

Righteous One Who died on the cross as a personal Saviour Who is now raised from the dead, and seated in glory with all His atoning work accepted before God, and Who is able to "guard that which is committed unto him against that day." On the cross Christ judged all sin and secured a perfect salvation for all who believe. So in heaven He saves those who have believed from every challenge of a broken law. Christ is "made unto us righteousness." It is rest to a sin-conscious soul to know that there is a perfect righteousness for him in Christ. Such knowledge cannot be gained apart from the illuminating work of the Spirit.

OF JUDGMENT, "because the prince of this world is judged." "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John xii. 31). "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Col. ii. 13-15).

The Spirit thus also enlightens the darkened mind concerning the complete and sufficient judgment of all sin in the cross of Christ. This judgment not only met all possible condemnation for in (Isa. liii. 4-6; Rom. vi. 10; 2 Cor. v. 14, 21; Heb. x. 2-18; I Pet. i. 18, 19; ii. 24), but broke all claim and authority of the rulers and powers of

darkness (Col. ii. 13-15). Through the dying Christ it is possible to be forever delivered out of Satan's darkness (Col. i. 12-14), and through the living Christ it is promised that the child of God shall be forever saved and kept unto the "Kingdom of God's dear Son" (Rom. v. 10). This is the plan of God's redeeming grace, and it may be concluded, in all confidence, that as certainly as Satan is blinding the minds of the unregenerate men at the point of the redemptive work of Christ, so certainly it is the purpose of God that the Spirit shall unveil their minds concerning that same truth.

The claim which Satan held upon man, before the cross, was the very fact of man's sin and unlikeness to God. That claim was wholly broken by the cross, and the curse of sin was lifted for all. Since the cross, it has been Satan's one advantage to blind those in his power as to the fact of the universal atonement for sin, and to secure an attitude of misunderstanding and rejection of this atonement that will keep man under the last and only condemnation: "that they believe not on me."

Thus all "principalities and powers" were "spoiled" and "triumphed over" in the divine judgment of sin. Now the way of redemption is open to all who will come by the cross. But it is this very value of the death of Christ that is the object of Satan's blinding, and the Spirit alone can unveil the blinded unregenerate mind. This He does by convincing of the perfect judgment for all men now accomplished through the cross.

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that the

phase of the Gospel which Satan has veiled from "those that are perishing" is the way of life through the death of Christ, and that it is the same central truth which the Spirit would make real to "those that are perishing," by convincing them "of sin, of righteousness and of judgment."

In this connection it is not claimed that an un-saved person must come to know every phase of truth about the atonement of Christ before he is divinely prepared for salvation; but it is claimed that the Spirit proposes to make the meaning of the cross sufficiently clear to that person as to enable him to abandon all hope of self-works, and to turn to the finished work of Christ alone in intelligent, saving faith. The unfolding of redemptive truth was revealed to Paul directly from God, and there is a very real sense in which that truth must be directly revealed to every individual, that he may himself choose it as the only basis of his hope. The atoning sacrificial death of Christ as a distinct and sufficient foundation for salvation must become a *reality* before it can become a *finality* in saving faith. And in convincing the world of sin, righteousness, and of judgment that truth is made real by the Spirit.

What human argument or influence can convince Satan-blinded minds that to fail to believe on Jesus Christ is the all-condemning sin? Surely that sin will not be seen in all its magnitude until the mind has been enlightened in regard to the Person of Christ and His atoning work. Thus only by the Spirit can any conception be had of all

that is being rejected when they "believe not on me."

No understanding of the illuminating work of the Spirit on the minds of the unsaved would be complete apart from the recognition of the important agency or means used by the Spirit in that work.

THE WORD OF GOD, "which is the sword of the Spirit." Another sharp distinction must be made at this point, as in the enlightening and teaching work of the Spirit, between the whole divine work for the saved and that small part of the same work which may be done for the unsaved as a preparation for salvation. The riches of the work for the saved can be only suggested here.

To the saved the Word of God is a cleansing, sanctifying and reflecting power (John xiii. 10, 11; xv. 3; Eph. v. 25, 26; John xvii. 17; and 2 Cor. iii. 18).

To the unsaved, the Word of God is the "sword of the Spirit" (Eph. vi. 17). All those who urge methods in personal work properly lay great stress on the right use of Scripture when dealing with the unsaved. God uses the "Sword of the Spirit," and He has not promised to use anything else in unveiling the blinded mind.

As has been seen, the convicting work of the Spirit involves a radical change in the deepest part of man's being, where his motives and desires are first formed; so that an entirely new conception of the God-provided grounds of redemption and a vision of the glorious Person of Christ are

created. As both the Person and the work of Christ are presented in the Scriptures, it is only necessary for the Spirit to vitalize His own Word, either upon the printed page, or through the lips of His messenger, to bring a new light and possibility into the hitherto blinded mind. It is, therefore, said of the Word of God: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful [living and active, R.V.], and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. iv. 12). The Word itself is however but the sword, and must be wielded by the Spirit to be effective.

The fact that the Word of God, in the hands of the Spirit, is living and operative is the only warrant for any appeal to the unsaved; and is a warning, as well, that the message, to be effective, must be in accord with the whole truth of God that it may be used by the Spirit. It is a conspicuous fact that every successful soul-winner has been a fearless defender of every essential doctrine of the Scriptures.

The skill of the evangelist, or the pastor who would do the work of an evangelist, is manifested in the ability to present the particular body of redemptive truth repeatedly, yet with freshness and variety.

The evangelist is limited to that evangel which unfolds the cure of sin and the way of life by the substitutionary death of Christ, since that is the

only message which the Spirit can use as His Sword in unveiling those eyes which are blinded to that particular truth. How helpless, then, in true soul-saving co-operation with God is that person who has a heart of unbelief toward the blood of Christ, or whose message has been beguiled away from the way of life in Christ Jesus, to an appeal for morality or religious ceremonials, which are the result of human energy and expediencies!

Jesus has commanded His own that are in the world to preach the Gospel of redemptive truth to every creature: yet their preaching is of no avail save as it is accompanied by the convincing and illuminating work of the Spirit, and this work of the Spirit is dependent upon a ministry of the believer which should always accompany preaching. This ministry is the prayer of intercession.

Thus it may be concluded on the question of the use of the Word in true evangelism that it is the work of the Spirit to present the sacrificial judgment of the cross and the living glorious Person of Christ to the unsaved through the preaching of the Word. And when a preacher evades either the message of the cross or the essential deity of Christ there has been, and can be, no co-operation of the Spirit in convincing power, though every element of literary merit and human eloquence be supplied. Evidence of this is on every hand.

It is not a mere arbitrary caprice with God that there must be an intelligent appropriation of the work of Christ as the grounds of redemption: "For there is none other name under heaven given

among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12). On no other grounds can the mercy and grace of God be exercised in righteousness and justice. It follows, therefore, that the grounds of redemption must be sufficiently clear to each individual to elicit a repose of faith, and a willing deposit of all eternal interests into the saving power of Christ. No human argument or teaching can dispel the Satanic darkness which hinders saving faith, or create the new vision that is required. It is quite possible for a blinded soul to be religious, or even to pose as a minister of the Gospel; yet, having never comprehended the way of life, to be "tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine," and, though sincere, and possessing a wide range of human knowledge, to be in his blindness only the minister of Satan (2 Cor. xi. 13-15).

The wide difference in appreciation of the Gospel which exists between people of equal mental attainments cannot be explained on the grounds of personal temperament or training, else their various attitudes would be more or less permanent, when in reality the attitude of indifference is often suddenly changed to a glowing fire. It need hardly be pointed out that unsaved men do not weigh the evidence of testimony and fact as accurately in matters relating to salvation as they do in any other sphere of investigation. In matters between men in the world the sworn testimony of two reliable witnesses demands a corresponding conclusion; yet the obvious fact of regeneration and the willing testimony of multitudes, "whereas

I was blind, now I see," creates little impression on others who are yet in their blindness.

There is a reality in Satanic blindness. But, blessed be God, there is a reality in divine illumination!

It should be observed that, apart from the power of God, superficial decisions may easily be secured, and apparently great results accomplished; for some minds are so dependent upon the opinions of others that the earnest and dominating appeal of the evangelist, with the obvious value of a religious life, is sufficient to move them to follow almost any plan that is made to appear to be expedient. They may be urged to act on the vision of the way of life which the preacher possesses, when they have received no sufficient vision for themselves. The experience of thousands of churches has proven that such decisions have not met the conditions of grace in "believing with the heart"; for the multitude of advertised converts have often failed, and these churches have had to face the problem of dealing with a class of disinterested people who possess no new dynamic, nor any of the blessings of the truly regenerate life.

It is possible reverently to repeat the most pious phrases and assume devotional attitudes and yet have the inner life in no way correspondingly moved. All such exercise, though producing apparent results, is of no avail in real salvation; for the Spirit has not wrought in such a mind to the end that the utterance of such phrases become the expression of the greatest crisis of the inner life,

and the only adequate relief for that soul's sense of utter helplessness and burning thirst for the water of life.

A few genuine decisions may occur among the many, and these have always justified the wholesale evangelizing method. There is, however, a very grave harm done to any who are thus superficially affected, and this harm might sometimes outweigh the good that is done. In reply to this it is argued that nothing can outweigh the value of one soul that is saved; yet when the harm of a false decision is analysed, it will be seen that the after-state of bewilderment and discouragement which results in an attitude that is almost unapproachable and hopeless, has its unmeasured results as well.

The Gospel will always prove, in this age, "a savour of death unto death" as well as of "life unto life"; for some, even upon whom the Spirit has wrought in conviction, will reject the way of life. But there is no expectation in the evangelism of the Scriptures, that souls are to be hurried into unrealities and be misguided in their blindness. In the ministry of the Spirit Who came to convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, God has faithfully provided the one all-sufficient preparation for a full and intelligent decision.

Placing saving trust in the Lord Jesus Christ is an act so definite that the experience must be abiding. A consciousness that this step has been taken will naturally remain. Well may we question our

own salvation when uncertain at this point. "I know whom I have believed" is the normal testimony of every saved person. Such trust abides. It is a consciousness that He alone is depended upon as the answer before God for every problem of a sin-cursed soul. This abiding confidence can be formed in the heart only through the illuminating, regenerating, and indwelling work of the Spirit.

The examples of soul-winning in the New Testament present a conspicuous contrast to some examples of present-day evangelism. So far as the divine record shows there seemed to be little urging or coaxing, nor was any person dealt with individually who had not first given evidence of a divinely-wrought sense of need. It is recorded that Peter directed the converts at Pentecost in the way of life after they were "pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do"? So also there is no record that Paul and Silas pleaded with the Philippian jailor to become a Christian before he had any such desire; but rather, after a great change had taken place in his whole attitude which compelled him to fall tremblingly before them and say, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" did they personally direct him to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." Peter does not send for Cornelius: Cornelius reaches out for Peter. And Saul is led into the light almost without human aid or direction.

In view of this all-important divine preparation

for salvation, it is clear that all evangelism, be it public ministry or personal work, which does not wait for the movings of the Spirit in the hearts of the unsaved is insomuch removed from true co-operation with God, and is in danger of hindering souls.

Such a waiting on God and for God as is necessary for true co-operation with the Spirit, although it may shatter the evangelist's claim to large numbers of converts, will tend to wean the church away from her dependence upon spasmodic periods of concern for the lost into a true and more constant attitude of fruit-bearing.

The Scriptures furnish us with examples of true evangelism, the results of which were reported many centuries ago when it was said: "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts ii. 47). This blessed condition will always result when believers depend upon the *Lord* to add to the Church and they continue "steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts ii. 42).