

A Sermon For Erring Christians

by
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TEXT: If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.
2 Chronicles 7:14

Theme: Plain directions to Christians who are out of the King's highway, telling them how to get back into the way.

This text is God's answer to Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple. That prayer is remarkable for these three things:

1. A distinct recognition of the fact that all of God's people will and do sin.
2. That divine chastisement for purposes of correction will certainly follow every such sin.
3. A petition that God would accept and honor as adequate provision for the forgiveness of such sin, the Temple sacrifices offered by the Temple priesthood.

These three notable characteristics of this famous prayer are very carefully stated because they embody a great deal of doctrine. And doctrinal statements ought never to be loosely and incautiously worded. Because, therefore, of the vital and fundamental doctrines involved, let us elaborate somewhat on each characteristic of this prayer, by enlarged restatement.

Observe carefully that the first notable characteristic is not a recognition of the fact that some of God's people will sin nor the mere possibility that all of them may sin, but that all of them will and do sin - all of them, without one exception. Not one of them is without sin. If this statement be correct, it forever settles some things. It forever negatives as unscriptural certain modern doctrines touching sanctification. If it be urged as an objection that Solomon in his prayer continually said, "If Thy people sin," the "if" implying contingency only, or mere liability, the answer to such objection is obvious, conclusive, and crushing that he himself carefully guarded against such construction of his language. The possibility or liability expressed by the "if" relates only to the particular form of the sin and never to the fact that sin would come in some form. It may be a sin against a neighbor or one against God, a sin of omission or of commission. He foresaw no end to the variety of form or kind. The "if" was

designed to cover any or all forms. It is as if he had said, "If it take this form or that, whatever form it may take and some form it will take - then hear Thou in heaven and forgive."

I say the proof of the correctness of such answer to the anticipated objection is obvious, conclusive, and crushing. Would you hear and consider some of this proof?

Then listen carefully:

We have two inspired records of this prayer. In both records is express proof that the "if" is not designed by him to convey the idea of doubt or uncertainty as to the fact of sin. Here are his precise words, twice recorded: "If they sin against Thee (for there is no man that sinneth not)" *1 Kings 8:46 and 2 Chronicles 6:36*

The full import of this broad negative as to the existence of sinless men is emphasized by its enlarged restatement by Solomon in another and much later connection: "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Ecclesiastics 7:20). This, for the present, at least, is sufficient proof of the correctness of the first statement, that Solomon's prayer distinctly recognizes the fact, not that some of God's people will sin, nor that all of them may sin, but that all of them will and do sin. The second characteristic of the prayer is that divine chastisement, for purposes of correction, inevitably follows such sin. There is no doubt here, no ambiguity. Every element of uncertainty is excluded. You, O Christian, do certainly sin. So, O Christian, are you certainly chastised. Chastisement is not the only inalienable and precious heritage of every child of God, but it is also a distinguishing mark to evidence the fact that he is a child of God. No chastisement, no child. What saith the Scripture?

My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, Nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him; For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, And scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If you endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he

whom the father chasteneth riot? But if ye be without chastisement whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons. Furthermore we have had the fathers of our flesh who corrected us, and we gave them reverence. Shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure. But He for our profit that we might be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them who are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet; let that which is lame be not turned out of the way: but let it rather be healed." Now, do observe how this Scripture corroborates the first proposition that all God's people sin. "He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." All His people are partakers of chastisement. Any self-styled child of God who is without chastisement is a bastard and not a son. He chastises to correct some wrong, to heal some lameness. He chastises not willingly, but for love and for profit. And especially, mark you, that the object of chastisement is that "Ye might be partakers of His holiness."

But our heavenly Father does not chastise the innocent. If you are chastised, you have done wrong. If you do wrong, you are not sinless.

There is no escape from the logic. You may impale any modern sanctificationist on the point of these questions: "Are you without a chastisement?" "Yes."

"Then you are a bastard and not a son, for all His children are partakers (present tense) of chastisement." "I take that back," says he; "I am not without chastisement."

"Then is your doctrine annihilated, for He never chastises except to correct wrongdoing. He chastens us for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness. If already holy, why chasten?" So to claim to be holy as God is holy is to claim that you have passed out of the realm of chastisement. But this earth and this life is the realm of chastisement and the

claimant is here and not yonder. The school of discipline for the spirit ends only with death of the body or its glorification without death. Every stroke of the chastening rod of our heavenly Father laid on one who here on earth claims to be holy either proves that God is a cruel tyrant or that the claimant is a liar. Let God be true and the man a liar. Death is the last stroke of discipline. With death all chastening of the spirit ceases. Seen after death they are at last "the spirits of just men made perfect." So testifies this same chapter that tells of the chastening (Hebrews 12:23).

The third characteristic of this prayer is that it petitions God to accept and honor the merit of the Temple sacrifices and the office of the Temple priesthood as the ground and means of forgiving such sins of His people. This third characteristic, like the second, wonderfully corroborates the proposition in the first, that all God's people will and do sin while in this life. Here is a Temple, and sacrifices, and a priesthood. The argument is in no way affected, whether you refer to the Old Testament typical Temple, typical sacrifice, typical priesthood, or to the New Testament antitypical temple, antitypical sacrifice, or antitypical High Priest. The doctrine is one. It is the

doctrine of mediation. The sacrifice atones for sin. The priest is a mediator, daysman, or go-between. A mediator deals only between the parties at issue. When the issue is settled, the office of mediator expires by limitation, of necessity. After that the parties, now at one, deal with each other directly, face to face.

As long as the offender makes use of the Temple, or its sacrifice, or its priest, in dealing with the offended one, so long he acknowledges that he is a sinner. When he becomes wholly sanctified, or sinless, he no longer needs a mediator. There is no longer an issue to be adjusted. Hence the Bible teaches that so long as the mediatorial dispensation lasts men must approach God as sinners, through a mediator, and that when the mediatorial dispensation ends, there will no longer be either mediator or Temple.

As this proposition, if scriptural, grinds into fine powder the modern heresy of sanctification, let us carefully consider "the law and the testimony." Open your Bibles and turn with me to 1 Corinthians 15:24-28:

“Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.”

This Scripture unquestionably teaches that the resurrection of the bodies of the dead and the final judgment of all reunited souls and bodies constitute the climax and culmination of the mediatorial kingdom of Christ. All issues whatever, whether of soul or body, between the sinner and God, the Father, are forever settled. The saved sinner is now presented glorious, “not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but is holy and without blemish.” The commandment being now fulfilled, “Be ye holy, as I am holy,” he no longer needs a Temple, or a sacrifice, or a mediator, or a “throne of mercy.” God, the Father, is all in all. And from this time there will be no Temple typical or antitypical.

Turn with me to Revelation 21:22: “And I saw no temple therein.” And to Revelation 22:4: “And they shall see His face.” The last two chapters of Revelation show us the universe after the mediatorial kingdom is ended. Now no Temple, no sacrifice, no High Priest, no mediator or go-between; they shall see His face. In mediatorial days, or days of sin, to see His face out of Christ was to die. “No man shall see My face and live.” But now, being sinless in soul and body, they see His face, because the apostolic prayer is answered: “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: And I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

In the light of these Scriptures we may well inquire: Does any Christian living on the earth before death and the judgment get beyond the need of the Temple, its atoning sacrifice, the intercession of its High Priest and its throne of mercy? If he comes to that Sacrifice, he comes as a sinner for cleansing. If he comes to that Advocate, he comes as a sinner not daring to see God’s face. If he comes to that throne of mercy, he comes as a sinner to “find grace to help in time of need.” But if he be now sinless, he has passed out of the mediatorial dispensation as well as passed out of the realm of chastisement. If for one single moment he becomes sinless here, he has effectually disproved the necessity for a high priest after the order of Melchisedec, for that necessity grew out of the fact that we could not be saved to the uttermost without a Priest “who ever liveth to make intercession for us.” But a sinner, though he be a Christian, needs a High Priest “who ever liveth to intercede for him” and who by that very ‘, power of an endless life” is “able to save him unto the uttermost.” But He never intercedes for the sinless. Hence the Apostle John’s threefold statement:

1. "If we say that we have not sinned [past tense] we make Him a liar and His word is not in us."
2. "If we say that we have no sin [present tense] we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."
3. "And if any man [i.e., a Christian] sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous."

Therefore, does this third characteristic of Solomon's prayer confirm the proposition in the first characteristic, to wit: God's people will and do sin every day, and never more heinously than when they say "We have no sin."

As this last point is a capital one, observe more particularly one of the facts already brought out incidentally. Solomon's prayer connects every hope of Divine favor with the Temple, its sacrifice of blood and the intercession of its high priest. He does not ask God to meet the sinner anywhere else... "O Lord, let Thy name be here, and Thine eye be here, and let Thine ears be here, and Thine eye be here, and Thy power be here." So God answers the prayer just that way: "My name shall be there; Mine eyes shall be there; Mine ears shall be there; My heart shall be there; and My power shall be there."

Thus God's people must meet Him in Christ. Meeting Him in Christ, they meet Him as sinners. Committing any sin, and desiring to be rid of it, the way is plain; it is through a mediator, and in that way is no delay. The first step in that direction, God sees, for His eyes are there. The first trembling petition in that name, God hears, for His ears are there. The motion toward the Father through the Son awakens His love, for His heart is there, but not elsewhere, except as a consuming fire.

Whoever claims to be holy as God is holy should never approach a throne of mercy, should never ask anything for Christ's sake. That throne is approachable by sinners only; that place is for sinners only. Whoever, living here on earth prior to death and the judgment, claims to be without sin, has passed beyond grace, beyond the realm of chastisement and discipline, beyond the mediatorial dispensation, beyond the necessity of the High Priest's intercession, if what he says is true. But as the realm of chastisement ends only with death, as the mediatorial kingdom lasts until death, that last enemy, is destroyed, as the glorious condition set forth in the last two chapters of Revelation, where there will be no -Temple, no sacrifice, no need to see God's face through a mediator.

I say, as this glorious state is after the resurrection and the final judgment, the man who here claims to be sinless does not tell the truth. Nor does the world believe him when he says it. He is less trusted and more suspected after he says it than before he says it. He is universally regarded as a misguided enthusiast, or the unwitting subject of a delusion, or a fanatic, or a hypocrite.

It was necessary thus to explain the text, which is an answer to the prayer. What then is my theme today? It is this: Plain directions to Christians who are out of the way, telling them how to get back into the way. The text contains the four simple

directions. What are they? Listen while I number them as I repeat the text: “If My people, who are called by My name, shall humble themselves” (that is the first direction, humility), “and pray” (that is the second direction, prayer), “and seek My face” (third direction), “and turn from their wicked ways” (fourth direction), “then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin.”

There cannot possibly be a subject of greater practical interest to Christian people than this subject. There is more involved in it than I could state in one hour if I confined myself to the tersest wording of my propositions. How far out of the way you are I do not know, nor do you. That you are, not all equally far out of the way is self-evident, but that every one of you is somewhat out of the way follows from the correctness of the positions already established.

Now, if you are, to any extent, out of the way, it is of importance coextensive with the degree of your departure from God that you get back in the way. Get back there for peace. Get back there for power. Get back there for strength. And, getting back, there is a revival. And a revival is a prelude to the conversion of sinners. Now, then, how important it is to people who are out of the way, who are, for the time being, astray, to have very simple, very plain directions how to get back in the way, to know which direction to take, to know just what to do. In simple language, “What am I to do to get back in the way?” Here is God’s answer to it. What is the first thing? Humble thyself. As soon as we come to this first direction, we are instantly put upon a definition. What is humility? The idea of a thing is often brought out by contrasting it with its opposite. “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.” Here are two things that stand over against each other and mutually define each other. “Humility,” then, is the antipode of pride, just as light is the opposite of darkness and truth is the opposite of error. So that, when we come to define “humility” we may know that we have never gotten to the true conception of it so long as the ground occupied by our definition does not stand squarely opposite to the ground occupied by pride.

Let us get a little nearer to its meaning. What is the etymology of the word? It is from the word “humus,” meaning the ground. Now, the idea of that word, derived from its etymology, clings to it always, and we have never given a correct definition of humility when we separate it from that basal, etymological conception—the ground. So that in that definition must be the conception of putting oneself low down, on the ground, next to the ground. To humble oneself then is not to be lifted up, which is pride, but to put oneself down onto the ground.

Let us get at it a little more closely. If I were to try to analyze “humility” I would state it somewhat in this way: That a humble man does not overrate himself, does not put himself too high. Now, see if that be true. Listen to this from the twelfth chapter of the Letter to the Romans: “For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.” Whoever, then, overrates himself, is not humble. Whoever thinks too highly of himself is not humble.

Let us see the next thought in the analysis: That he does not overrate his ability. The Scripture says, "Let not him that girdeth on the harness boast himself as he that putteth it off." So then, when you find a man speaking of something yet to be done, something yet an untried experiment, using great swelling words of vanity, overrating his ability, priding himself upon his power, that man is not a humble man.

But we shall proceed in the analogy: When he overrates his possessions. Listen to this Scripture, in the third chapter of Revelation, and this is about professing Christians, and is what Jesus said to these professing Christians: "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Now, when a man overrates his possessions, he underrates his needs correspondingly. If he says, "I am rich," that means, "I therefore need nothing." But if it be true that he is poor and blind and miserable and naked, in order for him to get a conception of his needs, he must put himself down where he belongs. Get down on the ground! Get down! Get down! Lower, lower yet. Get down until you touch the ground! Humus - humility.

Now, it is of vast importance that you notice this point: In analyzing humility you need not ask a man what he glories in. Watch him and you will see what he glories in. If he glories in himself, in his power, in his possessions, in his achievements; if you can see self-complacency stealing over him, you may know that he is not humble. But if he glories in the Lord, he will say, "I am well, but I glory in Him that made me well. I am clean, but I glory in Him whose blood cleansed me. I am rich, but I glory in Him who became poor that I might be made rich. I did this and that, yet not I, but God who was with me; yea, in all things good, by the grace of God, I am what I am."

In that sort of way, you can get at the true conception of humility. But mark, if humility is analyzed by looking at the rating whether it be overrating or underrating, you must know that when you use the word "rate" you necessarily imply a standard. Where there is no standard you can have no rate. Suppose I were to measure a goblet by itself, what has been gained? If I measure it by itself, it is utterly impossible to detect any defect in it, because nothing measured by itself will reveal a defect. If I measure it by another goblet which is also imperfect, I never get at a correct result. There must be some fixed standard by which both of them are to be measured.

And so, when a man begins to rate himself in order to determine whether he be humble, he must not measure himself by himself, nor must he measure himself by some other imperfect person, but he must measure himself by the true standard, which is God. And whenever you can get any man, however proud and conceited, however envious of superiors or contemptuous of inferiors, though his complacency is as deep and wide as the ocean, to come and stand by the standard of God, you will see him get down on the ground. He will humble himself before God. Take Job. How he did lift himself up when Eliphaz and the other two men discoursed with him! How he did maintain his integrity! But when God Almighty spoke to him out of the whirlwind; when the Lord came, Job said, "I have heard of Thee with the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and I repent in dust and ashes." He got down; he struck the ground that time. Humus - humility.

That is rightly rating oneself when placed by the side of holiness and purity. Take Isaiah. He was a saintly man, a long way in advance of his contemporaries. And yet one day he saw the Lord, whose train filled the Temple, and when he saw the Lord, he fell as if he were shot. He struck the ground, and, striking, he said, "Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" Now, here you get the true conception of humility rated by the standard (which is God). It means putting yourself right down on the ground. That is humility. Now, the next point is also essential. It would seem that it is not necessary to discuss it. If there were not so many delusions; if the most intelligent people did not deceive themselves; if the most intellectual people did not allow others to deceive them; if they did not permit deceivers to come up openly and hoodwink them in the broad light of day, it would not be necessary to discuss this next point.

What is it? That humility is not a matter of words or of dress. Did you ever read Dickens' David Copperfield? Did you ever listen to Uriah Heep? There is humility in words. Uriah and his mother were the humblest people in all the world. They would crawl at your very feet in words; they would absolutely get down on the lowest place they could find and flatten themselves out in words, the fawning, cringing hypocrites, masking the pride and hate of hell under the word-garb of humility.

Did you ever read Shakespeare's Julius Caesar? Look at Mark Antony. He apologizes for his very existence. See how humbly he stands there: "I did not come to praise Caesar; I merely came to bury him. You certainly will let me bury the dead. I did not come to make any complaint against those who slew Caesar; they are honorable men; they are all honorable men." Oh, how humble! And yet, under those words of humility he proceeded to stir the stones of Rome to mutiny. I never knew Shakespeare's genius to fail in but one thing. He should have represented Mark Antony on the battlefield of Philippi, standing with a long face of mock-sorrow over the cold body of Brutus, Rome's last patriot, whom he had hounded to death, distributing certificates to prove that he had always said that Brutus was an honorable man! No, my brethren, humility is not a matter of words. Take another case. There is Amasa, whom the king has received into favor, and here comes Joab. What does he say? "Amasa, my brother, art thou in health, my brother?" and, while so speaking, he stabs him under the fifth rib. Now, my point is, did the words, "my brother," did the inquiry, "Art thou in health, my brother?" keep that deed from being foul assassination?

Yet take another case. Yonder in the garden is Jesus, and His enemies are coming, and at the head of them is Judas. Look at Judas before he gets to Jesus. Hear him, while he obsequiously bows: "Hail, Master!" See him kiss Jesus! Did the "Hail, Master!" and did the treacherous kiss prevent that act from being foulest treason? Did not Jesus pass upon it when He said, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?"

Now, listen to what prophecy foretold about that. I read to you from the fifty-fifth Psalm, which describes the very transaction. It is the Lord Jesus Christ speaking through the prophets of that transaction. Here He tells who it was: One who had taken “sweet counsel with me and walked into the house of God in my company.” O Spirit of Prophecy, O Bible, God’s manual of parliamentary law, how do you decide the point of order as to his words? Hear the divine ruling: “The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords.”

What I want to impress upon you is that humility is not a mere matter of words. What is it then? “Serving the Lord with all humility of mind.” Then humility is internal. It is not a matter of dress. A man is not humble because he puts on a poor dress. He may be as proud as Satan and yet be dressed in homespun. Or he may be an humble man dressed in broadcloth. He may be a proud man and yet cringe and fawn in his speech, like Uriah Heep. He may be a traitor when he obsequiously bows and says, “Hail, Master!” Humility is internal. It is of the mind, and it is of the heart.

It is unnecessary to elaborate more. What are we after? We started out with the proposition that all of God’s people will sin. You do, and you know you do. And the second proposition is: For such sins God will certainly chastise them. And then, with the third proposition, that God has made adequate provision for the forgiveness of the sins of the Christian and that in this text are the directions, clear and simple, that tell you just what to do to get back into the way of the Christian.

The first direction is: Humble yourself. That is the first, and, let me tell you, there is a relation between the first direction and the second, an essential and vital relation. I do mean to say that you cannot take the second step first and that you will have to take the first step in order to take the second. What is the second? “Pray.” Prayer is the soul’s sincere desire. Now, if the man says, “I am rich, I need nothing,” how can he? ask God for anything? How can he? Will you tell me how he can? But if humility has put him on the ground and he realizes in his heart, “I have sinned; I am needy; I am wretched,” that need suggests the petition that follows, and therefore, the second direction: Pray.

In the great convention at Marshall one day, when everybody else had left my room, I locked the door; I humbled myself. I got down on the ground in my spirit $\frac{3}{4}$ right down on the ground $\frac{3}{4}$ and there I felt a need, and that need was transmuted in a prayer to Jesus, and never in my life have I known a prayer to be answered sooner and more certainly than was that prayer.

Now you brethren want another revival. I know what you want. I know that this church wants a revival of religion. And I am giving you the directions as to how to get it. First, humble yourselves. Do not say you know not how. See that Pharisee and that Publican. Look at them, first one, and then the other: “God, I thank thee that I am not as other men. I am not an extortionist. I am not like this miserable Publican.” Now the other: “God be merciful to me, a sinner!” There they stand right over against each other $\frac{3}{4}$ pride and humility. You want no other instruction. Look

at the picture. That Publican felt his need; he got right down on the ground, and then he prayed: "Mercy, mercy, mercy!" Oh, how sweet a prayer that is! I never knew of such a one, nor did any man ever know of such a one, who failed to reach the throne of God.

I do not care how far off you are today, O Christian; it makes no difference what may be your guilty distance from God, if you get down on the ground in your spirit, in your mind, in your heart, and not in mere words, and, being humble then pray, I tell you, you are nearly back already!

What is the third direction? "Seek My face." You know when a man has committed a sin,, he generally does not want to see the one against whom he sinned. When Adam sinned, he hid in the garden when he heard God coming. It is the nature of offenders to skulk out of sight of the offended. But here comes this direction of God to the offender: "Seek My face." Do not run from it. You never will settle it by going away. You only add to the distance. If you want to be fully right, being now humble and praying, get up and go to your Father, seek His face, turn toward Him, and keep on going until you meet Him. Look at that prodigal son. There is the whole thing illustrated. "And when he came to himself [there is the humility] he said, 'I will arise and go to my father.'" Just look at it!

But where do you, a sinner, seek to find God's face? You would seek God's face directly if you lived on the other side of the mediatorial kingdom. There is no go-between between you and God after that scene described in the Book of Revelation.?To seek God's face then would be to seek the Father direct. But you cannot seek the Father directly now, because you are a sinner, and, being a sinner, if you thus seek His face, you die. "How, then, can I seek His face?" You must seek His face in the Lord Jesus Christ, the glory of God revealed in the face of Jesus Christ: "I and the Father are one." "Show us the Father and that sufficeth," said Philip. "Have you been with Me so long a time, Philip, and have not known Me? Whosoever hath seen Me hath seen the Father." So then, when you would seek His face, seek it in Christ. You must come to the substitute. Seek His face in Jesus.

And now, what is the last direction? "Turn from your wicked ways." Do consider this matter carefully. What has made this issue between you and God after you became a Christian? What was it? Sin. What is the matter that now concerns you? To get forgiveness for that sin. Well, now, can you conceive of being forgiven for sin and yet retain it? "Can a man be pardoned and retain the offense?"

Dare you ask God to put you back in the way by forgiving your sin and let your sin go back there with you? You want to go back. You say you do. And you want to humble yourself and you want to pray and you want to seek God's face in Jesus Christ; then, my brother, what are you going to do with the offense that made the issue? What is your purpose? Would you sin the more that grace may abound? Now, meet that squarely. Here is a sin that you have committed. God's Word says, "Turn from it. Let him restore that steals, and steal no more. Let him that is drunk

sober up, and get drunk no more.” Shall a man with maudlin speech ask God’s forgiveness for drunkenness?

But, you say “Your whole sermon proceeds upon the assumption that a man cannot be perfectly sinless.” That is true. But where is the difficulty in that? You must turn away from that sin with your heart. In your heart you must hate it. You must turn away from it by putting it on Christ, and that you do by faith. You must say, “Lord, here is an offense; I committed it after my conversion, and now, O Lord, in my heart I turn away from it; I know my liability to commit the same offense, but I hate it with all my mind. I serve God in my mind, and I turn away from it, and I take up the offense itself and I lay it right over on the substitute, Jesus Christ.” Cannot I turn from it that way?

How do I know that I have turned away from it? If I have, by faith, put that offense on Jesus Christ, then its burden cannot crush me, for a thing cannot be in two places at the same time, and if it is on Him and crushing Him, it is off of me, and I am free. So you can turn away from it and yet retain liability to future sin. Put it on the Sin-bearer, brother; then the burden of that offense will be gone, and it will be on Jesus; by faith it will have been put on Jesus. The love of that offense will be gone; in my heart I will hate it.

That is what God means by turning away from sin. He does not mean that you never will in this life sin again. The whole theory of redemption is directly to the contrary, and the provisions of it are all coextensive with the mediatorial reign, and just so long as that sacrifice and that High Priest remain, that long will you need the application of the blood and the intercession of the High Priest. But let us suppose that you have gotten to the point where you are sinless. What follows? If yesterday you reached a sinless point, then yesterday you used up all that you needed of the Priesthood to intercede for you; then so far as you are concerned, you do not need a priest after the order of Melchisedec, i.e., an eternal priest. You only needed a priest who would live and intercede until you became sinless. The sanctificationist virtually denies the prevalence of the mediatorial kingdom, and he antedates the picture in Revelation, in which after the resurrection and the judgment, then, and then only, there shall be no Temple.

Now, brethren, I leave this matter with you. I do know that I would be ashamed to give you directions that do not apply to myself, and I apply them before ever I bring them to you. Let every one of us hearken to the four directions: humble yourselves. Get down! Get down! Get down in the spirit. “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” Get down to the ground. Humus. Brother, get down today. Oh, humble yourself before God. Lie down there: lower, lower, lower. Now, brother, pray, “God be merciful to me, a sinner; O God, I need many things. Help, help, help!” And when you pray, seek God’s face in Jesus, and then in your heart turn away from sin. Turn from it in loathing. Put it on Jesus: leave it there by faith and walk away from it forever. So comes forgiveness, and so comes the revival you desire.

