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Contributors and Correspondents

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"WHOSOEVER SHALL KEEP THE WHOLE LAW, AND YET OFFEND IN ONE POINT, HE IS GUILTY OF ALL."—JAMES II. 10.

BY RODERICK HENDERSON, FLORIDA.

By failing in only one point to meet the requirements of God's law we are "guilty of all." This follows from the principle of all law, especially the Divine. Adam obeyed all the laws of his God perfectly, but one. It was, in itself, a small thing, but it was the principle involved that made it of such tremendous consequence that the disobedience at that one little point is attended with evil as terrible as the curse, and as lasting as eternity. In order to do and be as God desires, we must come up to all his requirements, with no exception. Let us try to illustrate this truth.

How is it with those who live "near the cross," and strive every day, with all their might, after that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord?" What shall we say of such when the Bible teaches that however near we may be, "there is none that doeth good and sinneth not?" And especially when we learn that a lustful look, a secret desire, is iniquity in the sight of God, what shall we say? If the Christian be everything else that the Bible requires, yet have these secret faults, does he break the law? Is he guilty of all? No! For such a Christian, like Paul, can say, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I find another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin." "If then I do that which I would not. . . it is no more I that do it but sin that dwelleth in me." Here is the difference between the Christian, like the Apostle, who wages warfare against every "appearance of evil" in his heart, and the Christian, like David, who cherishes some wrong desire, small in its beginning perhaps, till it grows strong, and ruthlessly throws him helpless and wounded at its feet.

Take a step downwards now, and look at the Christian who fails in some point of duty—not the cold, lifeless Christian, necessarily, but the man who is alive and earnest, yet fails in one thing.

For example.—There are those who are earnest workers for Christ, whose "heart's desire, and prayer is" that they may "win souls; but who have not the success for which they work and pray because they fail in some duty which they know they should perform. There are earnest ministers of the gospel whose labors are not blessed, because for fear of offending, say, a rich brewer in their congregation, they will handle the sin of intemperance very gently. The vile demon has the Church of the Living God by the throat! A man has no business to look for a blessing, if he be not emptied of man-fear, and filled with God-fear—if he do not perform and "declare the whole counsel of God."

Another example.—A Christian may fail through not understanding his duty perfectly. Parents may anxiously desire to train up their children for Christ, may give them good instruction morally, send them regularly to Sabbath School, and even pray with them every day, and so look for them to grow up to be Christians; but those parents have no right to look for the conversion of their children anytime, if they neglect telling them faithfully of their need of a Saviour—that children need Jesus as well as old people.

These examples will suggest others of a kindred nature.

Now, not only will such short-comings, humanly speaking, limit the number of "such as should be saved," and rob the Redeemer of the eternal honor which our faithfulness would bring Him, but they will keep ourselves from having close fellowship with Jesus, and enjoying the "blessings which accompany and flow from it," like that Christian who strives, not only to know, but to do all the will of God. Take a boy who loves his mother, and wants to do what will please her, still who does something that would grieve her, if she knew it. That one thing keeps him just so far from having fellowship with her. We may love Christ, and desire to live in close fellowship with him, but if there is one sin—and "sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God"—that sin is ground on which Christ will not walk with us. "How can two walk together unless they be agreed?" God is not pleased with the Christian who is selfish, or keeps anything back, or who works with all his might, blindly. "If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness"—disobedience or ignorance—"we lie and do not the truth." Now, if we know our "begetting sin," and seek

earnestly to be fully consecrated to the Divine will, whatsoever we ask shall be done unto us. But the child of God may not be certain as to what his duty is, and so cannot know how to honor Christ and thereby secure fellowship with Him. God wants us to be certain. This is why He has given the Word and the Holy Ghost. Neglecting to study the Bible so as to learn unquestioningly the will of God, is itself a short-coming, a sin that will keep us from Jesus, and Jesus from us.

Now take the self-righteous, not hypocrites who know they are going to hell, but those who think they are "right in the sight of God" because they come up, or think they come up to what they consider to be the requirements of His word. A man may say he has faith in Christ which is "the principal thing," and it matters but little about the life. Let the Apostle James answer such a man. "What shall it profit, my brethren, if a man say 'I have faith,' and have not works? Can faith save him? . . . Ye see then how that by works a man is justified before God, and not by faith alone." Away with Antinomianism! It is a monstrous lie!

On the other hand there are those who think if they live moral lives, or are church members and live up to "the rules," all is well. Many who should know differently will tell you if they do the best they can God will save them. "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we can be saved, but the name of Christ." This sweeps away everything else, doing the best we can, and all. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Though we could keep the commands of God as perfectly as Adam did before the fall, but lacked living faith in Christ, our good works could not save us. It is sad to think of those who really love to see the cause of Christ prosper, whose morality and charity are unimpeachable, so that they are like and unlike many Christians, who believe they are right before God—it is sad to see such failing in the one thing needful, and so losing heaven.

It is not as we think and do, however honestly, but as the Word of God declares. A man who found a lump of yellow but worthless metal, resembling gold, and thinking he had gotten a treasure, hastened with it, from the rocks where he found it, a distance of several hundred miles, to an eminent mineralogist, and said to him, "Sir, I have found a large piece of gold, please tell me how much it is worth." He said "here is gold," when, instead, he should have asked the man of learning to examine and see what it was. Imagine how he felt when told it was not gold at all, and was not worth its weight in sand. Many think they are right before God because they have what they deem to be fit for heaven, and are hastening, not to find from the Bible if they have genuine fitness, but hastening to the judgment seat of Christ, with all confidence that their righteousness, whatever it may be, is gold. It is an awful moment in which to be awakened to their real state when the Judge declares their righteousness to be dross, and fit only for eternal burnings!

Again, there are those who do know the way of salvation, and have a desire to be saved, but some sin hinders them from fully surrendering to Christ. The seeker must throw away all his sins, or rather, bring all his sins to the fountain, and not come with all except one. One sin will destroy the soul. One mortal wound will kill a man just as certainly as a thousand! So one sin unrepented of will ruin the soul just as effectually as a thousand. If a boy have a bird, and tie a light, long string to one of its legs, with the other end of the string in his hand, he can let the bird soar up into its aerial home, until it thinks itself to be free, and whenever he wishes pull it down and place it securely in a cage: so Satan has the soul as it were by a string when he has a hold upon it by any sin; and he will by one sin pull the soul from the threshold of heaven down to eternal death. And this may happen to those who know the consequences of dying unsaved, and desire salvation. Look at the rich young nobleman. He came running—earnestness; kneeling—humility; to Jesus—the right person; asking for eternal life—the right thing. One thing drew him away from Christ and hindered him from entering into life. Many, like him, turn away from heaven and its eternal joys in order to enjoy some worldly pleasure a little longer. Heaven forever lost! Everlasting woe! All through one sin! Did I say it was sad to think of a man meeting all the requirements of God's will so far as he knew, but losing heaven because he failed in one particular of which he did not know? Sadder far to think of the man who knows the way, desires to be saved, and understands all that is involved in choosing and refusing, but is lost through some sin with which he would not part.

Oh how such a soul will be lashed in hell! The heathen who never heard of Jesus—those who mistook the meaning of the Bible—those who know the way but never desired salvation—and his own conscience—but let me stop. God have mercy on such sinners!

There are those who are earnestly seeking but cannot find the peace which the Bible promises. Whose fault is it?—God's or the sinner's? What such a one must do is come "to the throne of grace," pleading "search me and see what evil thing is in me and lead me in the way everlasting;" and if God answer not a prayer like that coming from the depth of a burdened soul, it is because he is beginning to break His word—but that is impossible. The persevering seeker never goes to hell. The one thing that keeps many out of Christ is ceasing to seek. Remember the Syrochænicæan woman. Doubting that Jesus is willing to receive—fearing that we are too sinful to be pardoned—any of the innumerable questionings of this nature may be the one thing that keeps a soul out of Christ. "Christ died for the ungodly," and "all have sinned;" so the way is clear in that direction. But perhaps the Bible itself is the one thing that keeps a soul from Jesus. The seeker may have no sin that he loves, no doubt but that Jesus is able and willing to save; but he says, "the Bible tells me to come to Jesus, but also says that no one can come except the Father draw him. What am I to do?" Suppose a mother takes her little child just able to stand but not to walk, and stands it up and says, "come over here to me." "Come!" says the mother, so as to awaken a desire in the little one to come. And when it throws out its hands the mother reaches over and catches them, leading the child up to her knee. So it really does go to its mother, though unable to walk by itself. The Bible tells the sinner of the greatness of the Saviour's love—of the blessedness of the man whose God is the Lord—of the joys of the life above, and says, "Come to Jesus," just to awaken the desire to come. If any one have this desire, let him be sure it is the Father's drawing, and let him throw out the arms of his faith to Christ, then Christ will reach out, all the way from heaven, and bring that soul to His heart forever.

Seeing that so much of such momentous importance hangs on doing the will of God perfectly, all are called upon to exert all their powers to know this will as God wants it to be known.

The Christian is called upon to do so. By the thought of the Father's everlasting love—by the thought of all that Jesus did, and does, and is to do—by the thought that fulness of joy here, and glory hereafter, shall be according as he lives and works with all his might, and in the right way, or not, the Christian is called upon to study his Bible, with intensest devotion, by the light of Calvary.

The sinner is called upon to do so. By the thought of how much God valued the soul when He expended so much love on its behalf—by the thought of heaven, and that soon he shall need it with its peace, and love, and eternal rest—by the thought of how awful it is to be almost saved, yet lost, the sinner is called upon to come with the Bible to the cross of Jesus, so as to fully learn, and fully comply with, all the terms of God.

WHAT WE OWE TO THE REFORMATION.

The good effected by the Reformation is not so well appreciated in the present day as it has been. We hear and read a great deal about the errors of the Reformers, but very little about the magnitude of the evils from which we have been delivered by their instrumentality. Their mistakes are magnified, while the value of those grand principles which they rescued from the dust of ages is overlooked. In the face of this tendency it is encouraging to meet with even one popular writer who manfully breasts the tide and defends the men, the work, and the principles of the Reformation. We refer to the Rev. Canon Ryle M.A., Vicar of Stradbroke, who has written so many good tracts in times gone by, and who has recently written one tract more. We cannot do better than give our readers some extracts from it without further comment.

"Let me clear the way by saying that I do not pretend to endorse the character of all the agents by whom the English Reformation was carried out, or to approve of everything which they did. I do not for a moment maintain that Henry VIII. was a godly man. No! Too often he was a brutal tyrant. I do not say that the statesmen who surrounded him were faultless characters. Far from it. Too many of

them made a market of the Reformation, and enriched their families by plundering abbey lands—I do not ask you to believe that Cranmer, and other Reformers, either in the days of Henry the Eighth, or Edward the Sixth, or Elizabeth, were angels, and made no mistakes, I frankly admit that they did some things which they ought not to have done, and left undone some things which they ought to have done. But you must remember that God does a great deal of good work with very imperfect tools, such as Sennacherib, and Nebuchadnezzar, and Cyrus. All I do maintain is, that the whole result of the Protestant Reformation was an enormous gain to this country. And I confidently assert that England before the Reformation was as unlike England after the Reformation as black and white, darkness and light, night and day. Facts, stubborn facts, exist to prove the correctness of this assertion, and some of those facts I shall try to bring before you.

"I begin by saying that the Reformation delivered England from an immense quantity of evils. In describing those evils, it is hard to know where to begin and where to leave off. Their number is legion. The utmost I can do is to give you a short summary of them, and to ask you to believe that the half is left untold.

(a) For one thing the Reformation delivered England from gross religious ignorance and a spiritual darkness that might be felt. No doubt there was a professing Church of Christ in the land when Henry VIII. ascended the throne, a Church abounding in wealth, and garrisoned by a whole army of Bishops, Abbots, Friars, Priests, Monks, and Nuns. But money and clergy were not make a Church of Christ any more than "men with muskets" make up an army. For any useful and soul-saving purposes the English Church was practically dead, and if St. Paul had come out of his grave and visited it, I doubt if he would have called it a Church at all. The plain truth is, that it was a Church without a Bible; and such a Church is as useless as a light-house without a light,—a candlestick without a candle,—or a steam-engine without a fire. Except a few scattered copies of Wycliffe's translation of the Vulgate, there were no English Bibles in the land, and the natural consequence was that priests and people knew scarcely anything about God's truth and the way to be saved.

"As to the clergy, as a general rule, their religion was the merest form, and scarcely deserved to be called Christianity at all. Most of them were pitiful turcoats without a conscience, and were ready to change sides in religion at word of command. In fact they did so no less than four times:—once under Henry VIII., once under Edward VI., once under Bloody Mary, and once more under Elizabeth.

"The immense majority of the clergy did little more than say masses and offer up pretended sacrifices—repeat Latin prayers, and chant Latin hymns, which of course the people could not understand—hear confessions, grant absolution, give extreme unction, and take money to get dead people out of purgatory. Preaching was utterly at a discount. As Bishop Latimer truly remarked, "When the devil gets influence in a Church, up go candles and down goes preaching." Quarterly sermons were indeed prescribed to the clergy, but not insisted on. Latimer says that while mass was never to be left unsaid for a single Sunday, sermons might be omitted for twenty Sundays in succession, and nobody was blamed. After all, when sermons were preached they were utterly unprofitable; and latterly, to preach much was to incur the suspicion of being a heretic.

"To cap all, the return that Bishop Hooper got from the rich diocese of Gloucester, no barbarous and uncivilized corner of England, when he was first appointed Bishop in 1551, will give you a pretty clear idea of the ignorance of pre-Reformation times. He found that out of 311 clergy of his diocese, 168 were unable to repeat the Ten Commandments; 81 of the 168 could not say in what part of the Scripture they were to be found; 40 could not tell where the Lord's Prayer was written; and 31 of the 40 did not know who was the author of the Lord's Prayer!

"As to the laity it is not too much to say that the bulk of them, except in the hour of trial, sickness, and death, had no religion at all. Even at such seasons as those there was no one to tell them of the love of God, the meditation of Christ, the glad tidings of free salvation, the precious blood of atonement, and justification by faith. They could only send for the priest, who knew nothing himself and could tell nothing to others; and then at last they received absolution and extreme unction, and took a leap in the dark. 'The blind led the blind and both fell into the ditch.'"

To sum up all in a few words, the religion of our English forefathers before the Reformation was a religion without knowledge, without faith, and without lively hope—a religion without justification, regeneration, and sanctification—a religion without any clear views of Christ or the Holy Ghost. Except in rare instances, it was little better than an organized system of Mary-worship, saint-worship, image-worship, relic-worship, pilgrimages, almsgivings, formalism, ceremonialism, processions, prostrations, bowings, crossings, fastings, confessions, penances, absolutisms, masses, and blind obedience to the priests. It was a huge higgledy-piggledy of ignorance and idolatry, and serving an unknown God by deputy. The only practical result was that the priests took the people's money, and undertook to secure their salvation, and the people flattered themselves that the more they gave to the priests the more sure they were to go to heaven. As to the grand cardinal question, "What must I do to be saved?" probably no one Englishman in fifty could have given you half as good an answer as an ordinary Sunday-school child would give in our own day. Such was the

ignorance which was scattered to the winds by the English Reformation. Mind you do not forget it.

"For another thing, the Reformation delivered England from the most grovelling, childish, superstitious practices in religion. I allude especially to the worship of relics. Destitute of the slightest scriptural knowledge, our forefathers were taught by the priests to seek spiritual benefit from the so-called relics of the dead saints, and to treat them with divine honour. The accounts which those trustworthy old historians, Strype, and Fuller, and Burnet have handed down to us about these wretched relics up to the middle of Henry VIII's reign, are so extraordinary, that you ought to hear some of them.

"At Reading Abbey in Berkshire, within a mile of the present station of the Great Western Railway, the following things among many others were exhibited by the monks on great occasions, and most religiously honoured by the people,—an angel with one wing,—the pear-head which pierced our Saviour's side,—two pieces of the Holy Cross,—St. James' hand,—St. Philip's stole,—a bone of Mary Magdalene, and a bone of Salome. (Strype, i. 300.)

"At Bury St. Edmund's in Suffolk, the priests exhibited the coals that roasted St. Laurence, the parings of St. Edmund's toenails, Thomas a Becket's penknife and boots, and as many pieces of our Saviour's cross as would have made, if joined together, one large whole cross. They had also relics whose help was invoked at times when there was an excessive growth of weeds or an unusually heavy fall of rain!—Burnet's Ref. i. 486.

"At Maiden Bradley Priory, in Somersetshire, the worshippers were privileged to see the Virgin Mary's smock, a piece of the stone upon which our Lord was born at Bethlehem, and a part of the bread used by Christ and the Apostles at the first Lord's Supper.—(Strype, i. 391.)

"At Burton Priory, in Somerset, was kept a girdle of the Virgin Mary made of red silk. This solemn relic was lent as a special favour to women in childbirth, to insure them a safe delivery. The like was done with a white girdle of Mary Magdalene, kept at Farley Abbey, in Wiltshire. In neither case, we may be sure, was the relic sent without a pecuniary consideration.—(Strype, i. 391.)

"Even in the Midland Counties, I am sorry to say, superstition was just as bad as in the South of England. Strype records that at St. Mary's Nunnery, in Derby, the nuns had a piece of St. Thomas' shirt, and that it was worshipped by women expecting their confinement. At Dale Abbey, near Derby, they worshipped part of the girdle of the Virgin Mary, and some of her milk! At Repton Monastery the bell of St. Guthlac was held in special honor, and people put their heads under it to cure the headache. At Grace Dieu Nunnery in Leicestershire, they worshipped the girdle and part of the coat of St. Francis.—(Strype, i. 393.)

"Records like these are so amazingly silly as well as painful, that one hardly knows whether to laugh or cry over them. But it is positively necessary to bring them forward, in order that men may know what was the religion of our forefathers in the days Rome ruled the land before the Reformation. Wonderful as these things may seem we must never forget that Englishmen at that time had no Bibles, and knew no better. A famishing man in sieges and blockades has been known to eat rats and mice and all manner of garbage, rather than die of hunger. A conscience stricken soul, famishes for lack of God's Word, must not be judged too hardly, if it struggles to find comfort in the debasing superstition. Only let us never forget that this was the superstition which was shattered to pieces by the Reformation. Remember that. It was indeed a deliverance.

"For another thing, the Reformation delivered England from the degrading tyranny and swindling impostures of the Romish priesthood.

"In the last days of the Pope's supremacy in this land, the laity were thoroughly 'sat upon' by the clergy, and could hardly call their souls their own. The power of priests was practically despotic, and was used for every purpose except the advancement of true religion. Like the frogs in the plague of Egypt, they made their way everywhere, both in the palace and in the cottage, met you at every turn of life, and had a finger in every transaction. They interfered by the confessional between husbands and wives—between parents and children—between masters and servants—between landlords and tenants—between subjects and sovereigns—between souls and God. Obey them and you might do anything, and commit any sin. Resist them and you had no peace, and no safety either for property or life."

Ministers and Churches.

[We urgently solicit from Presbytery Clerks and our readers generally, items for this department of our paper, and to make it a general epitome of all local church news.]

The congregation of St. Andrew's Church, East Williams, have given a unanimous call to the Rev. John Wells.

Twenty-six new names were lately added to the communion roll of Granton congregation. This brings the number of names on the list of membership up to one hundred and forty-seven.

Rev. H. McKELLAR was lately presented with a purse containing \$68.50, by numerous friends in Moore. The presentation was made at a public meeting held under the auspices of the Collville Temple of Good Templars.