

Editor's Note: The following information has been gleaned from issues of The Earthen Vessel and Christian Record from the 1857 and 1858 issues. These and the subsequent letters were published in the 19th century but have been long out of print. I have added headings briefly summarizing the subject of each letter. The location within the Vessel is given for reference.

The Letters to Theophilus being the substance of James Wells theology: Letters 31 through 40

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Epistles to Theophilus Letter 31 - pages 75ff 1857

God's joy over us – more from the Song of Solomon

My good Theophilus, it is not my intention to continue uninterruptedly through the book of Solomon's Song, but shall now and then give you a few words upon other departments; as in my next I hope to dwell chiefly upon the last judgment, more especially as that judgment relates to the saints; and after that, I hope to give you a letter upon the last judgment in its relation to the lost. But in this I have to dwell upon the gratulation (editor: the expression of joy) bestowed upon the church by the heavenly Bridegroom—"I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariot," &c. This is nothing else but a true oriental hyperbole; that is, it is a strong figurative exaggeration; and yet, as a divine order of speech, it is not an exaggeration; for it certainly is the language of that love which no hyperbole can reach, which no rhetoric can depict, which no logical power can adequately set forth; and it shews what we are, in being able to trust so little, and love so faintly, a God who hath so loved us. But happily, it will not be always as it is now; we shall ere long be perfect in love.

Now, I am not sure that I may handle rightly the comparison here set before us.

The various ideas, and good ones they are too, among us are that these horses were royal property; that among them there was unity of action, &c. But these, and several other ideas, excellent as they are, I will for the present pass by, and venture a few thoughts, which, if they do not bring out the meaning of the text, shall, I trust, be such as you will see to be at least Scriptural.

1st Best quality. The king—an oriental sovereign king—would certainly have those for his chariot of the best quality; and we all know in common life the importance of personal quality; hence the common saying, and there is an eternal truth in it, that it is better to have a fortune in a person than a fortune with them, without good qualities in them.

This company of horses, then, in Pharaoh's chariots, would be well broken in, and would be, as the term is, free from vice. So is the soul humbled down and reconciled to God, yoked with Jesus, one with him by his truth. Such a soul loves him, is happy with him, has no desire to go from him, works in his yoke easy and comfortable, and is glad instrumentally to help forward the chariot of God's salvation; glories in the progress of the true gospel. The heart of such an one is in his work; the love of Christ constrains him; his love to God is incorruptible; it can never wax fatally cold; but though at times it seems low, and the soul is weary and cast down, yet by the power of gospel truth it will revive again and again; for "the smoking

flax will he not quench, and the bruised reed will he not break, until he bring forth judgment unto victory." There is no quality that can be superior to this love of the truth. All professed love to God apart from his truth is but delusion; there must be willing-heartedness to work in his way, and to help forward the chariot of his salvation, as then the true church is brought into the love of his truth. None can equal his Church in goodness of quality; her children arise up and call her blessed; her Husband also he praiseth, not beateth her, nor hateth her, nor stormeth at her, nor forsaketh her, nor curseth her, but praiseth her, saying, "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all." Many excellent natural qualities others may and do possess, but they are but natural qualities. Just take the margin's reading here—" Many daughters have gotten riches, but thou excellest them all." But why so? Where is the secret? Here it is—" She receives the truth in the love of it," and hereby acquires durable riches and righteousness. She therefore surpasses all; none can equal her; she loves the right object in the right way. As there was, then, in the company of horses in Pharaoh's chariot a combination of the best working qualities, therefore I have compared thee, for unmatched excellency of willing-hearted quality, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariot.

2nd. Beauty. We may be sure that the company of horses in such a chariot were handsome. And you are, my good Theophilus, aware that this is a quality much dilated upon, both in this book of Solomon's Song and in other parts of the Word of eternal truth; and as I have to dwell in our progress through this book upon this quality, I will here say but very little, only just observing, that the beauty of the bride (the church) is seen only in her oneness with the Saviour, what she is here constituted makes up the whole of her beauty.

3rd. Price. The horses in Pharaoh's chariot were no doubt costly. But here we must mind we do not carry this figure further than it is intended; for however costly the company of horses in Pharaoh's chariot may be, yet, like everything else earthly, they must come to naught. But not so with the church; no, her price in a two-fold sense must be far above rubies. First, in the price paid for her redemption; a price infinitely surpassing all other pearls of great price. He, therefore, that would buy the church back again out of her freedom must have a price at command at least as great as the price given for redemption; but where shall such a price be found? Thus the God of heaven so loved the church that he thought her worth redeeming; she was therefore precious in his sight, and covenantally constituted honorable; and as he reckoned her through the love he had to her worth redeeming, so now he reckons her worth all that has been laid out upon her; so that while he valued her according to the price given for her redemption — so wondrously is she One with Immanuel God with us, that the living God would no more think of casting her away than of casting his dear Son away.

First, then, she is reckoned worth the cost of redemption; and second, she is constituted costly and supremely valuable; and if a price to buy her out of her freedom could be found, even then love would utterly scorn to entertain one thought of accepting the price. He hath loved with an everlasting love, and in loving-kindness draws the church to himself; therefore any power or price that would take the church out of his hands would utterly be contemned; and it is only because earth is not good enough for her abode, that he hath prepared an infinitely better world for her.

4th. Position in Pharaoh's chariot. Egypt is a level country, and in the day of its prosperity was a land of chariots; and Pharaoh's state chariot was, perhaps, proverbially celebrated for its superiority to all others; and if so, there is great force in this part of the comparison; for this company of horses had of all others the most honorable and most glorious position. And what can surpass in honor of position that of being one with the chariot of salvation, where there is the presence of the great King, and where he shews' the riches of his glorious kingdom, and the honor of his excellent Majesty? And if there were no chariot like

Pharaoh's chariot, so there are no chariots like the chariot of God's salvation. Our glory is great therein. And as Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter, there may be some allusion here to her; and if so, it was the chariot of her own father, one that she was acquainted with. And this you see, my good Theophilus, suggests to us the great matter of heavenly relationship; so that, handling this comparison carefully, we shall find that both its main drift and several allowable details all have a gospel meaning, a something in it that compels in our hearts a love to our God in thus exalting such poor worms of the earth as we are. May we, then, more and more cleave unto Him whose thoughts towards us are thoughts of peace, not of evil, to give us an expected end.

5th. Carefulness. What care would be taken of this company of horses in Pharaoh's chariot! and are not the people of God the objects of his special care?

Looking at the constitution of ancient oriental governments, as well as at most of the modern ones, too, we can easily see that no one dared to interrupt this company of horses in their progress, or in any way offer any indignity to them; nor can the people of God be hindered, slandered, or persecuted with impunity. "Shall not God avenge his own elect?" To run into all the details of the pains, and care, and skillful management of this company of horses, would be to go beyond what the comparison is intended to set forth; but taking the main idea of care, I think is right and fairly implied, as it indicates clearly that every care was to be taken of the church, which was the Lamb's wife; and to know something of the care which he has for us will, if our knowledge be heart-felt knowledge, make us care, very much care for him; we shall be concerned to honor him; and this we see is descriptively, and testimonially, and very beautifully carried out by the bride all through this book of Solomon's Song. This book (her faults and deformities being forgiven, and buried, and forgotten, this book) is a record of her excellences: and great as are the excellences attributed to her, you will find them all in the faith, and pure affections, and testimony of every soul brought into the liberty of the gospel. "How fair and how pleasant art thou, oh love, for delights!" is the language of every soul thus favored; and the more their hearts are directed into the love of God, the more they see and feel that they are cared for. This gratulation, "I have compared thee, oh, my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariot," would seem to take off the strangeness, and make the soul feel at home with God. Such gratulations are assurances of his love, of his great love, infinitely interested love—love which glories in the acquiring, and in the possession of its objects; love which will rest forever in happy satisfaction; the life endless, glorious, and higher than the heavens. What delightful meeting-places are such Scriptures! and all who know anything of the terrible majesty of the law, the guiltiness of sin, the fearful apprehension of judgment, the workings of a deceitful heart, the powers of unbelief, and the proud-humble movements of legality, trying to make our sin and sinfulness a bar to the promise, as though the gospel was not to the poor, the blind, the wretched, and the miserable; those who know what these experiences are, will be, and are, delighted with the book of Solomon's Song, as well as with all such new covenant parts of the Bible. How infinitely different is such congratulatory language in comparison of, "Ye generation of vipers! how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" Yet this is the language which belongs to us as sinners. Grace, and grace alone, has made us to differ; and shall we, then, for one moment give up one iota of the glorious gospel of the blessed God?

The comparison of this company of horses is also noticed: "Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold: we will make the borders of gold with studs of silver."

"Comely with rows of jewels." Without these she would not have a queenly, royal appearance. These are the adornments of the Holy Spirit; a meek and quiet spirit, faith, love, humility, holiness, sincerity, these are her living adornments. Chains of gold, a chain of truth, made up from "whom he did foreknow," to "whom he also glorified;" and another, made up from "Ye are a chosen generation to shew forth the

praises of Him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." These are chains of heavenly gold, which faith loves to wear about its neck; wears them where they may be seen; she is not ashamed to be seen in these chains of captivity to God.

And then come the borders of gold. These borders would be to overlay, enrich, and beautify the caparison; and so the soul is so overlaid, enriched, and beautified with the promises of the gospel, that its first husband, law, condemnation-state, its poverty, and deformity, are hidden and destroyed. Then, come the studs of silver. These studs of silver I will take to mean words of instruction. Prov. iii. 14). "And a word spoken in season how good is it!" How beautifully do words of instruction from on high adorn the soul! "For the words of the Lord are pure words; as silver is tried in the furnace, purified seven times." Psalm xii. 6.

Now, I have said nothing of the great occasions when this royal chariot was used, nor have I now room in this letter so to do. I have given you but a mere sample of the meaning, and perhaps hardly that; but as I find it good to dwell upon these things I desire you also should profit hereby; and poor as my humble attempt is, it is as much as you can expect from A. Little One.

Epistles to Theophilus Letter 32 - pages 111ff 1857

Making our calling and election sure

My god Theophilus— Having grace in your heart, you will, at those times when grace is reigning, feel one with the prospects and revelations which relate to eternal judgment. And, just in proportion as the scene is solemn, so has the Savior made the same cheerful, attractive, exultative, and glorious; so far so as to turn into experimental and practical reality, a looking for, and hasting unto, the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat And, in order to meet this great day, you ought, in order to prove your meetness for this great day, you ought, to give diligence to make your calling and election sure. Now, mind, not to make God's calling and election sure. They cannot be made more sure than they are; but you ought, in order to prove the reality of your religion, to give diligence, to make your calling and election sure.

Now again, mind, it does not say make your calling and election sure; but give diligence to make your calling; your calling and election sure. And I will presently shew you how to go to work upon this matter; but, before doing so, let us see what we are to understand by making our calling and election sure.

Give diligence, and see that your calling is not a mere natural conscience call; a mere letter of the word call; a mere loaf and fish call; a mere Sinai thunder call; a mere going out of the unclean spirit call; a mere humanly persuasive call; a mere going with the tide call; a mere intellectual call; a mere Ninevite repentance call; for all these, and many more, are, by thousands, substituted for, and taken for the one true predestinarian and saving call; and so the end will prove that "many were called, but few chosen."

The first thing, then, you have to do, is to give diligent attention to the nature of the calling wherewith you are called, and so to continue in godly jealousy over your own soul. And, if you have this true godly jealousy over your own soul, you will doubt, and fear, and tremble at God's word, for it is unto such that

he looketh. You will not, like the Pharisee, rushing in upon God with flaming, but at the same time fleshly, confidence. You will never be bold nor confident before him until he give you boldness and confidence; then it will be such boldness and confidence as he will approve. You will stand aloof from the tokens of liars, for God "frustrateth the tokens of liars, and maketh Diviners mad, and turneth wise men (after the flesh) backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish." Isaiah xlv. 25.

Now, when you have made you're calling sure, if you should be favored so to do, then God's eternal election of you is hereby made sure to you. But your election is another thing.

I say, if you should be favored to make your calling sure, for some are, and must be, it is the path appointed for them. Some are all their lifetime in bondage, through fear of death—through fear, lest their calling be not of the right kind; and so their religion, when it is most needed, will forsake them; but the Lord despiseth not his prisoners.

Now, you see the apostle has put your calling and election together, because you do by making sure your election, you do hereby make sure your calling; and, for this reason, that your election will be sure, more or less, to accord with the nature of your calling.

Now, then, what is your election? What do these words mean? If the word election, as here used, mean God's eternal election of you, then the word election here is superfluous, for you make sure your calling, then the work is done. Election—that is, God's eternal election of you—is proved by the reality of your calling; so that, when you have proved, and made sure that your calling is right, you need not then go to work to prove your eternal election, unless you have any doubt about the doctrine of election, then you would, with earnest prayer, search the Holy Scriptures, in order to be established in the truth. But this cannot well be the case, because no one has any Divine right to conclude that he is called by grace, when, at the same time, he is ignorant, in reality, of grace. Such a professor has, in many ways, to be put yet to the test, to the law of truth, and to the testimony of God; and, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

What, then, is this your election? Your election means your choice — that is, you (if your religion be vital) will make your election your choice; you will make your choice of God's truth; that is, you will choose his truth, and you will give diligence to make a sure choice thereof. So, you see, you are not only to choose the truth, but to make sure your election thereof; not to make a lax, careless sort of choice thereof, and so easily become bewildered therein and seduced therefrom. The apostle, therefore, would have us clearly understand our way, and be "faithful, firm, steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in this work of the Lord: forasmuch as our labor will not be in vain in the Lord."

The kind of gospel that men choose shews just what kind of calling they were called by; and also the manner of choosing or making our election of the true gospel, will also stand for or against us. We see the stony ground hearer choosing the right gospel, but he did not make a sure election of it; he did not make his election of it sure, or he would not have fallen as he did. The apostle well knew that nothing but a sure choice of the truth can keep from falling. The word fall here (2 Peter i. 10) means (as the ninth verse proves) apostasy.

Now, there are good people in the world who make such a sure choice of God's truth, and so practically abide by it, as to put the reality of their religion beyond all doubt in the minds of them who know the truth, and yet are hardly ever free from fear for themselves, lest they should be deceiving themselves; they cannot receive testimony from man; if they obtain assurance, it must be by the power of God.

Well, before we enter upon the great matter of eternal judgment, let me shew you how you are to go to work to make your calling and election sure.

Now, being brought out of an ungodly world, having escaped the corruption that is in the world—but beside this; yes, beside this outward department, beside this—what, then, is there beside this? this vital part, what is it? We will see:—"Add to your faith virtue." What is virtue? Now, virtue in a remedy is power to heal. So said the woman, "If I may but touch the hem of his garment I shall be whole." And she did give a believing, God-glorifying touch; but she could not do this without access to him. "And Jesus immediately, knowing that virtue had gone out of him, said unto her, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole: go in peace, and be whole of thy plague." Mark vi. And again (Luke vi. 19), "There went virtue out of him, and healed them all." Thus you see, you must be a wounded one, and such as none but Jesus can heal; and when he sends a pardoning, healing word with power, how sure this makes you of the excellency of his truth! this is one step towards making your election of his truth sure. And see how much more may be said upon this same part of our subject; but I forbear.

And you will see how nicely, with only one parenthetical verse, the several parts of the work you have to do, join in one with another. Hence, next to this healing virtue you have knowledge. See what a knowledge those had of him who were healed by him; at least, those who were healed by him spiritually as well as bodily.

Now, my good Theophilus, this is the kind of knowledge you will give diligence to grow in. Such knowledge is indeed power, and will enable you to discern good and evil; to love the good and hate the evil; to hold fast what you know to be truth, and to disdain what you know to be error.

Then comes with this knowledge temperance. You will now judge of God and of his dealings with you more soberly, and not be quite so rash in your conclusions; also you will judge men more soberly, not taking men too suddenly for Christians, nor, when once you do receive them thus soberly, easily part with them again; but will judge by the law of mercy as well as by the law of truth; or rather by the law of truth, which is itself a law of mercy; and you will have such a deep sense of the Lord's patience and forbearance towards you, that you will seek to be patient towards others; and you will never be out of patience with God's truth; however, your patience may, like the patience of Job, fail in other respects, you will not be out of patience with the truth, whatever you may have to suffer on its account, as your suffering on its account will be but very little compared with what He who is the Truth suffered on your account. But more of this next month. Sincerely your's in the truth, A Little One.

Epistles to Theophilus Letter 33 - pages 123ff 1857

Making our calling and election sure and The Last Judgment

My Good Theophilus.—In approaching the solemn scene of eternal judgment, I will here say a little more concerning your calling and election.

You are, then, as the apostle shews, to add to patience godliness. And if you are in the right path, this adding of godliness to patience will be sure to follow. For while your patience is being much tried, you will be glad to add more and more of the truth of the new covenant, especially the perfection of the Saviour's work, and the two immutabilities of God: namely, his counsel and his oath: and these will bring you more and more into fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And, then, with this godliness will come brotherly kindness. You will walk in works of brotherly kindness; and to this kindness comes the crowning excellency—charity or love. You will thus become rooted and grounded in the love of God; in the love of the truth; and in the love of the brethren; only, mind they must be brethren: such as, by the light of truth, stand manifest to your conscience; and you will not find such very thickly strewed over the land. Still, I hope not quite so few as the number to which Gideon's army was reduced; nor so few as the number to which, as in the 6th of John, professed disciples were reduced; nor so few as the old world in Noah's day. But, I hope there may be a seven thousand who do not worship golden calves, nor bow to Baal's images; so that we still have a remnant (not according to duty-faith) but according to the election of grace. These are they who "add to their faith virtue; to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity or love—that is, the love of the truth."

Now, then, if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be idle nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But, he that lacketh these things; he who does not seek the healing virtue of the gospel, neither feels nor sees his sin-ruined, serpent-bitten state, and, therefore, can have no right or saving knowledge of the truth, nor any sober-right judgment in the things of God, nor any real patience with the truth, but puts duty-faith, and other errors and evils, in the place thereof; such, therefore, cannot grow in godliness, seeing they look and lean away from it. And, as to brotherly kindness and charity, there are no people under heaven faultier in their eyes than are the true brethren. They eat up the sins of God's people; they live upon them; they are a sweet morsel unto them; so that still is dust the Serpent's meat. And yet these backsliders; these apostates; once possessed the truth; and were, by a little reformation, and also professedly, purged, by the truth, from their old sins. But they have seen their error, and have gone down to duty-faith Egypt for help, and do not intend to be so extravagant again, but mean to let their moderation (versus modification) be known to all men; and, therefore, wish to forget, also, their old profession, how they, at first, professed to be purged from their old sins. The sanctification of the Spirit was not pious enough for them, they, therefore, prefer the sanctification of the flesh—that is, a fleshly sanctification. And, therefore, the less you say to such about the eternities of the gospel, the better they like it.

Wherefore, my good Theophilus, the rather give diligence to make your calling and election sure, and then you will never apostatize; and so by holding fast the truth, an entrance will be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. But once take away the truth, which truth is the key of knowledge and the key of the kingdom of God; once set your face towards error, then you shut up the kingdom of God; you neither go in yourself, nor, if you can help it, suffer others to enter. "But you have not so learned Christ." No; "I am persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though I thus speak."

I must now proceed to lay before you those rules by which you will be judged at the last day.

But how shall I enter upon such an indescribable circumstance—a day when all worlds must appear before the judgment seat of Christ? What will be the extent of space those assembled worlds will occupy? What

number of miles will compass the well-ordered ranks of his redeemed? How far will the light of the sun be surpassed by the light of the presence of the Savior and the saints? By what mysterious law of sustentation will the saints stand ranged in the air? Will they be ranged in lines magnificent—many, many, very many, miles in length, and many miles deep? And shall they be ranged each line a little above the other? Shall the Saviour take some heavenly cloud for a throne, and yet all his saints seem equally near to him—every eye seeing him? And shall the lost stand suspended also; all standing, and made to face his left hand— every eye here, also, seeing him? Shall each tremble and gaze down into the bottomless pit, just opening her mouth to receive them? Shall the billows of the fiery lake be restless to receive them? Shall their visages be so contorted that hell itself shall be depicted in each countenance? Will they ask for some to take pity? But none shall be found; even to give them a drop of cold water? Shall the sins of each be written on their foreheads? Shall the lower world, before they sink into it, echo to their awful groans? Shall the two peoples, saints and sinners, be thus ranged: the saints of the Most High, in shining and happy ranks, be placed facing the Saviour's right hand; the lost directly opposite, in similar ranks, but standing lower than the saved? So the redeemed shall have a full and a clear view of all the lost. For although their ranks may, in length and breadth, occupy many miles of space, yet will not the saints be mighty in visual power as well as in other respects? And will not the Saviour be enthroned between these two opposite worlds of people? And will he not shew to the saints the righteousness of the several departments of judgment? And will not the intensity of judgment (or, to keep to Scripture simile,) will not the intensity of the fire upon each of the lost be according to the nature and extent of his sin? Will not the punishment be regulated by this? And must there not, during the most awful part of this judgment, be universal silence? And will not fallen angels be made visible to the saints? And will not fallen angels be ranged in lines behind the ranks of the lost, extending- many miles in length and depth? Will it not require all the visual strength the saints shall then have to contemplate the fastness of the scene? Will not Satan appear in the center of the lost with all the dishonors he has acquired? And will not the elect angels be ranged in behind the saints, waiting and watching the process of judgment? And when the Saviour has brought all the lost of men and of angels captive to the tribunal of God, shall not an Archangel descend from his elevated position in the rear of the saints, and, standing at the Saviour's right hand, and ranging with his mighty visual powers over the myriads of saints, receive a command to announce, in a voice like thunder, the capture and the presence of every enemy of God—both of men, and of fallen angels? And shall not the saints take up the sound, and shake the universe with " Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth:" a truth which the enemy has tried to overthrow, but, in trying to do this, they themselves are overthrown.

And, then, shall not the books be opened, and the doings of all the lost, in all ages, be made to pass in rapid review, each wrong finding out its proper owner? Their sins will surely find them out.

And, then, shall not the saints be pronounced blessed? Shall not the Archangel's voice, from the King of saints, sound out the same? And shall not the whole host of saints again repeat the anthem—" Hallelujah, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." And, then, after the echo of this voice, (a voice which, as it sounded, re-echoed thousands and thousands of miles, and from the lowest depths of hell to the highest arches of heaven): and after the echo of this voice has died away, does not the earth burst into one general conflagration? And shall not sun, and moon, and other planets, pass away in like manner? Shall not this increase the terror of the lost? Shall it not agonize them thus to see the entire destruction of their last hope? And shall not the saints at that moment look straight before them; not down upon the ruin of worlds, nor down upon the ghastly and trembling ranks of the lost; but shall look straight before them, up over the heads of the lost, and shall see eternal gates lifting up their heads, and the entrances to the golden city prepared for them, with the tree of life and river of life. They look again, they see a garden, a Paradise, such as never was, or ever could be, on earth. They look again, they see a wide extended region,

to which this earth is, for magnitude, but as a pepper corn. What, then, is this vast region—this happy and delightful land? It is their "inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." They can scarcely contain themselves. In a moment they seem to be there. Their eyes center on the Savior, and upon the everlasting God by him. Their souls go out in living adorations to his name. They all think alike of him. The presence of the Saviour in connection with the City, the Paradise, and the inheritance he hath prepared, is too much for them. Their voices, like the sound of many waters and mighty thundering's, begin to roll with—"Unto him that laved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, and his Father: to him he glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen."

But again silence reigns; Satan tries to hide himself, but cannot; and such a monster is he that his companions keep as far aloof as they can from him. Men, lost men, try to turn their heads so as to look away from the Saviour, but they cannot. The awful majesty of his presence fixes their eyes upon him, and now there are neither rocks nor hills to fall upon them, to hide them from the wrath of the Lamb. To be crushed to atoms, or ground to powder, would be heaven in comparison of the judgment about to be passed upon them. The books are opened; and all written therein is true— every sin recorded, and an owner found for everyone: not one of the lost without sin, nor one sin without an owner. Will not all be thus adjusted? Will not every mouth of men and fallen angels be legally stopped? Will not Satan begin to writhe? Will not universal black despair seize every heart and soul? The world burned up; the sun, and moon, and stars set to rise no more; hell beneath them; Almighty vengeance over them; eternity before them. They utter another awful groan; the saints tremble; and looking at redeeming blood, regenerating and sovereign mercy, stand in silent meditation, and say within themselves, "Who maketh us thus to differ? who plucked us as brands from the devouring fire—from everlasting burnings? The answer comes spontaneously to them—" He hath mercy upon whom he will have mercy; and whom he will he hardeneth: the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." They stand in solemn silence.

Satan is called to the front of the lost world. There he stands; and his crimes, in the presence of God and of all worlds, are read over to him by Gabriel, the archangel. He confesses the whole. He is ordered to the rear; he retires; anon, the awful words are uttered, "Go ye cursed." One line of the lost after another sinks; presently all are missing—all are gone; hell is peopled; the pit bottomless; the breath of eternal vengeance keeping up eternal fire; saints convinced of the righteousness of the judgment. Again it is said "Hallelujah; and their smoke rose up for ever and ever."

Thus, my good Theophilus, you may see that the subject we are entering upon is a matter most solemn. You will see I have not yet reached those parts of final judgment where I (D.V.) will lay before you—the laws by which, the saints are to be judged; and, also, the laws by which the lost are to be judged. And I trust you will be found among the saints—even if like me—but A Little One.

Epistles to Theophilus Letter 34 - pages 147ff 1857

More on the Last Judgment - The doctrine of Election

Most Excellent Theophilus.—I now lay before you the laws by which the righteous are to be finally judged.

Eternal election is one rule of final judgment. Hence the kingdom is said to have been prepared for them from the foundation of the world. Now, their being once chosen in Christ stands for ever good; and this election is an election of grace; and this election is in Christ as the chosen Head, and also the Mediator of the new covenant. And being thus constituted one with him, they will never be dealt with otherwise than as they are in him. And hence we see that this original election of them in Christ governs everything relative to them through all the circumstances of life and death, up to their final possession of glory, sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Christ Jesus, and called. Again, he shall send his angels with the great sound of a trumpet, and shall gather together his elect. "Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me." Here we see that election before time, and calling in time, are inseparably connected; nor can any be effectually called but those whom he did foreknow. How solemnly and strikingly is this truth set forth in some of the parables! Take the parable of the laborers in the vineyard. Here were men professing to want employment, that is, they wish to be religious; but who among them turned out well, and proved to be good servants? What saith it? Doth it not speak on this wise—that "many are called, but few chosen?" You will say, Why, then, were there many called? Why, if you look at the parable you will see why the many are called. They were called to work on the ground of their professing to want employment; and so, no doubt, they did; but they very soon quarreled with the sovereignty of the master, and their eye became evil because he was good; they looked with an evil eye at his chosen ones; overestimated (Pharisee-like) their own services. What, then, made the difference between these servants, so that some did not murmur,—and yet those who did not murmur would the next day have to bear the burden and heat of the day, and would yet be content to stay in that service? What, I say, was at the root of this difference? Election reconciles its objects to itself. The goodness of the master to the few made their election manifest to them; for the master set these few in the order of time, and in favor before the others. He began with the last; and thus the Pharisee is first, and the publican last; but the God of heaven put the publican first, and the Pharisee last; and thus it is that the first are last, and the last first; "for many are called, and few chosen." And does the King make a marriage for his Son? Wherein this parable like the other lies the secret of the difference between those who were rejected and those who were finally received.

Just look at the character of those who were not received, not forgetting that all those who were called to the wedding were already professionally the king's servants; and, of course, called upon to give their sanction to the marriage of the king's son. This very marriage carries in it something of the doctrine of eternal election—the Lamb and the chosen bride forever one; and an everlasting feast of good things is connected therewith. Now, look at the several classes of professed servants of the King, professed lovers of God, professed servants of the Most High. How do they treat this eternal oneness of Christ and the church, and the gospel feast connected therewith? The servants in this parable are divided into five classes.

The first class would not come. These were no doubt all free-willers to a man, and therefore they would not come to give their sanction to this marriage of Christ and the church. They could not, of course, approve the terms of the marriage, the terms being for them too positive, decisive, and certain; and therefore they would not come to those terms.

The second class made light of it. These are low Calvinists, who pretend to believe in electing grace; but they make light of it; telling their dear hearers not to trouble themselves about it, but simply attend to their farm, cultivate grace, and go on with their merchandise, and attend to their own weddings, marrying one church to another, until all are bundled up together; and thus obsequious to their teachers, they go their way, one to his farm, another to his merchandise, while the King's true servants are not to be listened to.

The third class were highly incensed at the truth, "and took the King's servants, and despitefully entreated them, and slew them." These, you see, are the third class passengers in the parliamentary train of things; it was by this state-religion class, this secular-power class, this Popish class, that the Saviour himself was crucified; and by the same class have thousands of the King's servants been slain; their eminent, high-toned piety could not endure either sound doctrine or those who preached it. Well, thanks to Mercy, that the machinery of this old parliamentary class is now so out of order that they can no longer carry the King's servants to the stake or to prison. Heaven break every wheel and every part of such infernal machinery, and burn every such devilish carriage in the fire, that men may fly from a religion which has taught them to slay the only men that could shew unto them the way of salvation.

I now come to the fourth class, which I suppose I must call the luggage train; for the man who is a sample of this class had not on a wedding garment, but of course a garment of his own; he brought his luggage with him. This is the mere Balaamite Calvinist—sound to a certain extent in doctrine, but has never been experimentally stripped; he has never been in the fire, nor in the deep waters of soul trouble. He holds the roll of truth in his hand, and has the word of truth much in his mouth; but he is not a new creature; he has never truly put on Christ; the powers of his soul are not truly wrapped in God's truth; and therefore, not being clothed with salvation, he only very partially savors of Christ—just enough to deceive the King's servants, but not enough to deceive the King himself. No doubt, I say, the great likeness of his garment to the wedding garment would deceive the King's servants, but could not deceive the King himself. The King's garment cost his Son too much for him not to know it from all other garments, and, therefore, in a voice of thunder said to this confident professor, "Friend, how earnest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? and (as well he might) he was speechless." But why should he be speechless? Ah, why indeed! It was this—that he had never been speechless before; his mouth had never been stopped by the power of true conviction of his state as a lost sinner; and he was speechless also because he was now made ashamed of his presumption. "Then said the King to his servants, bind him hand and foot;" that is, reckon him among the bond children; and as the bondwoman and her son are to be cast out, so this presumptuous one being (though among the free children) but a bond child, he must have the bond children's portion— "Cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping (to think the King's servants should be so cruel as to cast him out), and there shall be (secretly, in the dark) gnashing of teeth," at those who have on a wedding garment. This class (happily is not very, very numerous, and this, perhaps, is indicated by its being represented by "one, who had not a wedding garment."

Thus we have in this solemn parable, 1, those who would not come; 2, those who made light of it; 3, those who slew the King's servants; and 4, those who are sound enough in head to come in, but not right in heart.

But here is another train of things—the express train—special and superior to all the rest,— "And conformed to the express image of the King's Son." Now, where lies the secret of all this? It lies, my good Theophilus, in eternal election; and so this payable also closes with these words—"For many are called, and few are chosen." Election takes good care of its objects; it reveals itself to them, wins their affections, and brings them a right to the terms of the wedding, to the feast of the wedding, and to the presence of the King and his Son. Election works secretly but surely; and so it runs— "Him that I have chosen I will cause to draw near unto me."

And how is it that some of the virgins had oil in their vessels, and were ready, at the midnight cry, to go in with the bridegroom? The secret was, that election cut them off from all false confidence, made them wise unto salvation, and led them to choose those golden vessels of the sanctuary which contain the

golden oil. And what are these golden vessels but the yea and amen promises of the gospel? These supplied them with grace. Their hope, their faith, their love, could not give up the ghost: could not go out. This promise is yea and amen, and never was forfeited yet. But the others were not thus wise. They had not the faith of God's elect, and knew not the bridegroom, and, therefore, had no access to him, neither were ready, as were the wise, to go in with him. The wise had just enough of evidential grace to prove that they were wise, and, therefore, could not impart any unto the foolish; but they most go and buy it at the cost of the same experience as bad the wise. Hence says the Saviour to those whom he loves, "I counsel thee to buy of me." If you obtain your oil, if you have your religion anywhere else, your lamp in the midnight hour of trouble, or of death, will surely go out, and against all such the door of heaven will be shut.

My good Theophilus, cling, ever cling, to eternal election; you cannot glory too much therein; it will enable you to glory in all the other truths of the gospel, and it will enable you to very greatly delight in the service of the blessed God. And if your name be written in heaven, then "all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." But if your name be not written in heaven, then nothing is yours but sin, and death, and perdition.

You know people say if election be true it is of no use to strive after a salvation. "Well, it is of no use to strive after a salvation which does not originate in eternal election, for such never did succeed, and never will. And so it is that many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able; because election not being at the root of their religion they seek it not under the government of that sanctification of the Spirit by the truth by which alone salvation can be obtained. But the election shall obtain it.

Do errors arise, and carry the world away by their power? Who are they that shall escape?

Now, my good Theophilus, may you be enabled to listen solemnly, listen earnestly prayerfully, tremblingly, rejoicingly, while the word of eternal truth opens the secret— "All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Rev. xiii. 8. And does a huge body of prosperous error raise the wonder and gain the admiration of the world? Where lies the secret of escape from this delusion? Here is the answer:—" They that dwell on the earth shall wonder, (that is, admire and worship,) whose names were not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world." Rev. xvii. 8.

And do some escape the burning lake? Where is the secret? Ah! here it is, in that which men make light of—" Whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire." Rev. xx. 15.

And shall some dwell forever in the heavenly city? Where is the root — the origin—of this? What is the explanation t It is simply, solemnly, this—" They which are written in the Lamb's Book of Life." Rev. xxi. 27.

Thus, my good Theophilus, you will meet at the bar of God with eternal election. Are you its heartfelt friend now? Do you receive it in the love of it? Does your heart, by its (election's) endearing power, ever glow with gratitude to God for it; feeling bound to give thanks for the hope you have that God hath, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation? Or do you give a mere cold Balaam-like assent to it, simply because you find it in the letter of the word; and so it becomes a part of your creed; and, therefore, you like to have a little, but not too much of it, making the contemptible, the hypocritical excuse that you are afraid, by being taken up so much with this doctrine, you shall neglect other branches of truth, especially the practical parts! Dire delusion! Base falsehood! Insulting belief upon the pure truth of the blessed God.

For whereas the real truth is the more you glory in electing grace; the more spiritually, vitally, and practically will you follow out every other branch of truth. Look at it. It stands thus—" He hath, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." Again, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." But why speak I thus to Theophilus, whose very name signifies a friend and lover of God?

Well, then, my good Theophilus, if you do now, at times, rejoice that your name is written in heaven, what will it be at that day when electing grace shall give you full possession of all the good of his chosen? When you will rejoice forever in the gladness of his nation, and glory to everlasting with his inheritance?

May you, then, dwell much, and delight much, in the marvelous light of eternal election.

I hope, in my next, after a few more words upon election, to come to the next rule of final judgment—that of personal character. And I hope to set before you a right one, though it may, in my humble description of it, be but A Little One.

Epistles to Theophilus Letter 35 - pages 171ff 1857

More on Election - Love to God and Love to Man

Most Excellent Theophilus.—Yon will not, after what I have said in my last, forget, nor fail to see and feel, that eternal election is an essential part of the gospel, and therefore essential to be believed, received, known, loved, and honored. You will often hear people say that election is no part of the gospel, and that the Saviour did not say, "Go and preach election to every creature," but, "Go and preach the gospel to every creature." Now, your answer to this wily remark of the adversary must be this—that if because the word election is not mentioned in the command, "Go ye and preach the gospel to every creature," that therefore it is no part of the gospel; so (by this rule) neither is the atonement any part of the gospel; for the word atonement is not mentioned in the command.

You thus see how the various agents of Satan by subtlety get rid, some of one part of the gospel, and some of another part, and so you may go on down and down, until you come down into Atheism, and thence down into hell.

Election is as essential to salvation, and is as essential to be received as is the atonement, the Godhead of Christ, or any other essential part of the gospel. There is no right knowledge of, or reception of, or conformity to the atonement, without eternal election. If Christ be a Priest after a certain order, so must we be vitally and truly conformed to his Image, that is, to his form and order of things. No man can be a Christian but by the forming hand of God; and those whom he creates he creates in Christ Jesus, and are conformed to new covenant shape, form, and order, but you will find but very few who have heard the voice of the eternal Father, or seen his shape—that is, his new covenant paternity; this is his shape, to which all his children are conformed, and shall ultimately in this filial order be perfect, even as is the Father in his paternity.

Thus we have the Father in eternal election order; and the Saviour as the express Image of the same, is as clearly shewn in the eternity of the perfection of his Priesthood. We, then, in accordance with this, have the Holy Spirit with the saints forever. "He shall be with you forever," and to this order—if God be true, we must be conformed or be eternally lost.

Having said thus much, I now proceed to lay before my good Theophilus the second rule I propose noticing of ultimate judgment —namely, that of personal character. Now you know, from happy experience, that the grace of God effectually teaches you to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live righteously and soberly in this present evil world. You, therefore, are not of the world, but belong to that better country to which you are hastening. You know, also, that again and again it is written, that every man shall be rewarded according to his works; that only those that have done good can come forth to the resurrection of eternal life; that only those who keep his commandments can have right to the tree of life; that not every one that saith, "Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven; for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive that he hath done in the body, whether it be good or whether it be bad." And, "Only he that overcometh can inherit all things."

Now, all these apparently difficult Scriptures become perfectly easy when read in gospel order.

"They that have done good." Now, this sentence has a two-fold aspect, one towards God, and one towards man. 1st, Towards God. In this aspect it will mean love in opposition to enmity. Now the Saviour being supremely endeared to you, you can do nothing against the truth, but stand out for it, hold it fast, trade with heaven by it, in proportion to the amount of living truth administered to you; and you as a believer (for they must be works of faith) feel that you could not give up one particle of his truth. Thou hast, saith the Lord, a little strength, and hast kept my word, and not denied my name; you are but an earthen vessel, but yet by you as a vessel of mercy the truth is to be unto the last preserved in you. This is a good work, and it is by your possessing the truth in the savor of it, that you are a part of the salt of the earth. Give up, as many basely do, all, or any part of the truth, and you at once lose your savor.

Now, to love God in truth, by the truth, is a good work; and to hold fast to the end, to endure to the end, is a good work; and to stand out for the truth, nor say a confederacy with any of the yea and nays, is a good work; to suffer for the truth, even if it be unto death, is a good work; to profit by the truth, is a good work; to grow in grace, by the truth is a good work; to receive the messengers, the ministers of the gospel, is a good work; to receive babes in Christ, the little ones, is a good work; to cleave unto the truth with a ready mind, a willing heart, is a good work; to seek the Lord by prayer and supplication, is a good work; and to give thanks unto his holy name, is a good work.

But now, who is the man that can perform these good works? Not the natural man, for he "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God."

Thus, most excellent Theophilus, for your personal character to be good, you must stand well with new covenant truth; you must be conformed to its order. Can the mere natural man really receive the truth in the love of it? can he trade with heaven by the truth? can he hold it dearer than mortal life? can he truly and spiritually receive the ministers of God? can he refuse strangers or flee from them? can he receive in heart and soul the humbled, the broken-down sinner, who is so completely brought to free-grace terms that he is called a little one, and his very life, or rather the nourishment of it, is the sincere milk of the word? Can the natural man seek God on truth's ground by prayer and supplication? can he truly praise

the new name of the Lord, which he does not know? So true it is that they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

Now, to do what I have here described, is to do so far the will of the Father; this is to keep his commandments, and so to have (evidential) right to the Tree of Life, and thus enter in through the gates into the city; for all who are not thus born of God, and made one with the truth, will be judged by their first Adam characters, which are those of dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." This is what men are without Christ; for "there is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Who, then, maketh thee to differ? and what hast thou that thou didst not received?" And if thou didst receive it, it was according to the purpose of eternal election, purposed in Christ Jesus.

Well, now, of the good works of which I have spoken you will have to give an account; and it will be, or may be, thus summed up: "Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with men of blood, for I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth,"

But this doing good has another side to it, its aspect is towards men. Now, you must "walk not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the way of sinners," (enemies to the truth), nor sit in a free-will or duty-faith seat, or any other seat of the scornful; for such scorn the really poor and needy; but your delight will be in the law of liberty, as it is by that law you are to be judged.

Now you must, then, I say, walk in practical love to the brethren; you must pray for them, abstain from slandering them, as there will be plenty of people to do that, without any of your assistance. Yon must forgive unto seventy times seven. Too must honor the Lord with your substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase; or how can the Judge say to yon at the last, "I was hungry, and ye gave me meat; thirsty, and ye gave me drink; sick, and ye visited me; in prison, and ye came in unto me; a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me." Nor must you think this a hardship, but bless God that you have a heart to love those whom he loves. He loveth a cheerful giver; he giveth us all things richly to enjoy. You are with all your might and means to favor his righteous cause. "Remember them that have (not a lordship or Popish, but a pastoral) rule over you." Yon are to esteem them very highly for their work's sake; nor are you to slight the house of God, but reverence his sanctuary, "not forsaking the assembly of the saints."

Also you are to do evil to no man, but do all the good you can to all men; yon must mortify selfishness, for a little, or rather, a great deal of work in this way is essential to prove that you do partake of the spirit of the gospel; and when yon have done all, you are to go and tell the Lord that you are, after all, but an unprofitable servant; that yon have merited nothing; for that you have done only that which was due from you to God, in gratitude for his never ceasing mercy to you.

I hope next month to sum up this part of the solemn matter we have in hand, somewhat to your satisfaction; and believe me, your sincere servant in the Lord,

A Little One

Epistles to Theophilus Letter 36 - pages 230ff 1857

We must give an account to God at the Day of Judgment

My good Theophilus, I now come to another part of personal character—namely, that department in which every one of us must give an account of himself to God (Rom. xiv. 12). You have to give an account of yourself to God now, and if you can give a good account of yourself to God now, then the Savior will give a good account of and for you at the last day.

Infants, and those who are called in the eleventh hour, will come under our notice, when we come to some other rules of final judgment, of which we have to speak; but in this letter I wish to describe to you what it is to give a good account of yourself at the judgment seat of truth now, and especially as that your present account belongs to final judgment; and "as the tree falleth, there it must be," Eccles. xi. 3.

I scarcely need say to you, that the first essential of a good account is, that it must be a truthful account. You must, therefore, give a true account of yourself as a sinner; but this is what no man ever yet did, until convinced by the Holy Spirit of what sin is, and what man before God by sin is. This is so self-evident that I will not detain you long upon this matter.

The account that Saul of Tarsus gave of himself before his conversion, and the account he gave of himself as a sinner after his conversion, were essentially different. It was not before, but after his Divine conversion that he gave us the 5th and 7th chapters of the Romans; and it was by the power of the Eternal Spirit that Isaiah felt himself to be "a man of unclean lips;" that Joshua saw himself in filthy garments, and as a mere firebrand, which the fire of sin had burned and blackened, both the ends, the heart, and midst thereof, so that he was "not meet for any work." Ezek. xv. 4. It was by the grace of God that men and women were on the day of Pentecost pricked in the heart, —not merely to the heart, but in the heart. Thousands have been cut to the heart (Acts vii. 54), but not so as to alter what is in the heart; but every one taught of God is pricked in the heart; it is an internal wound, opening up the evils of the heart,— "They shall know everyone the plague of his own heart." (1 Kings viii. 38), and shall loathe themselves in their own sight, and shall thus come in with the 51st Psalm; not looking at that Psalm as a mere penitential Psalm, as the religions of this world call it, but a Psalm descriptive of what every truly convinced sinner is made to feel and to pray for. It is true we are told in the unauthorized superscription to this Psalm, of an occasion upon which this Psalm was written. Well, perhaps it was so; but this has never yet been proved, and perhaps David never saw the Psalm; but be that as it may, there is the Psalm, and a most glorious Psalm it is, although Pharisees, led by the superscription, chuckle over this Psalm finely, and conclude that none but such crimes as those committed by David can make it needful for them to adopt the humble language of this Psalm.

I once visited a man, who by intemperance had brought himself, to all human appearance, to an awful end. The wife of this man was a blind Pharisee (not that I ever yet knew a spiritually seeing Pharisee); she assured her husband that if David had not committed what he did, he would not have written such a Psalm as is the 51st; she also assured him that although he could not come in with the best of good people, yet he might come in with David. However, I went as far as I could to the root of the matter, and tried to show him that, bad as was his state by his outward sins, there was something yet infinitely worse in his heart; that his heart (as is the heart of every man by nature), was worse than the devil; for the heart was deceitful

above all things, and the devil is one of those things. And so I labored to lay open to him his real state before God; that his sin and sinful state were against God and against him, only, that the blood guiltiness spoken of in the 14th verse of the 51st Psalm was expressive of the deadly enmity against God under which all by nature are, as is shown not only in so many of his servants being slain, but above all in the slaying of the Lord of life and glory, a deed to which all by nature have virtually and relatively consented; and from this blood guiltiness the Psalmist prayed to be delivered, especially as God was the God of his salvation. "And my tongue (saith the Psalmist) shall sing aloud of thy righteousness."

The young man I visited seemed to be brought into real soul trouble, and to some knowledge of the truth, and walked well the little time I knew him; but he was removed by Providence to some other part of the world, and I have heard nothing of him since.

Now, my good Theophilus, you will, I say, find this 51st Psalm the very experience and language of your soul, so that, like the Publican and all others who are taught of God, you will give a truthful account of yourself as a sinner before God.

But while it is essential to give a true account of your sinner-ship before God, yet we must not stop here; we must go on, and look for some other proof of Divine life in the soul beside that of true conviction of sin; for he that begins the good work will carry it on; wo must, therefore, be satisfied with nothing short of the fruits of the Spirit.

But I shall not be able, in the short space of this letter, to set before you all we must say upon this matter. I will first take Deuteronomy xxvi. You, I am sure, will not be at a loss to recognize the spiritual meaning of the same.

First, then, here is the position of the man who is to give a good account of himself to God,— "When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee to inherit, and possessest it, and dwellest therein."

Thus, my good Theophilus, you are come into a land which the Lord your God giveth you. "Fear not, little flock, it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom;" so then it is a given land; a given kingdom; not offered, nor merited, nor bought, borrowed, nor stolen, nor hired; but given. What say you to this? Do you not both feel and see, that if you have a good hope, that it must be a given hope; and so it is written that "he hath loved us and given us everlasting consolation, and a good hope through grace." (2 Thess, iii, 16.) And so you live in the "land of good hope"—a land of promise, flowing with milk and honey. But you are to possess this land by the good pleasure of your father which is in heaven. Are you satisfied with this tenure? this title? for "with him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

Also, by completeness in Christ Jesus the Lord you possess this good land; so it is written, "Thy people shall be all righteous, they (therefore) shall inherit the land forever."

Also, it is given to you by promise,—by sworn promise; and "as he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, saying, in blessing I will bless thee."

Also, by faith you now possess it, and this faith may well be called "precious faith." How precious the thought that daily needy sinners as we are, yet still receiving the truth in the love of it, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

But you not only possess, but dwell in this good land. "When (saith the word, verse, 1st) thou dwellest therein." It is even now you're nearest, dearest, and best home; and you can afford better to give up forever all other homes than for one hour to give up the home of eternal truth. Thou dwellest therein, and thou findest it to be a land beginning with brooks of water, and ending with fountains and depths, that spring out of the valleys and hills—a land beginning with the finest wheat, and ending with the sweetest honey. (Deut viii. 7, 8.) Now the Israelite, when thus blest, was to come and give an account of himself to God: "When thou shalt come unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose." This place that God chose, was, first, the tabernacle, then the temple. And with safety we can look upon the temple as a type of the one final meeting-place of God and man; the Mediator of the new covenant. All their offerings were to be at the door of the tabernacle; and so Jesus hath said, "I am the door;" there is no other way of access to, or acceptance with God. This is the place the Lord hath chosen to place his name there. Here it is that his name is safe; nowhere else but in this ultimate meeting-place are the honors of his name perfectly and finally established. This is what the first temple could not do. He is the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, in an everlasting covenant. The great high priest of this covenant hath established the same, while nothing belonging to this covenant can be lost; not a hoof shall be left behind. Here, then, the new covenant Name of the Most High, with all its import will be eternally carried out. So then, God is your father in Christ, and Christ is your life in God; that is, in God's love to you, and counsels concerning you. The Holy Spirit reveals life to you, and works life in you, and makes you lively in hope in no other way. Here, then, it is that you may glory in his holy name.

But again, let us look at this heavenly door of nope, where alone we can give a good account of ourselves to God—the place which the Lord thy God shall choose. It was a sacrificial place. How delightfully suited was this! the sin offering; the burnt offering, the peace offering; all to enable a poor sinner to give a good account of himself to God. Be assured of this, my good Theophilus, that you can never give a good account of yourself by the works of the law; it must be by faith that it might be by grace. This meeting place is by grace; therefore it is that here is a mercy-seat; and here is the high priest making reconciliation for the sins of the people; and the high priest was to present the people as on his breastplate before God, but he was not to go into the holy of holies without the blood of atonement for that would leave room for the sins of the people to go in, and then that would be a curse and not a blessing for the people; but he was to go in with the blood of atonement; so that no sin could go in with him; and therefore none could return with him. We thus see that the Israelite who had to give a good account of himself to God, was first brought into a good land, and into a good position, and was well furnished with good things, suited exactly to the taste of my good Theophilus, and also to the taste of, A Little One,

Epistles to Theophilus Letter 37 - pages 246ff 1857

Laws by which the unrighteous will be judged

My good Theophilus, before closing what I have to say to you upon the final judgment of the righteous, I shall, in this letter, begin to set before you those laws by which the unrighteous must be finally judged; and those laws may be summed up in these three—the legal, the natural, and the dispensational.

1st. The Legal. By the legal I mean the law of God as transgressed by Adam and all his posterity in him; and you must be careful here to distinguish between sovereignty and justice. And I here speak of sovereignty in relation to the lost. Now it is an act simply of divine sovereignty to pass them by, leaving them in the fall. This is an unfathomable deep—a deep which none but the Creator can fully sound. There stands the awful fact in the Scriptures, that "whom he will he hardeneth."

It was an act of divine sovereignty to place man in the Garden of Eden on grounds conditional. It was an act of divine sovereignty to constitute Adam the federal and natural head of the human race. It was an act also of sovereignty to give to Adam the kind of law he (the Lord) thought proper. Nor can I scarcely say that he gave such law because it was a just law; but rather that such a law was just because he gave it. For in his own natural existence, he is above and beyond all external law. The laws of his own self and eternal existence are what no finite being can comprehend. Whatever, therefore, he does, is right: if only for this reason, that it is right because he does it. He therefore, in the region of pure sovereignty, determined upon whatever plans and counsels he pleased; but, mind this, his plans once fixed, he will not alter; and therefore they cannot be altered. His counsel must stand, and he will do all his pleasure.

To make my meaning clear, take it thus— his plan with Adam was that if he ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he should die; fairly implying, that if he did not eat thereof, he should not die. Now, here you see, whether Adam eat of the forbidden tree or not, the counsel of God would stand—his counsel could not be overthrown; for the counsel was, that if he ate, he should die. Well, he did eat, and he did die—virtually, at the time, and actually, at the "appointed" time. Now, if he do not eat of the tree, still the counsel of God would stand, in the fact, that Adam would not die; and thus, either way, the counsel of God would stand.

But now, mind that, while as a matter of sovereignty, God gave what law he thought proper. Now this law thus given, becomes the fixed eternal rule of right and wrong in the sight of God. It was not sovereignly, but justice that condemned Adam, and ail his posterity: whether we can see the justice of this terrible order of things or not does not alter the fact—that all sinned—all died in Adam.

The great God foreknowing everything does not associate him influentially with the fall. The devil was the agent, not God. Therefore sin is of the devil. Sin, in the commencement of it, was a flat contradiction to God's law. "Ye shall not surely die." That the devil was a liar from the beginning. And all men being in relation to eternal truth, led by him, are therefore called liars. "Let God be true, bat every man a liar."

Thus, my good Theophilus, you will see that in order for the blessed God to be the author of sin, he most tell lies; in a word, become a liar; for sin is a deadly lie. Who would not tremble at the thought of willfully making God a liar? Truly then is it written that it is impossible for God to lie. The man, therefore, who says God is the author of sin, can never know what he is saying; he cannot be conscious, that so speaking, he is making the God of truth one with the old serpent—the devil. We cannot speak too reverentially of our Maker, nor too broadly mark the everlasting difference between the delusions of Satan, and the truths of the blessed God.

Thus you see that the great God instituted that order of things which seemed good in his sight: but sin has come in upon that order of things, and death by sin.

Now, my good Theophilus, let us tremblingly look upon the fall of man; let us see what and where he is by that fall.

Now, as to what he is. He is dead in sin. The satanic falsehood which he has received into his soul is his death. He is loathsomely dead: yet nothing under heaven is so dearly hugged, loved, followed, and abode by, in some form or another, as that very same falsehood, which is at once our death, our deformity, our sin, our curse. Man is every way corrupt; and yet he may do many works in the moral and social relations of life, which are accepted in the sight of God, for what they are: so if Cain, in these respects, had done well, he would have been accepted to family pre-eminence, but nothing more. For when the heart is put to the test of God's holy law, in the spirit of that law, it (the heart) can produce nothing in the sight of that law, but all manner of concupiscence; there is not one thing there that the law can sanction. So that we can be neither sanctified nor justified by the law. Not sanctified, for the law has nothing in such a case but wrath to minister. Not justified, unless the law can justify sin and unrighteousness; for the sinner has nothing else that is really his own, nor can this be by any creature-power altered forever; for ought man can do must the sinner remain in the image and likeness of Satan: and so they are called by the same names that Satan is, such as dragon, viper, serpent, devil.

But it is not only what man is by the fall, but also where he is. He is under the law and its curse. The same law that appoints the body to a literal death, appoints the whole person to a second death—a death that never dies.

Man is in the hands of the law; it has fast hold of him; it holds him with an almighty grasp: there is no escaping; it is a prison whose walls no one ever scaled yet, or ever will; it has bars which cannot be broken; its chains are everlasting chains; not one link will ever give way; not a jot or tittle shall or can fail.

But man is not only under the law, and in the hands of the law, but also on his way to the judgment seat of God; and what thousands of the human race are daily called to appear at the bar of God! Probably, upon the average, from fifty to sixty thousand a day; from two to three thousand an hour; nearly fifty a minute! What, to angels, to the Saviour, and perhaps to the saints, must such a scene be!

Man, I say, is on his way to the judgment seat of the Judge of all. Can none go back? No, not one minute; but minutes will mercilessly flow, and could man stay for a while the wheels of time, and give to himself an antediluvian longevity on earth, this would only make it all the worse; he would have the more to answer for; and although it is for the elect's sakes that days are shortened, still the lost will not be wronged thereby. Every moment renders the distance between the bottomless pit and the unrighteous man less and less.

First, then, what men are by the fall, and where they are, will form one rule of final judgment; yea, already are they in this awful state judged. The judgment already given of them is two-fold: First, that there "is none righteous, no, not one;" and second that they are already under condemnation; for, "by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation."

Well, then, in the final judgment they will be judged according to what they are, and also according to where they are; if tares, they cannot be taken for wheat; if goats, they cannot be taken for sheep; if dogs, they cannot be taken for children, but must be taken for what they are. God is Judge himself.

And also as to where they are; for if in bondage to sin, they cannot be taken for free; and if one with the beast, the wild beast of this world's religion, then they are not on mount Zion; and if born only after the flesh, then they cannot see, much less be in the kingdom of heaven; and if one with the ungodly, they cannot be one with the godly; and if they put off one livery of Satan, to serve him in another (as comely, may be, as angels of light), then where God and the Lamb are they cannot come; and if standing on first

Adam ground, then such ground is cursed, and not blessed; and if standing on law ground, then devouring fire, everlasting burnings, not everlasting consolation, must surround and swallow them up; and if in a spirit of enmity against the truth, then they cannot be taken for friends, but must be dealt with as enemies, and so must all enemies perish; but them that love him shall be as the sun, when he goeth forth in his might.

Thus all are already, both in what they are, and where they are, in a state of condemnation; and here the Lord, taking that holy law for his rule, which he hath given, taking this law for his rule, he might justly have left the whole human race finally under sin and wrath, and so his wrath would have abode upon them; and if from this state any are taken, then election, mediation, regeneration, and a sworn covenant, all join to do the wondrous work.

Now, having shewn that man is as to what he is, and also as to where he is, that in both these he is in a state of condemnation, you will observe that I have said nothing here about personal works for which men will be condemned. This I hope to do in my next; the subject is indeed solemn, but still it endears the Saviour; and that we may love and honor him more and more, is the sincere desire of your humble servant in the Lord, A Little One.

Epistles to Theophilus Letter 38 - pages 280ff 1857

Laws by which the unrighteous s will be judged – two more rules examined

More against Duty-Faith

My Good Theophilus, I have—after showing in my last the condemnation we are brought under by the fall of Adam—I have now to set before you two more rules of final judgment to the ungodly—namely, the natural and the dispensational. Upon the first of these I will say but little. We learn from Romans i. 19, 20 that the works of creation demonstrate to the natural conscience of every man the existence, eternal power and Godhead of the Most High; and therefore, for the gross idolatries and revolting practices into which they have plunged they have no excuse. They did not like to retain God in their knowledge, or do him that homage of which, as moral and responsible beings, they were capable of doing; therefore God in sovereignty and in Justice gave them up to vile affections; he gave them up in sovereignty, as not choosing to have mercy upon them, and in justice, at Adam-fallen, and as practical enemies to God; the degree, therefore, of their punishment, will be in proportion to the amount of their guilt. This guilt arising from their Adam-fallen state: here all are alike; there is no difference; but in their guilt arising from practical wrong, there is a difference. Upon this subject of the final judgment of the heathen a volume might be written, yet I shall here say no more upon it, but pus on to the final judgment of the so-called Christian world who shall be lost. These will be judged by the laws of the dispensation they are under. When the Saviour and John the Baptist began to preach they said, "Repent, for the kingdom (the dispensational) of heaven is at hand." And had this dispensational kingdom been sent to Sodom and Gomorrah they would have received it. Both the Saviour and the apostles demonstrated to every man's conscience (within its range) the divinity of their mission; they therefore had no excuse for persecuting, much less for crucifying the Lord of life and glory; and the dispensation of the mission of the Saviour is

come down to us with such clear evidence to every man's conscience (except those who are practically given up to blindness, and of reprobate mind), that no one can have any excuse for persecuting the people of God, or for despising the gospel dispensation. Every natural man ought to walk in the light which the New Testament brings him into; and God will accept and honor such conscientious walking, and accept it for what it is. But not only so; the natural man feels he ought to regard the Sabbath, go to a place of worship, listen to the words of his Maker, and do homage to the Son of God, in whose hands is his breath (for all judgment is committed unto the Son), and by whose government of the nations he—the natural man—has fruitful seasons, and his heart filled with food and gladness; for the nation or kingdom which will not thus submit to the Son of God must perish, even when his wrath is kindled but a little. This, then, is the (superadded) condemnation, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. I say, superadded condemnation, because "by one man's offence judgment came upon all men to condemnation." This is one condemnation; but then there is the condemnation belonging, not only to the fall, but also to practical wrong.

Thus, my good Theophilus, you see there is a great and solemn principle of moral responsibility that men are under, and the greater light and the more privileges they have, the greater their responsibility. Where much is given much is required; some will be beaten in hell with many stripes, some with not so many stripes; some shall receive the greater condemnation, and that for their sinning against light and knowledge, as Judas did when he betrayed the Saviour, or as Ananias and Sapphira did, when they kept back part of the price, and as thousands do in our day. Thus it is that it will be more tolerable in the Day of Judgment for the worst of heathen cities than for these light and truth despisers.

Now, if men walk in the light while they have the light, as some do, then the Lord is with them in that respect as his creatures, nor will their condemnation be so heavy as those who do not so walk, for the wrath of God will come upon some to the uttermost, and some shall have judgment without any mercy or mitigation. But after all, to be lost is of all things the most awful; hell is hell, even to those whose place shall be in a less intense part of the lake, and upon whose devoted heads the thunderbolts of vengeance shall descend the lightest, and on whose backs shall fall the fewest stripes; "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Now the non-possession of the faith of God's elect is the spot which marks the character of the lost. Not having this faith of God's elect, they are for their sins condemned. But "who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" And thus, not having this faith, the wrath of God abideth on them; they are condemned already. But what are they condemned for? I answer, for their sins. But why are these condemned for their sins, while others are saved and not condemned? The answer is that they are condemned for their sins because God over all is not pleased to have mercy upon them; and the others are not condemned, because God is pleased to have mercy upon them. And as those upon whom he will not have mercy never did, never will, and never can possess the faith of God's elect, therefore, as have said, their non-possession of this faith is the spot, the mark, and as it were the seal, the earnest of their condemnation.

Thus, then, destitution of the faith of God's elect is the evidential cause of their condemnation, as, on the other hand, the possession of the faith of God's elect is the evidential cause of salvation. But are they loved, redeemed, blessed and saved, for believing? I trow not. So the lost are condemned for their sins, but it cannot, in the very nature of things, be any sin in them not to possess that faith which accompanies eternal salvation. Take their unbelief, or non-possession of the faith of God's elect, as the evidence of their state, if you please, or, as I have worded it, the evidential cause of their condemnation, then the word of God may be rightly understood. And so I understand it thus,— "He that believeth (that is, he who

liveth and believeth, or is born of God,—for no faith short of this can save the soul,—he who thus believeth) shall be saved; he that believeth not (who is not born of God) shall be condemned." Thus, the reason the one is not condemned for his sins, is because he is a believer; that is, he is born of God, and for him it is that Christ died; but the other is condemned for his sins, because he hath not believed on the only begotten Son of God. He might have believed mentally and morally, but not vitally; he is not born of God,

You know the old wives' fable, often connected by men with the truth of God: it is this,—that it is the work of God that we receive (savingly, I suppose it means) the gospel, (true), but it is the work of men to reject it. Reject it, in the doctrine and practice of it, they do; abuse it, as a dispensation, they do. Christ himself was despised and rejected of men; but this is not what our duty-faith, universal-invitation men mean; they mean, — if their words have any meaning at all,—that men are lost for not savingly receiving the gospel. My good Theophilus, I trust you feel the same contempt for such a gross insult upon the gospel, and upon God himself, as I do. Was the gospel in its vitality ever offered to any man? Did the Lord offer to bring the dry bones in Ezekiel's vision to life? Did the Saviour offer Lazarus life from the dead? Did he offer to stop Saul of Tarsus? Does he offer his sheep eternal life? Men reject the gospel in the vitality of it! As well may we say that Adam refused to exist before he was created; as well may we say that they that are in the graves will at the last great day refuse to come forth. Reject regeneration! Is it possible that men can be found, professing to believe in the certainty of eternal redemption, who yet hold that those who are not saved reject what was never meant for them? Satan certainly did get many of the old Puritans, as well as moderns, to do him the service of resting this abominable falsehood upon the head of God's truth; as though this vile duty-faith insult to God was a crown of honor to his truth, whereas it is nothing but a crown of thorns, intended by the enemy to degrade eternal truth. To advocate this duty-faith heresy is nothing but willful rebellion against the sovereignty of God; and if I begin to bring charges against it, where shall I stop?

First, it (this duty-faith universal-invitation system) is a perversion of the Word of God. Secondly, it is a root of bitterness against the new covenant counsel of God. Thirdly, it obscures the true light of the gospel. Fourthly, it teaches people in God's name to tell lies. Fifthly, it nourishes the vilest enmity and slanders against the truth and people of God. Sixthly, it sets thousands down for real Christians, whose conversion is merely mental and formal, but not vital, and thus deceives by thousands the souls of men. Seventhly, it helps forward with fearful rapidity the interests of the kingdom of Satan. It is at the root of every erroneous ism in Christendom; and it always tries to make God's truth a subservient means of establishing itself in the churches. Many a man will preach half-a dozen straightforward gospel sermons, sound in the letter, to put the hearer off his guard, to reach and bring in this pestilential doctrine of duty-faith; while such will stoutly deny that they are duty-faith men, being ashamed to own their own favorite doctrine.

How easily could I substantiate every one of these assertions! But you know them to be true bills.

Now, it will remain for me in my next to shew more clearly the meaning of those Scriptures upon which duty-faith rests its claims, and thinks itself entitled to a place in the temple of God, though at war with every truth in the new covenant.

The Lord bless thee out of Zion. So prays A Little Oms.

Epistles to Theophilus Letter 39 - pages 17ff 1858

Against Duty Faith – the true meaning of the scriptures used to defend it.

Host excellent Theophilus, I have now to set before you what I believe to be the true meaning of those Scriptures upon which the doctrine of duty-faithism rests its claims, keeping up in your mind the distinction between this, and that vital faith in the truth which none but a living God can bestow. Keeping up this distinction, we shall see our way clearly through the vapors wherewith duty-faithism darkens counsel with words without knowledge.

"He shall reprove (convince) the world of sin;" of sin, because they believe not in me. Now, mind, it does not say he shall convince of the sin of not believing in me, but he shall convince of sin. Now stop here for a minute and look at the words again. "He shall convince of sin." Here is special conviction of sin, so that here conviction of sin means something more than that conviction which can be, and in thousands of cases is, brought about by the warnings of natural conscience, and the letter of the word. Conviction of sin here means that which is by the special power of the Holy Ghost. "He shall convince of sin." It is therefore such conviction as none but the Holy Spirit can bring about. It is that kind of conviction which goes far beyond mere moral conviction. It is a conviction of sin that teaches the sinner what he is as a law sinner, and teaches him also what he is as an Adam-fallen sinner, and without such conviction he cannot savingly believe in the Saviour. Therefore, because he does not, and because he cannot, for no man can come except drawn by the Father, no man can come except it be given him of the Father, and no man can come but by faith, for whatsoever is not of faith is sin, and without faith it is impossible to please God, and no man knoweth the things of God but the Spirit of God. There is, then, a world which the Holy Spirit convinces of sin, and in a way which none others are. This world is the world which he convinces of sin. They are like Israel in Egypt, a world within a world; and, like Israel, are in the Lord's own time brought up out of this mystic Egypt, where the truth is still crucified: to make the word, world, in this Scripture to mean "all the human race," would; be calling truth a liar, for it is not true that all are in the sense here intended, convinced of sin; much less still are they convinced of the righteousness and judgment spoken of in this Scripture. But not one whom the Father hath given to Christ shall come short of this conviction, for "All," saith the Saviour, "that the Father giveth me shall come to me."

"He shall convince of sin." Now again mind, it does not say he shall convince of the sin of not believing in me. I have already shown you, in former letters, in what sense it is sin not to believe the Word of God, and if we believe the Word of God, we must believe in Christ, but this mere natural holiness is not the faith meant in the Scripture I now have in hand. As the conviction here spoken of is special, so also is the faith special. The reason of the conviction here spoken of, is because they believe not in Christ. Well, then, if this be the reason, the purpose also is clear: as the reason of this conviction is because they do not believe, the purpose clearly is that they are convinced of sin that they might believe. "He shall convince the world of sin:" of sin, because they believe not in me, but did the Holy Spirit ever convince any one of the sin of not being regenerated earlier?

Saul of Tarsus was a New Testament infidel, and was not even morally converted to Christ. Such unbelief was sin, and of this, as well as of other sins, he was convinced, but was he convinced of the sin of not being called by grace earlier? Does he anywhere inform us that he might have been regenerated, might

have been a spiritually living believer, might have been an apostle earlier; that, instead of being as one born out of due time, he might have been born earlier? So far from this being the case, does he not see that both in his first and second birth, he was governed by him whose counsel must stand, and who will do all his pleasure? Just look at the Apostle's own words. Here they are, "It pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace." Gal. i. 16.

"He shall convince of sin" then, clearly does not mean, he shall convince of the sin of not being regenerated earlier; and yet without regeneration, there is no saving faith and no salvation.

You will, my good Theophilus, meet with some professors who will tell you that they are convinced of the sin of not being Christians sooner. This delusive conviction is one awful proof that they are Christians now only after the flesh, but not after the Spirit, and therefore not real Christians at all.

"He shall convince the world of sin, because they believe not in me." This special conviction, then, of sin is one thing needful in order to a right belief in Christ; nor will the Holy Spirit stop here, for where he convinces of sin, he will convince also of righteousness, that is, of the righteous perfection of the work of Christ. This righteous perfection of his work is seen in his going to the Father; his acceptance is the open demonstration of this perfection of his work, and of judgment, because the Prince of this world is judged. Here is the final defeat of sin and Satan. He is utterly cut off. Such is the life and light into which truth brings the soul. Convinced of sin that they may thus believe in Christ with the heart unto righteousness, and with the mouth make confession unto salvation.

The Holy Spirit never substitutes untruth for truth, and therefore to charge him with convincing of the sin of not possessing saving faith, or of not being a spiritually living believer earlier than he is pleased to do his mighty work of a new creature created in Christ Jesus:—"this people have I created for myself"—to charge the Holy Spirit (as dutyfaithism in effect does) with convincing of the sin of not being regenerated earlier, is to make him the author of falsehood, but happily it is impossible for God to lie.

Again (John iii. 18,) it is written, "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Of course he is: he is condemned in the fall of Adam, and what is he condemned for? Why, say some, for not believing in the name of the only begotten Son of God. But the Word of truth does not say so. Well, say some, but it does give their not believing as a cause of his condemnation. Well I know it does, but among the many causes of salvation what kind of cause of salvation is faith? Not certainly the original cause, nor the mediatorial cause, nor the regenerative cause, nor the ultimate cause, for the original cause of salvation is God's good pleasure, the mediatorial cause is the work of Christ, the efficient cause is the work of the Holy Ghost, the ultimate cause is the happiness of the objects of everlasting love, and the glory of God. What, then, I say, kind of cause is faith, of salvation? Nothing but an instrumental and evidential cause. It is a means of uniting us to the truth, and in uniting us in love to the truth, for it hereby becomes an evidence of interest in the truth; but faith will by-and-by cease as a means, and as an evidence it will be wanted no longer. It will be lost, as we say, in sight.

And very analogous to faith's relation to salvation, does the non-possession of this faith stand to condemnation. The want of this faith is a means of keeping the soul from either rightly seeing, or truly and vitally entering into the kingdom of heaven, and thus becomes an evidential cause of condemnation, and therefore the evidential reason that one is saved and the other lost, is, that one is a true believer in Christ, and the other is not a living believer in Christ. But the legal ground of his condemnation is twofold; his fall in Adam and his personal sins, among which his non-possession of the faith of God's elect is not

one. Unless you mean to run into what appears to me to be but little hotter than blasphemy; namely, that Christ died as much to augment the damnation of the lost, as he did to procure the salvation of the saved, so the lost may have as just a cause to curse the Saviour as the saved may have to bless him.

But does it not say that this is the condemnation, that "light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil?" Well, I know it says so; and it is true upon two grounds. First, it is the duty of men to revere and listen to their Maker, and, as I observed to you in my last, this, their open rebellion against the light, is laid to their account as a part of their sin, and consequently their condemnation; and it is also evidentially their condemnation as proving them to be still under sin, and therefore, under the law of condemnation, and so by virtue of the state they are in, the wrath of God (which wrath has never been off from them) still abideth on them.

Beware, then, my good Theophilus, of either perverting the Scriptures, or of walking with them that do, but come out from among them; be not partaker of their sins, lest ye also receive of their plagues; lest the Judge, seeing thee consenting unto the counsel and deed of these who rob his truth of its glory, and who make themselves one with harlot churches; lest, I say, the Judge should say unto thee, "When thou sawest a thief, thou consentest unto him, and hast been partaker with adulterers."

Now, consider this, ye compromising professors that forget God, "Lest," saith the Lord, "I tear you in pieces, and there is no one to deliver.'

Most excellent Theophilus, be not thou like unto them, but hear what saith the Judge of all, "Whoso offereth praise, praise to him who out of Zion (by him who is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his Person, the perfection of beauty) hath shined." Whoso offereth praise to him who thus out of Zion the perfection of beauty hath shined; that ordereth his conversation aright, "I will shew," saith the Lord, "the salvation of God," and this gives us all we need both now and hereafter, so believes your most willing servant, A Little One.

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Against Duty Faith – Divine revelation leaves man without excuse: men's responsibilities are according to the light brought to them

My good Theophilus, if the things of creation left the heathen without excuse, for not glorifying God as God, how much more doth divine revelation leave men without excuse for not fearing God, and doing homage to the Saviour? Such men make God a liar, because they believe not the record God gave of his Son, (1 John v, 10.) Such men are indeed viler than the earth, (Job xxx, 8.) As, then, the things of creation were the moral law of the heathen, so both the things of creation and the Bible are the moral law of Christendom, and both law and gospel will be witnesses against all who are enemies thereto. And so the apostles were to shake off the very dust of their feet as a testimony against such.

Thus there is evidently a wide, a very wide difference between a laudable, wholesome, moral, natural belief of God's holy word, and the possession of the faith of God's elect. The one is the duty of the creature,

the other is the special gift of the Creator. The one makes a man merely a better man, the other makes a man the better man; but does not stop here, but goes on to prove that he is not merely a better man, but also a real Christian.

Do you say that if it be the duty of men to believe the Bible, and to do homage to the Saviour, do you, would you say that this is building up what I have thrown down, namely, that it is after all making the gospel the cause of condemnation? my answer to this is, that the same argument would apply to the things of creation; for whatever, whether creation or revelation, that demonstrates to the natural conscience the being and attributes of God, or the truth of the Messiahship of Christ, which indeed is of all the demonstrations we have of the attributes of God, the clearest. Whatever, I say, demonstrates to the natural conscience the being and attributes of God, becomes to the natural man a reasonable and righteous law, and rule of that homage due, which the natural man is capable of rendering to God. Do we, then, who are not only high in doctrine, but abundantly glory in the same, knowing that we are not higher than the Bible, nor even so high as the Bible; for we, with all our height of doctrine, we have not yet fully reached the height of Zion. Do we, then, we who disdain the doctrine of a man being responsible for his conversion, and for his eternal salvation, we who reject in total the doctrine of souls in hell, saying one to another, I should not have been here but for you: if such lies be told in hell, it is quite bad enough, without there being told on earth, and laboriously palmed off upon us for gospel truth: do we, who cast out these doctrines; do we who know that the responsibility of the conversion and salvation of every saved soul lies entirely with God, and with God alone; do we sanction, do we patronize, justify, or approve of a disbelief of God's holy book? No; we do not. Our opponents would like us to do so, that they may hereby have occasion both against us and against the truth; but we hold that men's responsibilities are according to the light brought to them. Here we are one in word with both Wesleyans and Low Calvinists, but not one in meaning. The Wesleyan is somewhat consistent with himself; but the Low Calvinists talk positive nonsense, admitting with one breath that none but those for whom Christ did not die, can be lost, and yet with the next breath tell us, that their being in hell is their own fault. As well might they tell us if a criminal be banished for life to a penal colony, it is his own fault. His crimes were his own fault; but when once in the hands of the law, he becomes helpless. Just so with men—our crime is apostasy from God in the first Adam, and so death reigns over all, for that all in Adam have sinned. Here then lies the fault, and to this one original fault all men in their lives add, some more, some less, to the original fault; so that, original sin is a fault in which they are involved. But, nevertheless, they are still held responsible for what they are capable of doing; but they are not capable of doing anything spiritually good, nor of being anything but mere moral agents and natural men. And thus, then, while we high doctrine people feel the force of this law of responsibility ourselves, we advocate the same as belonging to all men. We do not, therefore, sanction infidelity or a disbelief of God's word in any man; but neither, on the other hand do we believe that man ever was, ever will, or ever can be condemned for not being a real Christian. As well may we talk of condemning wood for not being iron; or of condemning iron for not being silver; or of condemning silver for not being gold.

For myself, I believe that the substituting of mere mental and moral conversion—this mere natural faith for the faith of God's elect—I believe that there are more souls deceived by this doctrine than by any other found in all Protestant Christendom; but upon straightforward realities I hope to say more in future letters.

I think I have said enough to show that it is the duty of men to glorify God, as God, who giveth them fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness; that it is the duty of men to read the Scriptures, to believe them, and walk and act thereby. Also I have said enough to shew that this duty of man and the special grace of God are two infinitely different things, though men are ever blending and confounding

them; and these men themselves being confused in these things, they confuse others with the confusion wherewith they themselves are confused. And their system (for they are great sticklers for system, though they affect to despise system) looks more like Babel than like the well-ordered bulwarks of Zion.

The judgment of the lost will indeed be an awful Judgment; nothing but their sins as a millstone about their necks, and down they must sink to rise no more. How, then, are the saved to be judged, as they shall stand so well at that day? They are, and will be judged upon those grounds upon which grace has put them. The foreknowledge of God: "He knoweth them that are his own;" "I know my sheep." This is one of their securities; this is one of those foundations which standeth sure—"The Lord knoweth them that are his;" and just as they are brought into this truth, they depart from the mystery of iniquity.

Election is another ground of judgment to the saved. By this act of eternal election he took them in council (and his counsel most stand) from under the law of wrath, from under the law of sin and death; and chose his own dear Son to stand between them and their sins, while all their sins lay between Christ and the law of God.

Predestination is another ground of judgment; and this decree brings in salvation. "He hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." Here, then, is no possibility of condemnation.

Regeneration is another ground. By this (regeneration) they become true Christians, and their works are works of faith in, and love to, God; and by these, and by these only will they be judged. Their sins would be sought for, and be very easily found, but they are all forgiven; so that not one bad work can appear against them in judgment. And they have by the Lord doing good to them, done good to their own souls, and to the souls of others, and walked in mutual brotherly love to the brethren; that those who have done this good shall come forth to the resurrection of life, but those who have not done this good, to the resurrection of judgment to come, there being in their state nothing but judgment for them.

Mediation is another ground of judgment. "Ye are complete in him who is head of all principality and power;" and the completeness they have in him is the highest kind of completeness; it is to be cleansed by the blood of God (Acts xx, 28.); to be beautified with the salvation of God; it is to be clothed in the righteousness of God.

The Resurrection is another ground of judgment; they will, when raised, be like him who raised them; their very appearance excludes all thought of wrath, condemnation, spot, blemish, wrinkle, or any such thing. Well, then, my good Theophilus, if these be the rules by which we are to be judged at last, then let us judge ourselves by these rules now, and see whether we have in our hearts that law of faith which makes our souls one with these eternal truths now; for "as the tree falleth so it must lie;" clean or unclean, just or unjust; there is no middle path; and if we be not one with this eternal order of things, then we are not where the love of God is, but where his wrath is. His love is in Christ; and his love is where centers his foreknowledge. His decree to eternal life; the harmony of his perfections; regeneration; for, if quickened, it is not apart from, but in oneness with Christ. Here, also, lies our final perseverance—"He loveth us unto the end." And here also lies his eternal glory. He then that dwelleth in the truth dwelleth in God—in God as a God of loving-kindness. For ever will this heavenly truth follow thee, and be true concerning thee, namely, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore in loving-kindness have I drawn thee." A Little One.