

GAINING THE WORLD AND LOSING HIS SOUL!

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(Concluded from last issue)

"For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matt. 16:26.

Evolution, An Insult to God

But if man were simply a creature of mental power, if he simply had that tremendous intelligence and that were the limit of his capabilities, he would simply be a great intelligent animal, dangerous, both to himself and to other creatures. But he has moral capabilities. He feels within him that he has obligations to some one higher than himself. Something capable of perceiving moral truth and of making moral choices and of creating moral motives, and in that he excels. Now, the old cow will eat up your turnips or your cabbage and never come back to offer any kind of pay. The hog will eat up your potatoes until they are but a memory and never come back to offer any kind of restitution. He is a creature of appetite and invested with enough intelligence to guide him in that direction but man has within him not only the sense of obligation to God, but of obligation to his fellows. That is an infinite distance from the brute. Let the man who believes in organic evolution tell how that infinite step was made to that lofty realm where men choose because it is right and turn away because it is wrong. There is a distance between the two that is so vast that an angel in the flight of a thousand years could not hope to span the chasm. Every animal has some sort of soul, but he has not a moral soul. He has a soul of instinct and appetite.

That man that undertakes to try to convince the people that God from a one-celled protoplasm, has through countless ages evolved a being from one mode of life to another until we have the soul of a Webster and the fiery evangelism of a St. Paul has undertaken that which no man can ever master. It is an insult to God and the blackest libel on the God of the skies that ever was dreamed in hell.

The Power of Choice

Man is moral. He can choose. It is perfectly possible for a man to do as he likes, to make his own choices without any compulsion. He can choose evil if he wants to, in spite of all the good folks. The man who imagines that some way his Christian wife or mother or children by their prayers can reach his case is leaning upon a broken reed. It will take himself to do it. You may pray your soul out and that fellow will choose his own course and die in his sins. In Texas a mother died at the altar pleading for her boys, and it only turned their hearts harder against God. A man may continue on in an evil way in spite of all the good folks on earth and the holy agency of the Holy Spirit. They may refuse to yield to God and die in sin and be damned in a wilful resistance to God. That is the fearful part. That actually scares me. What power—and every soul possesses it!

Friends, isn't it also encouraging to know that if we have a power by which we can choose the evil and pursue it in spite of all the good forces on earth and in heaven, we can also choose the good and pursue it in spite of all the evil forces on earth and in hell, and there is not power enough among bad men and demons to make one man sin once

if he will not do it. God made him king in his own realm.

Oh, soul, let me plead with you tonight. Remember that the whole of your destiny depends on you. God is willing to save, but you must make your own moral choice. You must put your will in line with God or take the consequences of your own choice.

Capacity for Holiness

Again, I argue the value of a soul from the fact that it has capabilities for holiness. I think you have anticipated that. If a being is endowed with moral sense and the power of moral choice and held up to the responsibility of moral selection and choice; if a person is thus endowed, it follows that he is capable of holy choice and holy action. To say that a man capable of moral action and moral choice cannot be holy is to say a thing so absurd that to see it clearly is to abandon it instantly. The soul has been hurt and damaged by sin but the Spirit of God still has an ally in the soul that faces that saying, "You ought and you ought not," and the Spirit comes and shows through the Scriptures and through the gospel what God's standards are, and then conscience says, "You ought to put yourself in line with God," and there comes into the man that strong sense of unrest, that sense of unworthiness, that feeling of wrong and that yearning for something better, that loathing of the past, that disgust with the past, and that cry of the soul is heard, nay, it has been induced by the Spirit. The Spirit broods over that condition and state and encourages and draws toward God until the soul with soul appetite and soul desire that is paramount, looks upward, uplifts its hands of faith, stretches out its hands to God, cries for the old fellowship it has lost, longs to walk with Him who is its Creator. The infinite hand of God lifts him out of the miry clay and puts him on the solid rock and there breaks from his soul the cry that has never been heard, "My Father." Now, once more they walk together. Now once more they have fellowship. Now once more the sense of unworthiness drops off and the feeling of estrangement heals and there comes to the soul the sense of peace and reconciliation and fellowship and holy love. God encourages it and God draws with cords of love the soul that has now been awakened and points to higher heights and stirs the depths of the soul in anticipation and heart hunger and brings it at last to the haven of its desire, lifts it out and lifts it up and draws it on until the soul's powers are consecrated and devoted and laid at the feet of God, and the mighty hand of God takes out every remnant of discord and every quality of evil from the soul and occupies the heart with the power of His own Spirit, with the residency of the Triune God through the Holy Ghost. He now knows God in the fullness of holiness.

"Down in the human heart, crushed by the tempter,

Feelings lie buried that grace can restore,
Touched by a loving heart, strengthened by kindness,

Cords that were broken now vibrate once more."

The Indwelling Spirit

The great attuner comes down into the soul and re-strings the chords and tunes them to heavenly playing and then with His own fingers thrums the strings until music like that which angels sing rings through the corridors of the soul, and God walks about

in the depths of the human consciousness, and might and power and glory and joy swell through his soul as he walks once more in the fellowship of a restored holiness through the blood of Jesus Christ.

The man who can still make moral choices may ally himself with the powers that build and bless and are in harmony with the will of God until omnipotence is brought within the grasp and the all-atoning blood becomes available for him.

Oh, we are not little folks. God built us for mighty big things.

Capable of God

I bring you the final thought, and that is, we are capable of God. Having said that, there is nothing beyond it, for that is infinity. To have God—to be capable of God.

I know associations are great. I have met people who were so cultured they made me miserable. I stammered, stumbled and knew not where to put my hands. I have met other people who were so cultured you didn't know it. I remember a dear, beautiful woman with silver hair, in Tennessee, with a culture so beautiful that you would never know it. She would be perfectly at ease in the cabin of a mountaineer. She would be just as much at ease in the White House. Somehow there was a refining touch that she laid on every soul she met without them ever finding it out that she was cultured. I think if I should have to meet King George of England, I should need at least six months of careful training to know how to get in and out of his presence properly, and I feel that even then I should stumble. King George is a fine little Englishman who stands at the head of a great empire, but one day he will sleep with his fathers in Westminster Abbey and some other Englishman will take his place, and why should I fear him whose breath is in his nostrils, who is human, even as you and I.

We Know a King

But I know a King who gave the skies their color and lifted up that blue dome. I know a King who gave the rose its crimson. I know a King who upholds all things by the word of His power. I know Him! I am acquainted with Him! I walk with Him! I can tell Him all. I couldn't afford to tell you all. You wouldn't understand. I can tell Him the deepest secrets of my soul. I have confessed at His feet all my sins, that which would make you turn away from me perhaps; but I have told Him and He draws closer. I know a King, a King, the King, King of all kings, Lord of all lords, the King whose Son walked the soil of the earth and watered it with His tears and shed His blood to redeem me because the Father's heart was so full of love that it would break unless something were done. That King of our Father, and that King can love. He can fill your soul. You can take all the cattle of the pampas and the Dakotas and the Texas plains and dump them into your soul and never hear a low. You can take all the gold and silver of earth and dump them into your soul and never hear the clink of a coin. Your soul is built for God. It can never rest until it is filled with God. It can never be satisfied until the Infinite moves in and makes you the habitation of God. I don't understand that. I don't have to. He built us big enough for Himself. Now. He didn't build angels that big. He says to Gabriel, "Blow your trumpet and call." He says to Michael, "Take your sword and go forth to battle." They are His servants. He can move into a man or a woman and live in