up before the people of God, and urge to the full enjoyment of it; and thus seek, like the apostles, to obtain "sufficiency of God to be an able minister of the New Testament, not of the letter that killeth, but the spirit that giveth life" (2 Corinthians 3:6).

Your application of Old Testament declarations of the universal sinfulness of men, therefore, to show the privileges of New Testament believers, is, in my view, a great mistake, and shows you to be still ministers of the Old Testament, instead of being, as you should be, "able ministers of the New Testament." For this reason, then, I cannot heed your admonition. I wish to be a minister of the New Testament, not of the Old.

REASON FOUR

4. I will now state one more reason, why I cannot give heed to your admonition, and then I shall have done.

There is a dying bed a little before me, and a judgment seat where I expect to stand and give account for all the actions of my life.

Can I tell the people of God that they have no Saviour from sin during their whole lives; that live long as they may, and labor as hard as they may to find out the path of life, and pray as fervently as they may, and trust in their Saviour for the fulfillment of the promises as fully as they may, they are doomed hopelessly to sin against the Redeemer they love, more or less, even to their dying hour; that all their cries and struggles for help are vain, and that they must be, to some extent, rebels against the heart of infinite love, until the grim monster death appears for their deliverance? To me it looks like casting dust in the eyes of such as wish to see a way whereby they may be enabled to love their God and Saviour with a perfect heart; and "sewing pillows to the armholes" (Ezekiel 13:18) of those who wish to pass comfortably through life in their remaining corruptions, hoping to find a Saviour from sin, only when all opportunity for sinful enjoyment has passed away.

I feel, brethren, that I could not go in peace to my dying pillow, or appear at the great tribunal, expecting the approbation of My Judge, if I did not tell God's people that He has promised to "circumcise their heart, and the heart of their seed, to love the LORD their God with all their heart, and with all their soul" (Deuteronomy 30:6); to "sprinkle clean water upon them, and make them clean: from all their filthiness, and from all their idols, to cleanse them" (Ezekiel 36:25), and that these, with many

other exceeding great and precious promises, were given for the express purpose, that through them, they might "cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfect holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1) that by these promises, they might become "partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:4).

I feel it to be a matter of unspeakable importance to the honor of Christ and the good of His cause, and the holiness and peace of His suffering heritage, that they be made to know that there has "come out of Sion a Deliverer to turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (Romans 11:26), and that God has said, respecting this Deliverer, "This is My covenant with them when I shall take away their sins" (Romans 11:27). It seems to me that God's professing people do not know their Deliverer, and there are vast multitudes who seem altogether unwilling to know Him. Hence the reproach cast upon such as declare that there is a "Deliverer to turn away ungodliness from them and take away their sins" Romans 11:26-27. But I see not how I can lie down in peace on my dying pillow, or meet the Saviour in judgment before the universe, unless I do what in me lies to make Him known. I feel constrained to cry in the ears of the church, Behold your Deliverer; He has come to turn away ungodliness from you, and to take away your sins. Look to Him; believe on His name, and let "your iniquity be taken away, and your sins be purged" (Isaiah 6:7).

And now, brethren, I have done. I cannot, for the reasons I have named, and in view of my final account; I dare not listen to your admonition for a moment. With my name you must do what you think right before God, and in view of an approaching judgment. I have no further defense to make. If you cannot own me as one of your number while I tell the church of Christ that He was manifested to take away their sins, and that they may and ought so to abide in Him that they sin not—that it is my privilege and theirs so to abide in Christ, that it is my belief that through the grace of God I do so abide in Him; if such a confidence in my Redeemer for the fulfillment of God's exceeding great and precious promises, must still make me, in your estimation, an advocate of important and dangerous error, then just blot me out of your book, and let the transaction be recorded, as it will be, in the book of God, to be reviewed before the universe in the final day. That I hold the doctrine which you call important and dangerous error, and believe it to be the brightest glory of my bleeding Saviour's gospel, is true; and I know that, if you knew the blessedness of trusting fully in Christ as your Redeemer from all iniquity, there is not a man of you, who would not choose that his tongue should perish, rather than be used to pronounce such a doctrine importantly and dangerously erroneous. But if you still adhere to that opinion, I must consider myself as no longer of your number, and you must do to me and with me as you think our Lord and Master requires. "Now may the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen" (Hebrews 13:20-21).

Yours in the gospel,

CHARLES FITCH 1840

A Letter

By Charles Fitch from Midnight Cry, December 21, 1843

Cleveland, Ohio, December 5th, 1843

Dear Brother Himes:

Life and Christian Experience of Charles Fitch

This day I have laid in the grave my dear Willie, a little boy that would have been seven years of age the 15th of the present month. I need not tell you that my heart aches, and I cannot tell you how much. Some ten months ago, he took an inflammatory rheumatism which left him with an organic disease of the heart. He was comfortable through the summer, and went east with us. He kept up and about until the last of October. While I was absent at that time, he was prostrated. On my return the physicians said there was no hope of his recovery. Oh, how my heart was pained at the prospects of seeing his life wrung out of him with anguish, and of then following him away to the cold grave!

I stood and watched by his side three weeks, held him in my arms to relieve his distress, and sung to him at his oft repeated request the second advent hymns to beguile his tedious hours. "Sing to me, Pa," was his repeated request every hour. What shall I sing, my dear? Sing, *How Long O Lord Our Saviour*, and again, sing, *Lo, What a Glorious Sight Appears*, sing, *My Faith Looks Up to Thee*. After three weeks, I thought he might live for weeks to come, and, feeling it to be duty, I tore myself away from his side with an aching heart, and I went last Monday week to Huron County to preach the kingdom of the Lord. On Sabbath morning last, being in Fairfield, more than 60 miles from home, I was awakened from my pillow by a messenger who said, "Your child is dead." I hastened home, and we have just laid him in his lowly bed. It has been painful, painful, but the Lord sustains us, and we have hope in his death.

When he was three years of age, I was accustomed to relate to him in language suited to his capacity the interesting incidents in the life of our Savior for the purpose of teaching him to know and love the character of Christ. He became exceedingly interested, and would often climb upon my knee and say, "Now, Pa, tell me something about the blessed Savior." At length he arose from his bed one morning very early, and came to me calling my name repeatedly to get my attention as I was conversing. He said, "The blessed Savior is my Savior." This was said by him when there had been nothing at that time to turn his attention to the subject. Sweeter accents than those never fell upon my ear. Never from that moment did his faith in Jesus waiver. When told by a sister some years older than himself, "You will never live to be a man. The Savior is coming soon, and the world will be burned," he replied, "I don't care, the Savior will take care of me." Once when he saw me greatly disquieted at some perplexing circumstances which came suddenly upon me, and at which I ought not to have been moved, he said in his usual calm and deliberate manner, "The Savior will come pretty soon, and then we shan't have any more trouble."

In his sickness, he manifested the most perfect resignation. During all the time I was with him, he never expressed a desire to get well, or to be relieved from suffering. At one time when I had expressed such a desire, he replied, "The Savior can make me well if He wants me well." He had his senses till the last, knew perfectly well he was dying, composed himself, closed his own eyes, and died with as much calmness as he would have gone in health to his pillow for a night's repose.

He was not without the follies and faults of childhood, but we do believe he lived and died with confidence in Christ, and we cannot doubt that the blessed Savior is indeed Willie's Savior.

Perhaps I should apologize for occupying you with so much that has no particular interest for any but ourselves, but when our bosoms are heaving with sighs we cannot suppress, and our eyes are gushing with tears which will flow, we love to lay open our whole hearts to those we know have hearts to feel. I must not neglect to say that we have had friends through all our afflictions that have been friends indeed.

Charles Fitch

"Here we saw the tree of life and the throne of God. Out of the throne came a pure river of water, and on either side of the river was the tree of life. On one side of the river was a trunk of a tree, and a trunk on the other side of the river, both of pure, transparent gold. At first I thought I saw two trees. I looked

again, and saw that they were united at the top in one tree. So it was the tree of life on either side of the river of life. Its branches bowed to the place where we stood, and the fruit was glorious; it looked like gold mixed with silver.

We all went under the tree and sat down to look at the glory of the place, when Brethren Fitch and Stockman, who had preached the gospel of the kingdom, and whom God had laid in the grave to save them, came up to us and asked us what we had passed through while they were sleeping. We tried to call up our greatest trials, but they looked so small compared with the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory that surrounded us that we could not speak them out, and we all cried out, "Alleluia, heaven is cheap enough!" and we touched our glorious harps and made heaven's arches ring." EW.017

Letter from Charles Fitch

Sylvester Bliss page 128, 129.

"Boston, March 5, 1838.

"MY DEAR BROTHER:

I am a stranger to you, but I trust that, through the free sovereign grace of God, I am not altogether a stranger to Jesus Christ, whom you serve. I am the pastor of an Orthodox Congregational church in this city. A few weeks since your lectures on the Second Coming of Christ were put into my hands. I sat down to read the work, knowing nothing of the views which it contained. I have studied it with an overwhelming interest, such as I never felt in any other book except the Bible. I have compared it with Scripture and history, and I find nothing on which to rest a single doubt respecting the correctness of your views. Though a miserable, guilty sinner, I trust that, through the Lord's abounding grace, I shall be among those that 'love his appearing.' I preached to my people two discourses yesterday on the coming of our Lord, and I believe a deep and permanent interest will be awakened thereby in God's testimonies. My object in writing you, my dear sir, is twofold.

"1st. Will you have the kindness to inform me, by letter, in what history you find the fact stated that the last of the ten kings was baptized A. D. 508, and also that the decree of Justinian, giving the Bishop of Rome power to suppress the reading of the Scriptures, was issued in 538? All the other data which you have given I have found correct, and I know of no reason to doubt your correctness in these. But, as I have not yet been able to find a statement of those facts, you will do me a great favor by just informing me where I may find them; and I shall then feel prepared to defend the truth, and to point others to the right source of information.

"There is a meeting of our Ministerial Association tomorrow, and, as I am appointed to read an essay, I design to bring up this whole subject for discussion, and trust that I may thereby do something to spread the truth.

"2d. My second object in writing was to ask if you would put me in the way to obtain a dozen copies of your lectures. I know of none to be obtained here. I know of several individuals who are very desirous to obtain the work, and if you can tell me of any place where it can be obtained in this city, or in New York, you will greatly oblige me. If you can give me any information of importance on the subject, not contained in your book, I should greatly rejoice, because, as I stand a watchman on the walls, I wish to 'give the trumpet a certain sound,' and to make that sound as full, and explicit, and convincing as possible.

"Yours in the faith of Jesus Christ,

"CHARLES FITCH."