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COMMENTARIES

COMMENTARY ON THE
NEW TESTAMENT, VOL 3
Colossians

By Rev. W. B. Godbey, A. M.,

COMMENTARY ON THE NEW TESTAMENT

VOL III EPHESIANS-PHILEMON

PAUL, THE CHAMPION THEOLOGIAN

BY

REV. W. B. GODBEY, A. M.,

Author of "Commentary, Volumes I and II;" "Spiritual Gifts and Graces," "Holy Land," "Victory," "Holiness or Hell," "Christian Perfection," "Sanctification," "Baptism," and "Woman Preacher."

COLOSSIANS

PROLOGUE

This was the old capital of Phrygia, one of the oldest cities in the world, long debauched in ignorance, superstition, and idolatry. The Church at this place had been established by the labors of others, Paul, in person, never having preached there. In the complement, this epistle should have preceded Philippians, as it was written previously, during the occupancy of the hired house in Rome, before Paul was taken to the barracks. The writing is evidently contemporary with that of Ephesians, which it strikingly resembles. Along with the latter and Philemon, it was carried to its destination by Tychicus and Onesimus. Paul fired no blank cartridges. I am like the colored man in a Southern camp, where the greatest preachers in the world had an opportunity alternately to proclaim the living Word. While a number of persons were expressing their partialities, he interjected, "I like best the one I hear last." When I read a Pauline letter, the Spirit shining down into the deep substrata, and hauling up grand bonanzas which I never saw before, like the colored man, I think certainly this is the best epistle he ever wrote. So, look out for wonders as you read Colossians. I do not know that any other book in the New Testament has suffered so much in the transcriptions. There is a great diversity in the Greek of the New Testament; some of it infinitely easier to translate than others. Portions of this letter are so difficult to translate, that it has suffered much, not only in the hands of King James's translators, but their predecessors. So, look out for surprises, as I have before me only the critical original by Tischendorf, which God, in his mercy, preserved in the convent of St. Catherine, on Mount Sinai fifteen hundred years, revealing it in 1859, just in time to boom the present holiness movement, the glorious millennial dawn; thus bridging the long, dark chasm of intervening ages, while the devil's millennium veiled the world in darkness, and deluged it in blood a thousand years; meanwhile everything possible was done to exterminate the Bible, other good books, and blot every vestige of light, culture, and civilization from the globe.

CHAPTER 1

1. Observe here the modesty of Luke, the amanuensis, in the omission of his own name, which certainly had a right to appear with that of Paul and Timothy.
2. *“To the saints in Colosse, and to the faithful brethren in Christ.”* You see here again a confirmation of the fact patent throughout the Scriptures, that “saint” is the epithet given by the Holy Ghost to the Lord’s people. We should all accept the name, and recognize the standard which God has given us.
3. *“Always praying for you.”* We do not pray enough. We ought to pray incessantly for all the saints on the earth.

ARGUMENT 1

FAITH AND LOVE

4. *“Hearing of your faith in Christ Jesus, and the Divine love which you have toward all the saints.”* Here, again, we see the magnificent globe of human salvation, exhibiting the two distinct hemispheres; *i.e.*, the human and the Divine. We do the believing, and God does the saving. Salvation must be subjective before it can be objective. We must first receive heaven in us, before we are in a fix to go to heaven. This Divine love, the heavenly *agapee*, constitutes the very atmosphere of heaven. We can not possibly love in the Bible sense, till we have it in our hearts. It is exotic in humanity, and indigenous in God alone. When the sinner meets the condition by an utter and eternal abandonment of sin, and casts himself, in a moment of desperation, on the mercy of God in Christ by simple faith alone, he freely forgives him for Christ’s sake, imputing to him the righteousness of Christ. At that moment the Holy Ghost, the commissioned executive of the new creation, pours out (☞ ^{ROM} Romans 5:5) into his heart this Divine love, which is the nature of God (☞ ^{1JOH} 1 John 4:18), thus imparting the Christ-life and nature to the dead soul, resurrecting it into the new life of God and heaven. The popular Churches on this

problem are wrapped in an awful delusion, preaching human love as a substitute for the Divine, there being no salvation in it, as illustrated in case of the rich man in hell, who there had it in behalf of his brethren in the superlative degree. Faith is your own act, co-operated by the Holy Ghost, who is always on hand and ready to give you all the help you need to believe God's Word, and as a sinner to trust him implicitly for a free pardon, and as a Christian to trust him triumphantly for entire sanctification, and as a wholly sanctified servant of the Lord to trust him incessantly to keep you by his power, fill you with his Spirit, and give you momentary and perpetual victory over every foe. All the other graces are resolvable into these two; *i.e.*, faith and love, which focalize at the constituents of the two spiritual hemispheres, and represent the entire plan of salvation. Hence, your faith is positively the measuring line of your experience. When the sinner believes God's convicting truth, he always gets convicted. When he believes converting truth, he always gets converted. When the Christian believes God's copious illuminating truth, everywhere revealing inbred sin surviving in the heart of the regenerate, he invariably gets convicted of it. When he walks in the light of that conviction, and believes God's wonderful truth, revealing entire sanctification in the cleansing blood, he sweeps into Beulah land with a shout.

5-7. *“From the day in which you heard, and have truly and perfectly known the grace of God.”* We know the grace of God in regeneration, but truly, perfectly know that grace in sanctification. We reach experimental certainty.

8. *“Who also revealed to us your Divine love in the Spirit.”* The Holy Spirit is the only Dispenser of the Divine love, native only in the heart of God, and poured out into our hearts by the Holy Ghost. (Romans 5:5.) Hence, Holy Ghost religion only is characterized by love. All others are carnal and selfish.

ARGUMENT 2

THE SCHOOL OF THE SPIRIT

9. *“That you may be filled with the perfect knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.”* Man is a trinity like God. His is an immortal spirit, having a mind and body. In the fall the human spirit was utterly bereft of Divine life, and has been dead ever since, till the resurrection of the Holy Spirit raises it into life. Our educational system is radically defective at this point. As a rule, our colleges, under the auspices of the different religious denominations, are minus the school of the Holy Ghost. They educate the mind, but not the heart, sending out semi-infidels to occupy the pulpits. We have a few holiness colleges, and need a thousand more. These schools, like holiness revivals, recognize the Bible as the only authority, and the great Textbook to which all others are subordinated. We can not depend on the dualistic system of theology to educate our young people, if we do not want them to graduate like Samson, shorn of his locks, to go out and grind in the mills of Dagon all of their lives. We must have teachers filled with the Holy Ghost. The holiness movement must take our schools into hand, if we would supply the world with able ministers of the New Testament. Instead of spending four years studying heathen authors as I did, and many others are now doing, we should make out our Latin course in the Latin Bible, and our Greek course in the Greek Bible, and likewise with the Hebrew. It is a shame on the escutcheon of Christianity to educate our young people in the heathen classics. I would rather than a million of dollars today I had spent my four years in the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew Bible, instead of the pagan authors. It is high time we would throw off this semi-paganism which we carried out of the Dark Ages. If we are going to save the world, we must have Spirit-filled teachers as well as preachers. We must wake to the fact that the Bible is the only Book, and let all others be merely subsidiary. The secret of the awful apostasy now so fearfully prevailing in the Churches is, that the pulpits are filled with intellectual giants and spiritual babies (in the same person).

10. *“That you walk worthily of the Lord in all loyalty.”* All of this clamor about Church loyalty is heretical and misleading. The Bible says nothing

about it, but teaches us to be loyal to God. If you are loyal to God, you are loyal to everything in Church and State which is in harmony with God, and disloyal to everything which is disharmonious with God. When you let any one but God expound your loyalty, look out! There is danger ahead. There is where all of the martyrs bled. Be loyal to God alone, revealed in his Word, Spirit, and providence. Abide your destiny right there. If God needs a martyr, put in the first bid. If Church and State are loyal to God, I gladly accept of their company. If they are disloyal to God, I am disloyal to them.

ARGUMENT 3

GOD'S DYNAMITE

11. *“Being dynamited with all dynamite according to the power of his glory.”* Paul, in ⁴⁰⁰Romans 1:6, defines gospel the

“dynamite of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.”

Hence, this power (Greek, dynamite) is the only gospel. The trouble with the pulpit nowadays is the absence of the dynamite, which alone can blow sin out of the soul, and the devil out of the Church. Dynamite is like powder, but infinitely more so. The preachers are afraid to handle it, lest it blow their Churches all to pieces. They need not be afraid, for it can not blow out anything but sin, which is bound to come out, or the devil will get them. Some are willing to take the dynamite of conviction for sinners, and regeneration for penitents, but not willing to take the dynamite of sanctification for Christians. Shall we not walk in the footprints of Paul, and go for the entire bill of fare, and get the people dynamited with all dynamite? God forbid that we should leave out any of heaven's dynamite! In so doing, we take an awful risk. Let us receive the dynamite of conviction, regeneration, and sanctification, and henceforth be true to our commission, do our utmost to get our people all dynamited with all dynamite.

ARGUMENT 4

GOD'S TREE

13. *“Who delivered us from the power of darkness, and transplanted us into the kingdom of the Son of his love.”* This transplanting (not translating, as E.V., which takes the body) includes sanctification. We are all born into this world mere seedlings of Adam the First, and utterly incompetent to bear good fruit (a fact well-known to all fruit-growers). Conversion puts us in the Lord’s nursery, and regeneration grafts the Divine nature in us. If we abide in the nursery indefinitely, we will be too much crowded up and encumbered to ever bear fruit. The frugiculturist in due time spades us up by the roots, trims all of our limbs off, and many of the roots; *i.e.*, sanctifies us wholly (on the negative side); then he carries us out into a ‘large place,’ where we will have plenty of room, as trees in the orchard are forty feet apart. Then follows the great fruit-bearing period after we are transplanted into the kingdom of the Son of His love. The unsanctified Christians are like the tree, spending its life in the nursery, no place to bear fruit. We must be closely trimmed, put out in the rich soil, unprotected, if we would be truly fruitful.

14,15. — *“First begotten of all creation,”* as we see from verse 18; this means the first to enter the transfigured state. A number had been raised from the dead before Christ, but none transfigured. As the transfiguration is the consummation of the resurrection out of mortality, it is referred to in these Scriptures, thus confirming the actual precedence and pre-eminence of Christ.

ARGUMENT 5

GOD CREATIVE IN THE SECOND PERSON

16. *“Because in Him were created all things in the heavens and upon the earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or lordships or governments or authorities. All things were made by him and unto him.”*

18. *“Himself is the head of the body, the Church; who is the beginning, the first-begotten from the dead, in order that in all things he may be pre-eminent.*

19. *“And in him all fullness was pleased to dwell.*

20. *“And through himself to reconcile all things unto himself, making peace through the blood of his cross, through himself, whether things upon the earth or things in the heavens.”* We have wonderful and, to the unspiritual, paradoxical revelations in this prolix quotation. The transcendent intellect and liberal culture of Paul well adapted him to the instrumentality of the Holy Ghost in the evolution of these inscrutable mysteries. The singularity of the word heaven in your translation is due to the astronomical incredulity of the translators, as the Greek is uniformly in the plural number, corroborating astronomy in its revelation of an infinite plurality of worlds, constituting the celestial universe. Already one billion and one hundred and seventy millions have been discovered, which in all probability constitute but a fraction of God’s universe, as the telescope rests upon vast fields of nebulae, which are evidently systems of worlds so infinitely distant as to be unindividualizable by the most powerful telescopes. We are here informed that the Son of God, our wonderful Christ, who lay in the Bethlehem manger, and hung on the Cross of Calvary, created all of these stupendous worlds, as many of them are of tremendous magnitude. Saturn, our neighbor, is eleven hundred times as large as this world, and Jupiter, a still nearer neighbor, fourteen hundred times as large as the earth. Hence, after all, we find that our great world is but a speck floating in the ethereal firmament of God’s boundless universe. How glorious it will be when I get my immortal pinions to wing my flight from world to world, exploring with adoring admiration the stupendous works of God, and cultivating an acquaintance with the unfallen intelligences occupying millions of immortal worlds. Yet your Savior and mine, as here we have clearly revealed, created every one of these worlds. Not only did he create the multiplied millions of worlds, flaming suns, and wandering comets, which speed their flight through the void immense, but he created the human race, every angel that shines and shouts, the melodious seraphim, the adoring cherubim, the tall sons of God whose triumphant shout answered the anthem of the morning stars which sang together at creation’s birth, the mighty archangels and the heavenly

hierarchies who fill the responsible offices in the perfect organizations, principalities, and powers which characterize the heavenly universe. If the Son executed the stupendous work of all creation, where were the Father and the Holy Ghost? What did they do? You must bear in mind there are not three Gods, but one only. Hence, as we see in the next chapter, *“In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead.”* Hence, the Father and the Spirit are in the Son in creation, redemption, and administration. You must not differentiate the Divine persons indefinitely, lest you run into tritheistic heresy of three Gods instead of One, which is the first departure into pagan polytheism. This one God manifests himself to our finite senses, and accommodates himself to the plan of salvation in three distinct persons. How are other worlds besides ours affected by the mediatorial work of Christ? The revolt of this world from the Divine government was calculated to jostle the loyalty, and wield an alienating influence on the inhabitants of other worlds, so many as are still on probation like ours. Hence, all worlds as here revealed are reached by the mediatorial administration, culminating in the complete restoration of this world to its celestial loyalty and the perfect reconciliation of all other worlds, and their final and complete fortification against all liability to apostasy, thus in the grand and triumphant finale sweeping the last probability of defection forever from the celestial universe, and eternally establishing all worlds in their Divine loyalty. It is here said that our Savior is the beginning; *i.e.*, he existed alone in the universe before a solitary star had twinkled, or a sun had shot forth one cheering ray. Doubtless the work of creation is still in progress, omnipotence in his glorious majesty tossing other mighty worlds, and populating them with immortal intelligences. We also have it here stated that “Himself is the head of the body, the Church.” In ⁴⁰²Ephesians 1:23, we have the climacteric affirmation that the Church is the “fullness of him that filleth all things in all things.” O the unfathomable depths, the immeasurable altitudes, the infinitesimal latitudes and longitudes of the Divine benefactions in behalf of poor, fallen humanity! With adoring wonder we will sing the song of redemption forever! How paradoxical when we contemplate the ineffable glory of the unfallen angels, the inconceivable grandeur and sublimity, splendor and beauty, radiant from the immortal visage of cherubim, seraphim, archangel, and heavenly hierarchies, undimmed by a solitary cloud of sorrow through all the long tread of eternal ages! Lost in unutterable bewilderment while

contemplating these matchless splendors, glories, and triumphs characteristic of the mighty unfallen intelligences, who wing their flight through celestial ether! Is it possible that in the wonderful dispensations of grace and glory, the blood-washed, fire-baptized Church of the First-born is destined to stand upon the topmost pinnacle of the universe, and outshout Gabriel and Michael?

Lord, shine on us from heaven, and illuminate us with a glimpse of the glories awaiting the Bridehood of Christ! While all the angels, archangels, cherubim, seraphim, and heavenly hierarchies rank as servants of God, the Bride of Christ will certainly enjoy an honorary pre-eminence and a participation of royal favor utterly staggering the loftiest flights of human imagination. If the human intellect could only apprehend these peerless glories, there would be a universal stampede into the kingdom. But, alas! they are only spiritually discerned.

ARGUMENT 6

HOLINESS THE ULTIMATUM

22. “—*To present you holy and blameless and unrebukable in His presence.*” Here Paul reaches the culmination of his prologue, running into a transcendent climax on holiness, the end of the apostolic ministry. No wonder he reaches this conclusion after the wonderful affirmations on the Christhood, leading human thought up to the highest pinnacle of the created universe, amid the splendors and glories of cherubim and seraphim, to gaze upon the unparalleled beauties of the glorified bridehood. No wonder he reminds us of the absolute necessity that we be holy and blameless and irreproachable in his presence. The slipshod theology that would satisfy carnal people short of entire sanctification will never get in a million miles of the glorified bridehood. It is a wholesale delusion and caprice of the devil.

23. “*If ye abide, having been grounded in the faith, firm and immovable from the hope of the gospel which ye have heard.*” The holiness which Paul preaches is no superficial affair; it goes down through all the mud, sand, and slate, and builds its superstructure on the everlasting Rock, destined to

stand forever unshaken by cyclones, eternally towering, the admiration of angels and redeemed spirits. This experimental holiness gives you a permanent and abiding settlement in Christ, no longer the sport of the billow, the caprice of the storm. *“Preached in all creation, which is under heaven;”* not as E.V. reads, *“to every creature,”* as if the gospel had reached all people in Paul’s day; but it is for the whole world.

ARGUMENT 7

OUR AFFLICTIONS SUPPLEMENTARY TO THOSE OF CHRIST

24. *“Now I rejoice in sufferings in your behalf, and fill up the residue of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, in behalf of his body, which is the Church.”*

There is a wonderful significance in the atonement of Christ infinitely transcending all human comprehension. While “he trod the wine-press alone,” and there was none to help, yet the old dispensation is flooded with symbolic blood flowing from the dying animals four thousand years bleeding on Jewish altars. King Solomon slaughtered twenty-two thousand oxen and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep at the dedication of the temple, all these rivers of blood adumbrating the bleeding Christ on the cross. In the gospel dispensation the pagan emperors of Rome kept the blood of God’s saints flowing three hundred years, whom Romanists and Moslems soon succeeded in the bloody work of martyrdom, till history foots up the paradoxical hosts of two hundred millions of our Lord’s disciples who have followed him in his bloody track to Calvary. Besides, no tongue can tell the sufferings of God’s saints, who have never enjoyed the privilege of sealing their faith with their blood. While we all recognize our wonderful Savior as the Healer of our bodies, yet we read, ~~8:28~~ Romans 8:28,

“God worketh together for good all things to them that love God.”

Hence, we see that, in a manner to us wrapped in mystery, our wonderful Savior makes all the afflictions, troubles, and trials incident to this life a great blessing to his true people; not only to the sufferers, but to others indefinitely. *“All who will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution.”* There are gracious possibilities and susceptibilities of the

Divine glory revealed through afflictions, which are utterly out of our reach in health and prosperity. Let us remember it is a glorious privilege and a rich source of blessing to suffer in the kingdom and patience of our adorable Savior.

25. *“Whose minister I became according to the economy of God, which was given unto me for you to verify the Word of God.*

26. *“The mystery which was hidden from ages and from generations, and is now revealed to his saints.”* This wonderful mystery, whose revelation was postponed four thousand years, is none other than the incarnation of Christ, literally the climax of all mysteries; *i.e.*, the immaculate and incomprehensible Creator of the universe invested in mortal humanity. The heathen Greeks and Romans had inklings of the incarnation, and often their poets described the Roman gods as visiting the earth in human form. Christ incarnate was on the earth from the days of Eden, saving all who would give him a chance. But the incarnation, the culminating glory of the mediatorial intervention, was in wisdom and mercy postponed till the myths and fables of primitive ages gave way to reliable history, competent to appropriate that greatest of all events, and transmit it securely to all subsequent ages.

27. *“—Who is Christ in you the hope of glory.”* The Christ nature is the second Adam created in our hearts by the Holy Ghost in regeneration. This creation bringing the Christ nature into your heart is the only hope of glory. Hence, without the true regeneration of the Holy Spirit there is no hope beyond this fleeting life. O how radically defective is popular religion on regeneration! A Methodist bishop recently stated in presence of a large audience, “Not more than one Methodist in ten is this day living in the conscious favor of God.” What an awful defection! I remember well fifty years ago when none but class-meeting goers could be Methodists.

ARGUMENT 8

PERFECTION THE ULTIMATUM OF THE PAULINE MINISTRY

28. *“Whom we preach admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ.*

29. “*For which indeed I labor, agonizing according to his energy, which worketh in me with dynamite.*” How an immortal man destined quickly to leave his pulpit and stand before the judgment-bar, there to give an account of his ministry, can open his Bible and read these flaming declarations of inspired Paul, and then not only fail to preach Christian perfection, but have the effrontery to antagonize it, is a mystery to me indissoluble. I preached fifteen years before I received the experience of perfection, but I always preached it in the honesty of my heart, and the candor of my convictions, though like a blind dog in a meathouse, smelling the meat and jumping after it, but as apt to jump the wrong way as the right. We live amid the awful fulfillments of the latter-day prophecies, when “men will not endure sound doctrine.” John Wesley advised his people, when a preacher spoke against perfection, quietly to get up and leave. Now, sad to say, his so-called gospel sons speak against it with impunity. Wesley said, that any man who could take the vows of a Methodist preacher, and go back on Christian perfection, was fit for any other place than the pulpit.

No honest person can read the two verses at the head of this argument, and not see beyond the possibility of cavil that Paul and his comrades made Christian perfection the constant burden of their preaching and pastoral labor, doing everything in their power by faithful warning against everything out of harmony with perfection and importunately and indefatigably laboring night and day, teaching the people the Word of the Lord and the way of salvation, thus leading every person into the experience and doing their utmost not only to bring all into the experience, but to establish them there, sedulously fortifying them against apostasy. Hear him certify, “*for which (perfection) indeed I labor agonizing.*” Do you not know that agonize is the strongest word in the English language? It is of Greek origin, and means the awful fight of the gladiators in the Coliseum; where they met and fought for life, the contest ending only in the death of one or both of the gladiators. So Paul certifies that he is striving for the perfection of every person, just like the gladiator struggled with all the power of every nerve and muscle, fists and feet, teeth and toenails, for dear life. Paul says he was thus agonizing, “*according to His energy, which worketh in me with dynamite.*” Not only did Paul use all of his own power, physical, intellectual, and spiritual, but he lays under contribution all the Divine energy imparted to him by the Holy Ghost,

“working in him with dynamite.” When men of science discovered the wonderful mechanical power called dynamite a few years ago, they found no word in the English vocabulary competent to describe this greatest of all mechanical powers; consequently they went to the old Greek, and took the very word used so frequently by the Holy Ghost in the New Testament to reveal the power that defeats the devil, and explodes sin out of the human heart. Paul declares that the Divine energy wrought in him with dynamite, thus qualifying him for the climactic work of his ministry; *i.e.*, leading “every person” into perfection. Woe unto the man who dares to intrude into the sacred desk, and not only prove delinquent in preaching perfection, but even have the diabolical audacity to oppose it! Infinitely better for that man that he had never been born. The preacher’s hell is, of all, the most terrible. I have been preaching forty-four years in my humble way; if, in the end, hell should be my doom, I would gladly exchange places with the gambler or the saloonist; but, glory to God! I am a long way from hell, and running heavenward at racehorse speed. Yet I am on probation, liable to fall and make my bed in hell. God, help me to be true the little remnant of my pilgrimage!

The controversy on perfection in the modern pulpit is a confirmation of the awful infidelity which has flooded our Churches like avalanches from the bottomless pit. Perfection is the battle-cry of the apostolic ministry, the great salient fact culminating in every epistle, standing out so boldly as to sweep all candid controversy forever from the field. It is like the atonement of Christ, so patent that “he who runs may read.” Good Lord, have mercy on the preacher so blind as not to read Christian perfection from the Alpha to Omega of the New Testament, and pity the man so fraught with demoniacal delusion and Satanic effrontery as to try to explain it away!

CHAPTER 2

1. It had not been the privilege of the beloved apostle in person to meet the saints of Colosse and Laodicea, his ministerial comrades having enjoyed that honor.

2. *“In order that their hearts may be comforted, being cemented together in Divine love and in all the riches of the full assurance of understanding.”*

The Oriental cement is wonderful, utterly obliterating all seams and consolidating all the fragmentary rocks into a vast monolith. When I ascended to the roof of Simon the tanner in Joppa, that I might kneel on the roof where Peter was praying when the messengers of Cornelius arrived, I observed that the whole house was a solid limestone from the foundation to the roof, including the stone stairway on the outside, the cementation so perfect that I could not recognize a seam anywhere, impressing me as if the whole house had dropped solid from the hand of the Creator. Such is the mystical union of all the members constituting the bride of Christ, “cemented in Divine love.” This is all descriptive of the sanctified experience for which the “full assurance” is but another name. “In the perfect knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ.” The Greek word here, “knowledge,” E.V., is *epignosis*, from *gnosis*, knowledge, and *epi*, perfect. Hence, it means perfect knowledge of the mystery. We receive a knowledge of this wonderful mystery of salvation in regeneration; but it is not free from the liability of interruption ever and anon by the clouds of doubt and fear, prone to rise out of the old bogs of inbred sin still surviving in the deep interior of the spiritual realm. Entire sanctification must come to our relief, expurgating all inbred corruption. Then we will walk in cloudless day, delighted in the victories of experimental certainty.

3. *“In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”*

While knowledge is the wonderful insight into Divine truth, imparted by the infallible Revelator, wisdom is that blessed endowment of heavenly gumption which we constantly need to qualify us to make a correct application of this wonderful supernatural knowledge revealed in God’s Word, Spirit, and providence.

4. *“I say this, that no one may deceive you in a persuasive discourse.”* This is a solemn warning against Satan’s preachers, whose strong forte is soft palaver, winning words, and genial manners, pandering to the prejudices of all and antagonizing none, so soft and polite that butter will hardly melt in their mouths. An old bishop in his cabinet, surrounded by the elders, receives a petition from a metropolitan Church, “Please send us a round man, who will please all the people.” Pausing a moment, he observes, “There is but one round figure, and that is Zero; the other nine all having sharp points and corners. So I hope I have no such a man in this Conference as this petition calls for; *i.e.*, naught. Tell them I can not supply them, but they can pick such a one almost anywhere.”

ARGUMENT 9

SANCTIFIED AS CONVERTED

6. *“Therefore as you receive Christ Jesus the Lord, walk in him.”* You received him by faith and by faith alone when a poor sinner, and he converted your soul. Now do not plunge into the heresy of the popular pulpits, and conclude that you are to be sanctified by growth or by—*i.e.*, works—but remember that you are sanctified precisely as you are converted; *i.e.* by faith, and by faith alone.

7. *“Having been rooted and grounded in Him, and confirmed in the faith as you have been taught, abounding in thanksgiving.”* The Bible contains but a few primal truths, which are enforced by a vast diversity of imagery deduced by the Holy Ghost from every ramification of human life and employment and every department of the material world. The great truth revealed in the Bible is the compound problem of sin and its remedy. Here Paul gives us a grand double metaphor, illustrating entire sanctification by a tree and a house. The lateral roots of the tree represent the justified experience, while the long, powerful, trunkly tap-root penetrating far down into the deep interior of the earth, coiling around the eternal strata and holding the tree steadfast amid the storms of centuries, beautifully symbolizes entire sanctification. The tree without a tap-root flourishes amid calm and sunshine, but is ruthlessly torn out by the roots when caught in the Briarean arms of the cyclone. So the unsanctified Christian is

all right when skies are clear and seas are calm, but hopelessly wrecked in the raging storm. The other metaphor is that of the house whose foundation is laid deep down on the everlasting foundation of the earth, and solidly built up into a magnificent superstructure. The winds blow and the floods come down, but it stands unshaken like a rock in midocean, defiant of every storm. Conversion is a real experience, but it is superficial, neither descending down to the bottom rock nor ascending up to Pisgah's delectable summit.

8. *“See that no one shall be leading you through philosophy and empty delusion, according to the—commandment of men, according to learning of the world, and not according to Christ.”* Paul's prophetic eye is wide open in all of this epistle, contemplating in vivid panorama the delusive humanisms of the present day. The Bible is the only authority in this world, and the only guide to heaven. How few people are free! Spiritual and mental chains and slavery everywhere abound. Science and philosophy out of harmony with the Bible are all false.

9. *“Because in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.”* In the body of Christ on earth and in heaven actually dwelleth the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Hence, we have in our Jesus all of the divinity and humanity, all salvation, authority, and power in the whole universe, temporal and spiritual. O what a wonderful Savior we have! We need nothing else. In him we have everything pertaining to this life and that which is to come. Away with all humanisms! When they come, the devil always avails himself of the door ajar.

10. *“Ye are complete in him who is the head of all government and authority.”* Give up all of your human delusions, and take Jesus only for everything you need in time and eternity.

ARGUMENT 10

CIRCUMCISION, BAPTISM, AND SANCTIFICATION SYNONYMOUS

11. As physical birth in Judaism emblemized regeneration, circumcision, following quickly, typified sanctification. (⁵⁰⁰Deuteronomy 30:6.) Here we know it is spiritual, as it is “made without hands;”

12. As the baptism here mentioned is in grammatical and logical apposition to circumcision, and only separated by a comma, it is synonymous with it. The resurrection mentioned is by the Spirit, as it is by the same power that raised the body of Christ from the dead; *i.e.*, the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit. It is parallel with ⁵⁰⁰Romans 6:4-6, where the crucifixion of the old man, his burial into the death of Christ, and the resurrection of the new man, are all imputed to baptism. It is none other than the one baptism (⁴⁰⁰Ephesians 4:5) in the glorious plan of salvation. Is that baptism a burial? Not so revealed. We are buried by baptism; *i.e.*, the burial of the old body of sin is one of the effects of baptism, like the crucifixion; but the baptism is the agent, while the crucifixion and burial are the wonderful work wrought by the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

ARGUMENT 11

THE CROSS IS UNIVERSAL VICTORY

13. “—*Quickened along with him.*” “Quickened” is *zoopoiesis*, from *zoe*, life, and *poieo*, to create. Hence, to create life in the dead soul. Regeneration is a stupendous work—a *de novo* creation—as literal as the creation of a world. The great trouble with the Churches is at this point. All regenerated people long for holiness. Others do not want more, because they have never had a taste. A dead man does not want his dinner.

14. “*Having blotted out the handwriting which was against us in creeds, which was detrimental to us, and took it from the midst, nailing it to the cross.*” “Ordinances” in E. V., here does not mean Divine ordinances like baptism and the Eucharist, but human ordinances; *i.e.*, human creeds,

decrees, opinions, and authorities, which in all ages have enslaved the mind, conscience, soul, and spirit of generations. All these—*i.e.*, all human authorities—Christ nailed to the cross when he died to redeem us from chains of sin, bound on us by men or devils in all ages. Why don't you claim your perfect enfranchisement, and go to shouting, since Christ has snapped every chain and smashed every fetter, and made you free as an angel; *i.e.*, free to do everything good and nothing bad? When human authority corroborates the Divine, you incidentally obey; when there is a conflict, your perfect freedom puts you on God's side.

15. *“Having spoiled governments and authorities, he publicly exposed them, triumphing over them on it;”* *i.e.*, on the cross. Unutterable and transcendent victory! When Christ died on the cross he publicly exhibited to a gazing world the utter ruin of all human governments and authorities, political and ecclesiastical. This victory is to be verified in the fulfillment of the Father's promise, “I will make thine enemies thy footstool.” O the chains of slavery with which Babylon has bound the consciences and blinded the minds of earth's millions the last fifteen hundred years! How many people this day enjoy the wondrous freedom which Jesus purchased with his blood? He said, “My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Yet to this day the world is in bondage to the devil and the priest. Even the Protestant Churches en masse are in legal bondage, new institutions unheard of in the Bible being constantly invented to tighten the yoke and add to the burden, prejudicing the world against the very name of religion.

ARGUMENT 12

VISIBLE RELIGIONS: CARNAL AND COUNTERFEIT

16. *“Let no one judge you in meat or in drink, or in participation of a feast, or of the new moon or of Sabbaths.”* The old law of restriction on meats was nailed to the cross, universal liberty peculiar to the gospel dispensation, the typical significations of “clean” and “unclean” superseded in the spiritual dispensation of entire sanctification; meanwhile we are to live hygienically and harmonically with the endless diversity of variant constitutions and climates. On the drink problem we should all be Nazarites unto the Lord, as they were the holiness people of the old

dispensation, and most radical teetotalers relative to all intoxicants. Coffee and tea are admissible under hygienical restrictions. I much enjoy the privilege of abstinence from all nervines. As to festivals, be sure that you follow the Lord. Do not hold them in the house of God. (⁴⁶¹²1 Corinthians 11:22.) “Sabbaths,” in the original, is in the plural number, having prophetic reference doubtless to the controversy now prevailing on that subject. In ⁴⁸⁸¹Matthew 18:1, the Greek reads, “At the dawn toward the first of the Sabbaths,” confirming the conclusion that both days were recognized at the time of the writing; *i.e.*, the Jewish Sabbath, which was the last day of the week, and the Christian Sabbath; the first day of the week, so memorialized by our Lord’s resurrection as ever afterward to be denominated the Lord’s day. The Christian Church began all Jews, in a century eliminating the Jewish element and becoming Gentiles. Of course the apostles and pentecostal converts kept the Jewish Sabbath as well as the Lord’s day, till the Jewish element evanesced after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, A.D. 73. There are fundamental reasons arising out of the genius of the gracious economy, which justify the change from the last to the first day. The law says, “Work first, and then rest,” and if you do not finish your work, you shall not rest. Hence, the pertinency of the last day under the law dispensation. The gospel says, “Rest first, and then you will be in good fix to do your work,” as a well rested man will do about ten times as much work as a tired man. Besides, we have clear and positive proof of the change, and the observance of the first day by the primitive Christians. The bloody persecution inaugurated by Nero, in which Paul lost his head and Peter was crucified, lasted three hundred years, during which martyrs’ blood flowed like rivers. When a student in college, I read the Roman historians, Sallust, Pliny, and Seutonius, who lived and wrote during those bloody centuries. As they were heathens, having no sympathy with Christianity, they are certainly impartial witnesses to the current events of the times. In their simplicity and candor they chronicle their historic sketches of the Christians, describing them as a strange, bigoted, fanatical sect, the followers of one Jesus, who was crucified under the reign of Tiberius and the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate at Jerusalem, whom they certify to have risen from the dead, and they worship him as a God, though the good emperors had done their utmost to reconcile these fanatical people, even proposing to confer the apotheosis upon Jesus Christ, thus adopting him as one of their own gods,

to be worshipped along with Jupiter, Apollo, Mercury, Venus, Minerva, and Diana. But these incorrigible fanatics treat with utter contempt all of the good old Roman gods, obstinately refusing to worship any god except Jesus Christ. In their simplicity they described the persistent efforts of the emperors to correct and loyalize this disturbing element in the empire. Then they proceed to describe the arraignment, trial, and martyrdom of the Christians. When persons were suspected of being Christians, they were arrested and arraigned before a civil magistrate. Then they asked them the question, “*Dominicum servasti?*” “Have you kept the Lord’s day?” The answer came promptly, “*Christianus sum,*” “I am a Christian,” “*Intermittere non possum,*” “I am not able to omit it.” This is positive and unequivocal proof that they kept the first day of the week, which, from the apostles, was called the Lord’s day. If Saturday had been the day, they would have asked them, “*Sabbaticum servasti,*” “Have you kept the Sabbath day?” The very fact that they never asked them if they had kept the Sabbath day, but always, “Have you kept the Lord’s day?” is unequivocal proof that they kept the first day of the week. While we have this clear and unequivocal assurance of the change from the seventh to the first day, simultaneously with the change from the Jewish to the Christian dispensation, we would subjoin,

“If you have any conscientious scruples that you ought to keep Saturday as a holy Sabbath, we exhort you to satisfy those convictions in the observance of that day. In that case, you will keep both days, as you must keep Sunday, conservatively of the conscience of Christendom.” (~~1~~ 1 Corinthians 8:12.)

Thus you will keep both days, the former pursuant to your own conscience and the latter the conscience of the Lord’s people. An easy way to settle the whole matter, and sweep controversy from the field, is for you to get sanctified wholly, and walk with Jesus in the beauty of holiness. Then you will have seven Sabbaths in the week, instead of one. The history of the apostolic Church during the early centuries utterly upsets the allegation that the Emperor Constantine, who was not converted till the fourth century, made the change from the seventh to the first day; while the fiction that the popes did it is still more at random, as there never was a pope till the seventh century. Doubtless, Constantine and the popes, like all other ecclesiastical leaders, frequently sent out

edicts exhorting the people to keep the Christian Sabbath. There is no more reason why we should Judaize on the Sabbath dogma than that we should go back to the Jewish dispensation on other things. God wants holy hearts. In that case, all days will be holy. It is the wildest fanaticism to magnify holy days, instead of holy hearts.

17. “*Which things are a shadow of the things to come.*” These Old Testament institutions all symbolize the glorious spiritual experiences of the pentecostal dispensation. Sabbath is a Hebrew word, and means rest. It symbolizes the perfect repose of the sanctified soul in Jesus. It is an awful mistake to keep the eye always on the shadow and miss the substance, like Aesop’s dog in the fable, walking through the creek with a piece of meat in his mouth, and, seeing his shadow in the water, thinking it was another dog carrying a piece of meat, leaped at the shadow, dropping his meat to get the other, and, losing all, came out of the water meatless and hungry. If you have perfect rest in Jesus, you have an everlasting Sabbath in your soul. If you have not got the soul-Sabbath, the devil will get after all of your zeal about days.

“*But the body is of Christ*”— that is the thing for you to settle—is that you are a *bona fide* member of the New Testament Church; *i.e.*, the Divine Ecclesia, who, responsive to the call of the Holy Ghost, have come out of the world, and separated themselves unto God. This blood-washed Church of the First-born is called the body of Christ. If you are saved and sanctified, and thus a *bona fide* member of the body of Christ, the day problem, along with all other symbolisms, will take care of itself.

18. “*Let no one, pursuant to his own will, rob you of your crown in humiliation and worship of the angels.*” Then the Church, which had been kept pure by martyr blood and fire three hundred years, during which she pushed her conquest to the ends of the earth, and soon would have prepared the world for her Lord’s return, received the sudden uplift into power and riches through the conversion of Constantine, the Roman Emperor, she soon plunged headlong into the darkness and secularism of Roman Catholicism, and set up the worship of angels, to which Paul alludes: “*Thrusting in those things which he has seen, being vainly puffed by the mind of his depravity.*” Here we see a sweeping condemnation against all visible religions as consequently carnal, the true being invisible

and spiritual. Not a solitary apostle ever preached in a church edifice, the Jews and pagans throughout the world making a great pomp and show with fine buildings. One hundred and fifty years rolled away before the Christians erected a house of worship. I sometimes feel that they made a mistake in ever building a house, and localizing the worship of God. Solomon's temple signified the sanctified heart. Jesus certifies that neither at Jerusalem nor in Samaria is the true worship, but in the humble, sanctified heart. The first trend into apostasy and idolatry is always through a materialistic religion. Christendom is this day flooded with the idolatry of materialism, spirituality being more and more superseded by materiality, as the Churches, like Judaism and Romanism, go deeper into apostasy. All the paganistic Churches of the present day, with a thousand millions of souls, are the apostasy of the patriarchal dispensation; Jews and Mohammedans, two hundred and fifty millions; of the modern Roman Catholics two hundred and sixty millions; while one hundred and fifty millions of Protestants are following them at racehorse speed on the downward way to idolatry and diabolism. They all traveled the same way, originally deflecting from a purely spiritual and invisible into material and visible forms, ceremonies, temples, shrines, musical instruments, etc.

19. “*Not holding the head.*” Here the prophetic eye of Paul sees a great man at the head of the Church, leading the people in the pompous rites and ceremonies of a visible worship, with fine house, splendid choir, pipe-organ, and Official Board, and utterly destitute of salvation. “Not holding the head;” *i.e.*, has no connection with Christ, and utterly ignorant of his saving power. Ecclesiastical leaders on this line are too many to be counted. Their name is legion. O how the present age is flooded with the fulfillment of these wonderful latter-day prophecies, which flashed continually from Paul's inspired pen! How deplorable to see myriads of preachers blindly and ignorantly fulfilling these prophecies! “*From which the whole body, through joints and ligaments supplied and cemented together, increaseth the increase of God.*” Here we have a beautiful affirmation of the universal oneness of the Lord's Church. There is no harmony in Satan's kingdom. The miseries of the damned are constantly augmented and awfully intensified by the universal disharmony, perturbation, and bitter conflicts in hell. It is equally true on earth; war, bloodshed, strife, and disharmony universally characterize the kingdom of

Satan. The world is belted with sectarian Churches, rivaling each other in visible pomp and pageantry, and material power and aggrandizement, amid universal rivalry, competition, and disharmony; while the Church of God is an invisible spiritual entity, consisting of blood-washed souls dispersed in all the earth and millions in heaven, all not only perfectly harmonious but identical in spirit, each individual identified with Christ as the branch in the vine, and all receiving the same life-blood flowing out from the heart of Jesus. Union there can never be, unless that we be one in Jesus,—one as he is one in God, in spirit, and in disposition. This the Holy Scriptures teach. It is plain without an exposition.

20. *“If you are dead along with Christ from the institutions of the world, why are you dogmatized as living in the world?”* There is no reference here to Church ordinances, as you might conclude from E.V., but to human institutions indiscriminately and independently of Divine authority. So fast as Churches lose the Holy Spirit and backslide, they always depart from New Testament simplicity, and go off into human institutions, laying heavy burdens on the people, and depending on their own works instead of the Holy Ghost. Jesus came to break all of these yokes off our necks, and make us free as angels. For this he died, nailing all human creeds, institutions, and authorities to the cross. How inconsistent for people whom God has made free, to still live encumbered by these human burdens! If you are a Christian, you have come out of the world. Then, why do you live like the people of the world, still wearing the yokes of worldly people? How few people, who claim to be the Lord’s, really enjoy the glorious freedom which Jesus purchased on the cross?

21. *“Touch not, taste not, handle not.”* What is here referred to under this sweeping prohibition? Why, all human institutions, inventions, customs, and laws, laying on you a thousand heavy burdens. You have come out of the world. Then how inconsistent that you be enslaved, contaminated, and encumbered like people of the world!

22. *“All which are for destruction by the use, according to the commandments and teachings of men.”* Every age has had its methods, institutions, and customs, by which the people were burdened and enslaved. They have all vanished away with the revolving centuries, leaving not a trace. Our life in Christ is invisible, spiritual, and immortal. Is

it possible we can not rise above transitory things, and even here live the life of God and eternity, remembering that all these human fashions, customs, laws, and usages perish with the fleeting moment?

23. *“Whatsoever things are indeed having a manifestation of wisdom in will worship, humiliation, and deprivation of the body, are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh.”* The heathen in all ages have tortured the body to get rid of sin. The Roman Catholics have long preached the doctrine of remedial suffering in this life and in purgatory. The apostatizing Protestant Churches are fast going away in the track of their predecessors, losing sight of the great Bible truth of justification and sanctification by the free grace of God in Christ, received and appropriated by faith alone. It takes a preacher on Sunday morning nearly as long to announce his appointments as to preach his little sermonette. These appointments are a concatenation of work for all of his members every day, in cooperation with a great catalogue of human institutions, which give no relief to the heart aching for purity, and to the immortal soul longing for victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil. The week is spent in toil and drudgery, and no victory for Jesus. A little filthy lucre is gathered up, which is of no value, for our God is infinitely rich. John Wesley was a great man for institutions, establishing the class meeting, for the conversion of penitents; the holiness band, for the sanctification of Christians; and the select societies, for the establishment of the sanctified; all these being strictly the institutions of the Holy Ghost. Let us still have them, instead of wearing ourselves out in “will worship;” *i.e.*, worshipping the will of preachers and leaders, and perhaps our own will, instead of worshipping the sweet will of God. In a Western town I met a young man from Kentucky, who, when a boy, had been converted in my meeting. Fearing that he was on a downward trend spiritually, I requested his pastor to look after him. “Yes, that I will; I must hunt up some work for Joe to do.” The poor fellow was about to starve to death. He needed a Benjamin’s mess, instead of a job. But that is the way the blind pastors are doing. They starve and work their members to death. Paul says that “all this is of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.”

You may torture, toil, pay your money, and suffer bodily privation till the judgment-day, and find old Adam in you big as a rhinoceros, gripping you by the throat and dragging you into hell. Salvation does not come in this way. It is not by works, but by faith. Stay at the feet of Jesus till you get saved to the uttermost, and filled with the Holy Ghost. Then go and work for God and souls, with victory in your heart and heaven in your life.

CHAPTER 3

ARGUMENT 13

THE TRUE CHURCH INVISIBLE TILL OUR LORD'S RETURN

1. *“If therefore you have been resurrected with Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is sitting on the right hand of God.*
2. *“Think about the things above, not things on the earth. For you are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”*
4. *“When Christ, your life, may appear, then you shall also appear with him in glory.”*

While the Head walked the earth visible to mortal eyes, then the Church of Christ was visible also. When the glorified Head flew up to heaven from Mt. Olivet, thus becoming invisible, the body became invisible also, and will so remain till our descending King shall ride down on the throne of his glory, and call his saints to meet him in the air. Materialistic religion in all ages has been quarreling over the identity of the Church of Christ. I was reared in a country where ignorance abounded in pulpit and pew, and sectarian war was the order of the day. If an insinuation was cast against his creed, the spunky pastor announced a time for a doctrinal sermon. We all went and enjoyed two solid hours on his creed. No time for the Bible that day. Meanwhile his necessary entrenchment on his neighbor's creed arouses him to the defense. And so the creedistic war is renewed on all sides, every pastor laboring assiduously amid perspiration and hoarseness to prove that his Church is the genuine apostolical succession, to the exclusion of all others, simultaneously exhorting the people to teach' the heresies, and come and join the *bona fide* Church of Christ. I, with all the balance, preachers included, was at that time utterly ignorant that each champion, by his stalwart effort, was actually proving the very opposite of his enterprise; *i.e.*, confirming to all intelligent Bible readers that his visible organization is not the Church of Christ, and that his clamorous, excited people, so enthusiastically vociferating their claims to the true

apostolic succession, are not the Church of Christ, which is composed of the people, who are “dead,” and their life “hid with Christ in God,” and will never be recognized by mortal eyes till Christ shall appear. Then his true saints will enter into the transfigured glory of their descending Lord, and fly up to meet him in the air. If you want to know whether you are a member of the true Church of Christ, you must settle it on the route you are traveling. Are you really dead? Is your pride dead? Is your lust dead? Is your temper dead? Is your love of money dead? Are you really dead to the world? If so, you are a full-fledged member of the gospel Church, regardless of modes, rights, and cognomens.

ARGUMENT 14

GOD’S METHOD WITH SIN, EXTERMINATION

5. “*Therefore kill your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, passion, covetousness, which is idolatry.*” Mortify, E.V.—which theologians have endeavored to construe, gradualistic—is *nekrosate*, from *nekros*, a corpse. Hence, the word here used by the Holy Ghost is the strongest possible expression for “kill.” It literally means “kill instantaneously,” because the Greek verb is in the aorist tense, which means a sudden momentary action. God, in his providence, put that instantaneous tense in the Greek language (which is not used in English), to reveal to the world his wonderful work in the destruction of sin and the salvation of the soul. Here we are commanded to kill the evil surviving in our hearts suddenly as you could fire a revolver. Can I thus instantly slay the man of sin in my own heart The Bible is pre-eminent for common sense. Charles Wesley says, “How can I cleanse my hands or my heart but by believing Thee. O Lord!” These variations in phraseology and attitude wonderfully relieve the Bible of monotony. Here we have especial prominence given to human agency. While it is impossible for me to kill old Adam in my heart, either suddenly or gradually, I can, in the twinkling of an eye, turn him over to omnipotent Adam the Second, who, pursuant to my faith, will kill him before I can open my eye to see him fall. So the way you kill all the evil in your heart is simply to trust for it.

7. *“In which you also at one time walked about when you lived in them.”*

This verse shows that Paul is not commanding sinners to “kill” all the evil tempers surviving in them, but Christians, as he here alludes to their former lives when they once lived under the dominion of these evil tempers. They are not there now. Their service to these evil tempers is a matter of the by-gones. Yet they have them on hand, though in a subjugated state, an everlasting annoyance till exterminated. Some holiness people teach only the suppression, and not the extermination of sin. That is simply the Bible standard of regeneration, while sanctification here, and in hundreds of other plain passages, is sin’s extermination.

8. *“Now you also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, evil speaking, disgraceful talk out of your mouth.”* The Greek here is the same aorist tense, imperative mood, setting forth the instantaneous and utter removal of these hereditary evils. Hence, it is simply another expression parallel with verse five for the extermination and complete elimination of these evil tempers.

9. *“Lie not one to another, having put off the old man along with his habit;*

10. *“And having put on the new man, who is renewed in perfect knowledge, according to the image of him who created him.”* These verses speak of the old man eliminated suddenly and completely, and the new man instantaneously put on, involving the reception of the Divine image lost in the fall. In this paragraph we have a beautiful variety of expression, all fulminating instantaneous death to the man of sin, surviving in the heart of the regenerate. While we have this variety of expression, in two instances ordering us to kill and utterly remove the members of old Adam—*i.e.*, our evil tempers—in two other instances the man himself is specified. Of course, these statements are substantially synonymous. When you kill all the members, you kill the man, *“et vice versa.”* When old Adam dies, all is over.

ARGUMENT 15

BROTHERHOOD OF THE SAINTS

11. What a contrast the religion of Jesus, reaching its Briarean arms around the world, gathering the Caucasian, the Mongolian, the Ethiopian, the Jew, the Mohammedan, the Buddhist, the Brahmin, the Romanist, and all the infinitely diversified Protestant sects into one universal brotherhood, filling the globe with Christian philanthropy, flooding the nations with holy benefactions, and making the plains resound and the mountains reverberate the praises of God! How decisive the contrast with the poor selfish sectarian religions filling the world with jargon, logomachy, and confusion! God's ways are always right and successful. You see this wonderful eleventh verse concludes the paragraph on sin's extermination. All of the sects let old Adam live. If they did not, then sectarian ecclesiasticisms would collapse forever, and perfect love inundate them in a sea of glory. The metropolitan pulpits must defend the man of sin, and make room for him, or carnal power is at an end.

12. We are nominated in conversion, and elected in sanctification. Sin goes out to make room for grace. Hence, following this wonderful paragraph on sin's extermination (verses 5-11) we have election and perfect love, and the beautiful graces of goodness, humility, meekness, and long suffering, constituting the substratum of perfect love's gorgeous temple.

13. Delighting to forgive all wrongs. So you wish somebody would treat you like a dog, so you will have a chance at the amiable blessing of forgiveness. Two neighbors living on adjoining lots fell out, quarreled, and fought, utterly stopping all comers and goers till the grass grew green over the path. One of them happens at a glorious revival, gets a knockdown conviction, rolls and cries at the mourner's bench till two o'clock, and passes gloriously into life. "I can not go to bed for thinking of my neighbor; but must go to see him." Arriving at four in the morning, he knocks at the door. "Who is that?" "It is Bill Johnson." "Go away, you scoundrel, or I will kill you!" "But I want to tell you how I love you, and how mean I have treated you. O, do please forgive me for treating you so mean." "Why, Bill, what is the matter with you?" "Glory to God! I got

religion tonight, and won't you please forgive me?" The door is thrown wide open. "O Bill, I have been a heap meaner to you than you have to me. If they get religion after that sort, I must go to that meeting, too; for I am the meanest man in the world." So he goes, gets gloriously converted, and they live like David and Jonathan.

14. *"In all of these things, Divine love, which is the bond of perfection."* The crucifixion of old Adam is negative sanctification. Then perfect love fills the vacuum, and inundates the soul, making your life a constant sunshine, and keeping old Adam out forever; for he can only live in the jungles of depravity, all of which have been transformed into fruitfulness and added to Immanuel's lands.

15. In justification you have peace with God, but in sanctification the peace of God. Here it says "the peace of Christ." Christ never had the peace of pardon, as he never had any sins to be pardoned. But he always had the peace of purity. as he always had a pure heart. Hence, you must get sanctified wholly, if you would have the peace of Christ; *i.e.*, the peace of God. You see this follows that paragraph on sin's extermination. If you will quit believing human creeds, written and oral, and believe the Bible, giving all your sins and all your doubts to the devil, where they belong, you learn the truth of sin's destruction. So long as you believe unsanctified preachers, who seek to bring the standard down to their level, you will never enjoy the unutterably sweet experience of entire sanctification, as your attainment will never rise above your faith; but, glory to God it will come up to it.

16. *"Let the Word of Christ dwell abundantly in your hearts, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another."* O what a blessing to us and to others to have the Word of Christ dwelling richly in us! It is our duty to be well posted in the Word of God, and freely give others the full benefit of our knowledge, not only teaching one another, but admonishing either the other, freely correcting the faults we see in one another in perfect love, enlightened by the Holy Ghost in the fear of God. O what a blessing God will thus make us to one another! Psalms, hymns, spiritual songs; what a contrast this with the old pipe-organ, the senseless preludes, interludes, and postludes, with the jargon of Satan's choir squealing out an operatic song! God, help us to get back to the New Testament!

17. We are to do “everything in the name of the of Jesus.” Can you follow the senseless, extravagant fashions, wear jewelry, put on needless ornamentation in His name? Can you attend the theater and horserace in His name, taking him with you? Can you prevail on him to go with you to sociables, card parties, and festivals?

ARGUMENT 16

DOMESTIC GOVERNMENT

18. “*Wives, submit to your husbands, as it becometh you in the Lord.*” Out of God’s will, you are not to obey; but take a thrashing, if he gives it, for Jesus’ sake.

The whole problem of family government is to be in the Lord. When the commandment is out of harmony with the Word, Spirit, and providence of God, you are not to obey, but meekly suffer abuse and even flagellation for Christ’s sake, esteeming it a great blessing to endure contumely, insult, and persecution in Jesus’ name.

19. “*Ye husbands, love your wives with Divine love, and be not bitter toward them.*” No sinner can obey this commandment. Hence, God requires every man to get religion before he takes a wife. It is the privilege of every sinner to receive a wife; but God’s order is to get converted first, as no man can love his wife with Divine love until the Holy Ghost pours it out in his heart. Hence, all domestic trouble arises from the deficiency of grace in the heart.

20. “*Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing in the Lord.*” Here we see that filial obedience, like that of the wife, is to be in the Lord. If your parents order you to commit sin, disobedience, for Christ’s sake, becomes your duty, never resisting, but patiently suffering for Christ’s sake.

21. “*Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, lest they may be discouraged.*” Your little children have inherited evil tempers from you, which are little rattlesnakes in them, feeding and thriving on fret, humor, teasing, and all sorts of provocation. So be cheerful and kind, yet positive

and firm with your little ones, doing nothing to fret, worry, or arouse their evil tempers. Parents vainly think they can castigate the evil tempers out of their children. It is a great mistake; they will only feed them, and develop a rapid growth. The true plan is by cheerfulness, love, kindness, and firmness to avoid everything that would “provoke them to wrath,” and thus bear with them patiently till Jesus comes along with the sword of the Spirit, and cuts off every snake-head. When they get sanctified wholly, they will have no evil tempers to provoke.

22. *“Slaves, obey your masters according to the flesh in all things, not with eye service as men pleasers, but in purity of heart fearing the Lord.”* This beautiful law of perfect love is to establish mutual brotherhood, even between the master and slave; the former with his eye on the great white throne where his Master sits; and the latter with his eye on Jesus, oblivious of his servitude to an earthly master, but delighted with his most servile and menial duties, which he cheerfully and patiently performs for Christ’s sake, transported with rapture night and day, dreaming that he serves the Lord alone. In this way many a servant wins souls for his Master, to shine like stars in his crown through all eternity. Years ago, in time of slavery, an old Southern bishop related an incident in a Kentucky Conference, which I here subjoin illustratively:

A very wealthy Southern planter, Owing several hundred slaves, and, of course, by his money power ruling the Church of which he was a member, was so fond of his pastor’s company, that he carried him about with him to fashionable watering-places and other pleasure resorts, cheerfully pouring out his money, living like kings, delighted with the funny jokes and entertaining conversation of the cultured clergyman, who thought he was doing a land-office business in his pastorate, so perfectly satisfying the man who held his circuit by the foretop. Eventually, that awful scourge of the Southland takes hold of the millionaire. He burns as in a furnace, despite all medical aid, which, far and wide, from the beginning has been laid under contribution for the arrest of the destroyer and the recover of the valuable man. A council is held early in the morning of the ninth day. All hope having evanesced, the physicians mutually agree to notify him that his end is nigh. The wife, awfully excited, orders a servant to run for the preacher. The suffering husband countermands: “No, wife; don’t send for him, for I don’t want to see him. While I lived in pleasure I

enjoyed his company; but now that I have to die, I don't want to see him." "Well," says the wife, "whom shall I send for?" "Call in Tom [he was the slave who drove his carriage]; I have often heard him praying and shouting about the barnyard. I do believe he has got the true religion." In a moment Tom tips his hat at the door. "Massa, what do you want?" "Tom, I have to die, and I want the kind of religion you have got." "Massa, you can have it; the Lord has plenty of it." "Pray for me, Tom." Down on his knees goes the sable Ethiopian, and O how he prays for his dear old master! It seems that the roof will certainly fly off to let heaven drop down. Tom prays, and his master prays. Tom exhorts and shouts, and, while the hours go by, the throne of grace is terribly besieged. Before the sun goes down, the dying man says, "Come here, Tom, and let me hug you; you are the prettiest man I ever saw. Glory to God! I am not afraid to die!"

CHAPTER 4

ARGUMENT 17

TREATMENT OF THE WORLD

1,2. *“Persevere in prayer, watching in the same with thanksgiving.”*

Constancy in the spirit of prayer is an infallible fortification against all surprises and sudden assaults of the enemy.

3,4. We do not pray enough. We should pray for the Lord’s true people, pressing his war against Satan in all the earth, incessantly and importunately.

5. *“Walk about in wisdom toward outsiders, buying in the opportunity.”*

6. *“Let your word be always in grace, seasoned with salt, to know how it behooveth us to answer each one.”* The salt in the ocean is the savor of the physical world. If the oceanic waters were fresh, they would stagnate, generate malaria in so vast quantities as to inundate the continents with pestilential atmosphere, so fraught with malarial poison as to kill every human being and every air-breathing animal on the face of the whole earth, and literally depopulate the globe, speedily bringing an end to the world, whitening all lands with the bones of dead animals, and turning the world into a graveyard. O how powerful the metaphor, “Ye are the salt of the earth!” From these statements of Paul and Jesus we see the wholesale putrefaction of the spiritual world. Since the saints are the spiritual salt and the hope of earth’s dying millions, we should do our best to salt as many souls as possible,” “buying in the opportunity;” *i.e.*, seizing every fleeting moment to scatter the salt to the ends of the earth, not wasting it in the mud, but bringing it in contact with never dying souls.

7-9. This letter, along with that to the Ephesians and Philemon, was carried by Tychicus and Onesimus, who enjoyed the honor of visiting those Churches, bearing the news from Paul, and comforting their hearts.

10. Aristarchus, Paul's Asiatic comrade, sticks to him during his Roman imprisonment, a faithful helper in his gospel work. Here Paul also commends to them Mark, a nephew of Barnabas, exhorting them to receive him all right when he comes to them. This is a confirmation that Paul's controversy with Barnabas over Mark, when they started out on their second great evangelistic tour among the Gentiles, the latter desiring to take his nephew with them, and the former dissenting, because he had not persevered with them to the end of the first tour, but gotten tired and returned to Jerusalem, was purely for the glory of God, and in perfect harmony with the sanctified experience. As here, we see Paul is all right toward Mark, and highly recommending him to the Churches.

11. "*Jesus called Justus.*" Jesus being the Greek for Joshua, a familiar patriarchal name among the Jews, was in common use till the days of our Savior, when it was discontinued in view of its sanctity.

ARGUMENT 18

EPAPHRAS DEFINES PERFECTION

12. "*Epaphras, who is from you, salutes you.*" Epaphras was one of Paul's juvenile evangelists, who had in his peregrination visited the Colossian saints, and preached for them. He avails himself of this opportunity to salute them through the pen of Paul's amanuensis. "Slave of Jesus Christ." *Doulos* means slave, and *oiketes*, hired servant. They are both translated servant in E. V., *Doulos*, slave, being invariably used for the apostles and saints, who thus constantly subscribe themselves the slaves of God; tacitly referring to the Old Testament institution, in which all went free at jubilee, except those who preferred to abide as love slaves forever, who must have their ears bored and be nailed to the doorpost. All sinners are Satan's slaves. All sanctified people are God's love slaves, delighted in perfect submission and joyful obedience for pure love alone; while the unsanctified Christians are hired servants in the kingdom of God; e.g., preachers and others working for salary. The holiness evangelist blows the jubilee trumpet, proclaiming a new departure. The slaves must either go free; *i.e.*, go back to the devil, who will allow them the full freedom of a sinful life—*i.e.*, they backslide under the preaching of entire sanctification,

because they reject the call of the Holy Ghost, their sanctifier—or they must come up to the doorpost, have their ears bored, and abide with their Master forever; *i.e.*, old Adam must be nailed to the cross, bleed and die, thus consummating the experience of entire sanctification, which makes you God’s love slave for time and eternity; perfectly free from every care, as the slave has not the slightest concern as to food, clothing, lodging, medical attention when sick, nor anything else. All this and a thousand more interests, of which he has never dreamed, devolve on his master. Hence, if the master is sufficiently able and appreciative, the slave is the happiest being in the world. Glory to God! My Master owns the universe, and loves me enough to die for me. Hence, I would rather be his slave than the incumbent of Alexander’s throne.

“Always agonizing for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect, truly having been fully carried away in all the will of God, and more so now than ever.” It is a signal blessing to have a clear lexical definition given to the great, salient words of God’s revealed will. Here it is our privilege, in the ministry of Paul’s boy preacher, Epaphras, to have a straight, clear, and infallible definition of that wonderful word, “perfection,” so

climacteric in the Scriptures, and utterly invisible in the plan of salvation. Now, what is that definition, as the E.V. is deficient in this passage?

“Truly having been fully carried away in the whole will of God, and more so now than ever.” What a wonderful, copious, glorious, beautiful, sublime, and charming definition of Christian perfection! Be sure you verify it. The last clause of this definition, “more so now than ever,” is a circumlocution to bring the full meaning of the Greek idiom, expository of the perfect tense. This tense is defined in your grammars as revealing an action complete in past time, developing a state which continues down to the present. While this definition appertains both to the Greek and English, in the latter the emphasis is laid on the past, whereas in the former it is on the present. This idiomatic truth peculiar to the Greek grammar, justifies and authenticates the subjoined circumlocution, “Better now than ever.” Now, I hope you will commit to memory, and never forget this inspired definition of Christian perfection, *“Truly having been fully carried away in all the will of God, and more so now than ever.”* This love-inspired definition will personally fortify you against wreckage,

simultaneously making you a tower of strength in the leadership and establishment of others. God help you to utilize this fortunate definition!

13,14. Luke, the amanuensis, along with Epaphras and others, sends fraternal greetings. Demas is here catalogued with the prominent salutatory saints; though sad to say he afterward backslid, and goes out under a cloud.

15. Nymphas and other brethren in Laodicea and the Church in their house (as the Christian in the apostolic age had no church edifice) also received Christian greetings.

16. This verse enjoins the reading of this epistle in the Church of the Laodiceans, which was near; also that the Laodicean epistle should be read in the Church at Colosse. We are sorry the epistle of Paul to the Laodiceans was lost. It may yet be found, as the explorations in the Bible lands are this day moving vigorously. When I was at Jerusalem in 1895, Dr. Bliss was excavating in Mt. Zion without the walls, down toward the Valley of Hinnom. The great manuscript of Tischendorf, which I hold in my hand, containing the whole New Testament, flooding the world with light on the inspired text, lay hidden in the convent of St. Catharine, on Mt. Sinai, until 1859. So it is not too late for the Laodicean epistle yet to come to light.

17. *“Say to Archippus: See to the ministry which you received in the Lord, that you fill it.”* Lord, send this admonition, with sledgehammer conviction, to every one whom the Lord has commissioned to preach the living Word!

18. The feebleness of Paul’s eyes disqualified him for his own writing. So, as in case of Luke’s Gospel, Acts of the Apostles, and the Pauline epistles, he dictated them to Luke, his faithful companion and noble amanuensis. But we see he gives his autograph with his own hand. After Paul’s decapitation, Luke was hung on an olive-tree in Greece, thus, like his apostolical comrades, receiving a martyr’s crown.

APOLOGUE

The Blessed Holy Spirit, who gave to Paul this wonderful epistle, has illuminated the foregoing expositions. Doubtless the reader has run on many surprises perusing these pages, arising from the fact that portions of this letter are very difficult to translate, and doubtless during the intervening ages suffered much in the hands of transcribers. Again, this letter is eminently prophetic. Looking down into the coming centuries, the inspired eye of Paul saw the awful apostasy, with concomitant abuses and perversions, and sounded the alarm which has been ringing down the revolving ages.