

realize in their inmost consciousness that they are under either of those dread burdens; for the painful sense that we need redemption will never yield to a very ardent interest in a controversy as to which of two Scripture phrases uses the best terms for expressing our bondage.

So we seek to understand the gospel as a divine instrumentality, through doctrines, precepts, counsels, warnings, and promises, — all kindled with the power of inspired truth, — for saving men from every thing from which it is desirable to be saved: from the bondage of the flesh, and all unrighteousness; from the curse of sin; from an evil heart of unbelief, from superstition and despair; from uncheered grief; from a godless life, and from a hopeless death. To understand the gospel, we have to realize, that, in our natural condition, and so far as all the wisdom and resources of the world can help us, we are in that unredeemed and unsanctified state, which, while it still leaves us enough of the furniture of a religious nature to be conscious of want and risk and sin, makes us dependent upon a power above our own for all relief. Prayer and preaching; ordinances and means of grace; private meditation; self-conflict; the experiences of life to ourselves and to others; the past, with all its burden of instruction and example; and the working testimonies of faith in Christian fellowships and Christian enterprises, — these are our helps for understanding the gospel. We may be perplexed by the knowledge that the gospel has been so variously understood, and has opened so many controversies. These controversies of men about the gospel are, however, matters of light moment, compared with that controversy between men and God which the gospel is to reconcile. After we have yielded for a