

FREEDOM IN CHRIST

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hatreds have a way of doing. "That is not the way to live," said Jesus. "God did not build you for hate, He built you for love. Hate enslaves; love liberates. It is this truth, among others, that I have come to plant in your hearts."

In this fashion Jesus Christ deals with the bondage of the mind and looses it from its blighting, cramping errors. "I am the light of the world," He cries (v. 12), "he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

A Fettered Will

Still, there is something besides the bondage of the mind that Christ deals with in His promise of freedom. It is the bondage of the will. Look now at verse 34, and note the solemn way in which the sentence begins, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." I do not insult your intelligence by trying to prove to you that Jesus was right in that statement. The world is tragically full of folks who are walking, breathing illustrations of it.

You commit sin, and pretty soon sin will commit you—commit you to its own prison house. It has got you! Our acts of wrong so easily repeat themselves. Repeated, they become habits. As habits they become our masters, and we their unwilling servants. A few months ago, in the dead of winter, my young son touched a piece of icy steel with his tongue. The tip of the tongue froze fast. It was a bloody-mouthed but wiser boy who brought his tear-stained face into the house a few moments later. He was free to stick out his tongue, but he was not free to withdraw it. It hurt to keep it there, and it hurt to pull it away. Thus it is when we trifle with dishonesties, immoralities, and intemperances in our lives; so free to start; so helpless to stop!

"Helpless," did I say? Yes, and yet—blessed be God!—not helpless. In our lovely hymn "Abide with Me," Christ is called "The help of the helpless." He is just that! And I so present Him to you in this hope-filled moment. I do not say to you who are held fast by habits that you yourself have come to loathe, "Try harder. Exert your will—what little you have left of it—a little more severely." That is neither good psychiatry nor good gospel. Says one of our experts in mental and emotional problems: "The doctrine that the will alone is the way to power is a most woebegone theory for the relief of the morally sick." No such "woebegone theory" is it that I would offer to you now, but rather the simple, direct, inspiring challenge of Jesus Christ when He says, "Give me thine heart."

That is, stop thinking of yourself as a stagnant pool of poisoned water which you are vainly trying to purify, and begin to think of yourself as a channel through which God's forgiveness and healing and power will this moment start to flow if only you will really trust Him. The flow of His grace will put strength into your will, as it will put strength into every other part of your being. For,

"He breaks the power of cancelled sin,

He sets the prisoner free;

His blood can make the foulest clean,

His blood avails for me."

An Imprisoned Spirit

But there is still another aspect of deliverance which we must see if we would grasp

the whole of Christ's message on freedom. The bondage of the mind is broken by the victory of truth over error. The bondage of the will is ended as Christ Himself comes to us with God's forgiveness and love. Is that all? Not if I understand the Master correctly. There is, in addition, a promised deliverance from the bondage of the spirit. In this use of the word "spirit" I mean the desires, drives, and dispositions that lie back of our conduct.

After quoting the words, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin," Alexander Maclaren says, "That is true in two ways." What does he mean? One meaning we have already seen; repeated acts of sin become enslaving habits. But Jesus seems to have had something else in mind, along with this truth. If I practice a certain line of sin, I am advertising to the world that behind my conduct is an evil desire, an unholy sentiment, an indefensible disposition. What comes out is an expression of what lurks deeply within. And even after the practice has changed, the spirit of a man may be unsanctified.

A dip into real life will, I think, make the point reasonably clear. The late Dr. Charles Trumbull, at a Victorious Life Conference, was approached by a physician who wanted to get some assurance that he was living as a sanctified, triumphant Christian should live. It seems that a certain man had done the doctor a serious injustice. The doctor, in return, had been bitter. Now he wanted Dr. Trumbull to know the situation was improved.

"You mean that you love him," said Dr. Trumbull.

"Well, I do not have that old bitterness I used to have."

"You love him then?"

"Why," said the doctor, "I am indifferent to him."

"Do you love him?" insisted Dr. Trumbull. Whereupon the man admitted, "I do not." Here was a case where a Christian was still inwardly enslaved by an old sentiment. The situation might have improved: at least the old doctor did not "see red" every time he laid eyes on his enemy. But—and I say this with emphasis—improvement is not victory. Nor is indifference perfect love—far from it. Jesus did not say, "Blessed are the indifferent in heart, for they shall see God." His word is, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." There, Christian, is your Emancipation Proclamation: the promise of a pure heart.

Surely we want to know the condition on which we may be set free. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

The simple truth is: Christ gives freedom by giving Himself. He is forever free; and where He is invited to come, there liberty has its home and its happiness. Look at verse 35: "The servant abideth not in the house forever but the Son abideth ever." That is to say, the servant or slave of sin does not need to remain forever in the house of sin. Why? Because the mighty Son of God, who dwells forever in the house of God's righteousness and love, will take a sin-bound man by the hand and lead him out into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Turn Over The Reins!

Henry Drummond, riding on the driver's seat of a public coach, was working with his usual, prayerful skill to win the coachman to Christ. The man's reluctance to surrender was due to his fear that a certain habit by which he was bound would not permit a free and per-

manent decision.

"Suppose," said Drummond, "that your horses ran away and you lost control of them as they raced down a steep hill. What would you do?" The man confessed that he would be helpless. "But suppose," said Drummond, "that someone sat by your side who was really stronger, more skilled, than you are. What would you do?"

"I should give him the reins," came the quick reply of the coachman.

"Of course," said Drummond. "And your life has got out of control. It is running away with you. Jesus Christ, stronger than you, because He is God, asks for the reins of your life. Turn them over to Him."

Turn over the reins to Jesus Christ!

UNCOMPROMISING . . .

I am often told today that what the Church of God needs in order to succeed is to catch the spirit of the age. I reply that the Church succeeds only in proportion as she corrects the spirit of the age. I am told that if I am to succeed as a Christian worker I must adopt the methods of the world. Then, by God's help, I will be defeated. We are not in the world to borrow the world's maxims and spirit. The world would crucify Jesus just as readily now as nineteen centuries ago. The Cross is no more popular in the world today than when men nailed Him to the cross on the green hillside outside the city gate nineteen centuries ago.

—G. Campbell Morgan.

OBITUARY

On Sunday evening, June 8th, **John Smith, Sr.**, passed away at his home at Port Maitland, at the age of 77. His death came as a shock. He is survived by his widow, five sons, all residing here: Raymond, Edward, Bernard, John and Frank; two daughters, Mrs. (Rev.) Gordon Symonds (Eva) at Seal Cove, Grand Manan, and Hattie Smith, of Waterville; also two sisters, Mrs. Hattie Haskell, residing here, and Mrs. Charles Adams, Gloucester, Mass. Mr. Smith was a life long member of the Reformed Baptist Church, and as long as health permitted, he was a faithful attendant. The funeral service took place Wednesday from the Reformed Baptist Church, conducted by his pastor, the Rev. H. S. Mullen, and was largely attended. A male quartette from the Sandford R. B. Church sang four beautiful selections.

On May 19th, 1947, North Head Church sustained another great loss in the passing of **Brother William Parker**. He was in his 80th year and until a few weeks before his death was able to attend church regularly each Sunday morning. He succeeded Brother Edward Redmond as deacon, and his presence will be greatly missed in the church as well as the community in which he spent his entire life.

Brother Parker was a devoted husband and father and a Christian gentleman in every respect. He leaves, besides his sorrowing widow, three sons, William jr., Charles and Gordon, and one daughter, Mrs. Ralph Griffin, all of North Head.

The funeral service was conducted by the pastor, Rev. J. A. Owens, from the home, and the church choir rendered favorite hymns. Interment was made in North Head cemetery. Our prayers and sympathy follow the bereaved ones.