

The Poison of Serpents

O that they were wise . . . “and that they understood this; *yea*, that they would consider their latter end. *for* how should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight? except their rock had sold them, and the LORD had shut them up?

For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes (doctrine, teaching, instruction) are grapes of gall (bitterness), their clusters are bitter. Their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps . . . !”

Deuteronomy 32:1-2 and 32:29-33

Quote –

“ **The sense of sin** has poisoned the springs of *your* life. But Christ says, “I will take your sins; I will give you *My* peace (John 14:27). I have bought you with My blood. You are Mine. My grace shall strengthen your weakened will; *and* your remorse for sin I will remove . . .”

– Ministry of Healing, p.84

Quote –

Jesus is the only hope of the soul. “By faith every soul may say with the Psalmist, “Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee.” [The moment the sinner lays hold of Christ by faith, that moment his sins are no longer upon him.](#) **Christ stands in the sinner’s place** (as our Substitute and Surety), and declares, “I have borne his (II Corinthians 5:21) guilt, I have been punished for his _____ (your name) transgressions, I have taken his sins, and put My righteousness upon him (Zechariah 3:1-9).” In Christ the sinner stands guiltless before the law of God . . . !”

– Present Truth, January 30, 1890

Quote -

“It is in looking upon our sinful condition, and talking and mourning over our wretchedness, that distress becomes more keen, and pain accumulates. **Let the sinner arise in the strength of Jesus;** for he has no strength of his own, [and let him assert his liberty.](#) [Let him believe that the Lord has spoken Truth, and trust in Him, whatever may be the feelings of the heart.](#)

[Let the sinner say, I will look away from my own misery, from the wound of the serpent, to the uplifted Saviour, Who has said, “Him that cometh to Me, I will in nowise cast out” \(John 6:37\).](#) Look upon Jesus. “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world !”

It is your privilege to believe that [Christ has borne your sins;](#) for God hath “laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:4-12). You are under the shelter of the sure Refuge, under the cover of the atoning blood of the acceptable sacrifice.

All legalism (you get what you deserve) . . . “*as a man soweth, so shall ye also reap*” . . . all the

sorrow and woe by which you may encompass yourself, will not give you one moment of relief. You cannot rightly estimate sin. **You must accept God's estimate**, and it is heavy indeed. **If you bore the guilt of your sin, it would crush you**; but the sinless One has taken your place . . . and though undeserving, **He has borne your guilt**. By accepting the provision God has made, you may stand free before Him in the merit (worthiness) and virtue of your Substitute.

Christ is the friend of sinners. When the scribes and Pharisees accused Him of eating, with publicans and sinners, Jesus said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." If you feel yourself to be the greatest of sinners, then Christ is just what you need; for He is the greatest of Saviours.

Lift up your head, and look away from yourself, *look* away from the poisoned wound of the serpent . . . to the Lamb of God, Who taketh away the sins of the world (Hebrews 10:4-20).

What will all your groaning and the torturing of your soul avail? **You may entertain thoughts that condemn you**, but in them there is no Salvation . . . "*for as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he*" (Proverbs 23:7 and 4:23) . . .

Put away your thoughts, and receive the thoughts of God (Jeremiah 29:11-14), through which your mind may be elevated, your soul purified (Ephesians 5:25) and uplifted. **The Lord says:** "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. **In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for *but* a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee**, saith the Lord thy Redeemer."

Why will you carry your burden of sin, when Christ has come to be your burden bearer? Roll your sins at the foot of the cross. Unload! unload! He takes away the sins of the world, *and says* . . . I, even I Am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine Own sake, and *I* will not remember thy sins." {BEcho, July 2, 1894 par. 4}

You have been pronounced a sinner, and Christ has announced Himself a Saviour. Accept the remedy God has provided for you in a sin-pardoning Saviour.

How would you have felt had you been in the camp of Israel, **and seen the people groaning and shrieking in distress because of their swollen and painful wounds (Numbers 21:4-9), when the brazen serpent was uplifted, and when by one look they might be healed?** Would you not have exclaimed, "why do they not look at the uplifted serpent? How strange it is that they do not perform the one simple act by which they may receive healing!"

But is it not as inconsistent for you _____ (your name) to refuse to look at the crucified Saviour? Heed the invitation . . . "Look unto Me, and BE ye saved* (rescued, delivered, set free, healed and made whole), all the ends of the earth, for I Am God, and there is none else . . . !" Isaiah 45:22-25

"Seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts (Jeremiah 4:14); and let him return unto the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon !" {BEcho, July 2, 1894 par. 5}

Why should the repenting sinner forsake his thoughts?--It is because they are not in accordance with Truth (John 17:17). **He is tempted to believe** that because of his sins God has given him up to the will of his enemy, and **that there is no pardon for so great a sinner as he**. But all these thoughts are dishonouring to God, because man is God's possession, both by creation and redemption.

"God so loved the world, that He gave up (*in exchange*) His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him [as his personal Saviour, and accepts Him as the only provision whereby he can be saved] should not perish, but have everlasting Life." John 3:16

You are one of the "whosoever may believe." **But while you cherish unbelief**, and permit feeling to govern you, your case will look hopeless to yourself. Forsake these unbelieving thoughts. For God says: "My thoughts are not your thoughts _____ (your name), neither are your ways My ways. . . . For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."

O Who is a God like unto Thee? "that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression* (rebellion and apostasies) of the remnant of His heritage, *yea* . . . He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy . . . !"

Micah 7:18-20

Moses prayed that God would show him His glory, "and the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him, (Moses) and proclaimed, **The LORD, The LORD God, merciful** (full of mercy) **and gracious**, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and Truth . . . keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity* and transgression* and sin* (side slip, habitual failures), and . . . that will by no means clear the guilty." Exodus 34:1-7 and Romans 3:24-26

This is the character of the God in Whom you are to put your trust. "**God is love**" (self-sacrificing). Repeat this sentence whenever temptation presses upon you. Remember that He is just and merciful, True and gracious, and will by no means clear the guilty.

God can be just, and yet be the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus (the Word and Promise of God). **He will accept you just as you are**; **for there is no hope of your becoming better until you come to Jesus for pardon and sanctification**. Mourning and weeping will not purify you. You may mourn your life away in unbelief and in bitterness of soul; but the power to cleanse the vilest sinner is vested wholly in Him Who can save unto the uttermost.

God does not ask you to feel that Jesus is your Saviour, but to believe that He died (personally – Romans 6:10-11) for you , . . . and that His blood now cleanseth you from all sin.

You have been bitten by the serpent, and as the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness that the dying might look and live, so Christ was lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not

perish, but have Eternal Life. [Saving faith is simplicity itself](#). You must cry no more; you must cease to hang down your head as a bulrush. Look to the uplifted Saviour, and, [however grievous](#) may have been your sins, believe He saves you !

for God's Word declares it . . . !

II Timothy 1:9 and Titus 2:14 and 3:5-7

All the remedies and medicines of the world would have failed to cure [one soul who had been bitten by the venomous serpent](#); but God had provided a remedy that could not fail. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Be not among the number to whom the Saviour said, "Ye will not come unto Me that ye might have Life." Oh, how He longed to save them; for while we were yet sinners (not waiting for us to make ourselves good), Christ died for us.

Take the Word of Jesus as more sure and valuable than any word that can come from the human agent. Thank God with your whole heart and soul and voice that [you are](#) barricaded with the rich promises of His infallible Word, so that the wicked one shall not touch you. [God will give you the Holy Spirit, even though it may seem to you that it is too good to be true](#). "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who *then* can be against us? He that spared not His Own Son, but delivered Him up *in exchange* for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give* us all things?" Romans 8:31-32

– Bible Echo, July 2, 1894

Look and Live !

Quote -

"And they journeyed from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom; and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way." The Lord does not remove all the difficulties and trials and hardships from the pathway of his people. He would have them learn to put their trust in him, believing that the invisible God is their mighty helper. The children of Israel became accustomed to the presence of the pillar of cloud, that covered them as a canopy by day, and was as a pillar of fire by night. They came to look upon the cloud as a common thing. They did not appreciate the fact that they were favored with the presence of the only-begotten Son of God, who was equal with God; and, in spite of all their perversity, their murmuring and rebellion, he had done wonderful things for them in all their journeyings. {ST, April 2, 1894 par. 1}

The Lord had said: "**Behold, I send an Angel before thee**, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of Him, and obey His Voice, provoke Him not; for He will not pardon your transgressions; for my name is in Him. But if thou shalt indeed obey His Voice, and do [all that I speak](#); then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. For mine Angel shall go before thee."

The one great object of the care and guardianship of Christ was the church in the wilderness. He said of Israel: "I Am the LORD thy God, [the Holy One of Israel](#), thy Saviour; I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee _____ (your name); therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life." Egypt was desolated with plagues and became a wasted land, in order that Israel might be freed from bondage; but the people did not appreciate the goodness and mercy and love of God.

The Lord, their Redeemer, undertook to lead and guide them, but when he brought them into strait places, they were discouraged because of the way, and spake against God and Moses, saying: **“Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.** And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.”

The Lord had fed them with the bread of heaven, even with angels’ food; and yet they murmured against him. **By his power he had** held in check the wild beasts of the forests, and the reptiles of the wilderness, so that they had not hurt His people; but now He removed His restraining hand, and let the poisonous serpents do as they would have done all along the way had the Lord not restrained them. The real trouble that now came upon them served to bring them to their senses, and to awaken their paralyzed thoughts as to what course to pursue. “Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that He take away the serpents from us. . . .

And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole; **and it shall come to pass, that everyone that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.** And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole; and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.”

Throughout the camp of Israel there were **the suffering and the dying who had been wounded by the deadly sting of the serpent.** But Jesus Christ spoke from the pillar of cloud, and gave directions whereby the people might be healed. The promise was made that whosoever looked upon the brazen serpent should live; and to those who looked the promise was verified.

But if anyone said: **“What good will it do to look?** I shall certainly die under the serpent’s deadly sting;” if he continued to talk of his deadly wound, and declared that his case was hopeless, and would not perform the simple act of obedience, he would die. But everyone who looked, lived !”

– Signs of the Times, April 2, 1894

Jesus said: “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal Life.”

“ For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only-Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting Life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.” John 3:14-18

Christ is speaking to us now as certainly as He spoke to the children of Israel in the wilderness. He is the Healer of both body and soul. Our attention is now called to the Great Physician. **“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”** **Just as long as we look at our sins,** and talk of and deplore our wretched condition, our wounds and putrefying sores will remain.

It is when we take our eyes from ourselves, and fasten them upon the uplifted Saviour, that our souls find hope and peace. The Lord speaks to us through His Word (John 14:10-11), bidding us

“Look and live.” “He that hath received His testimony hath set to his seal that God is True !

For He Whom God hath sent speaketh the Words of God; for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting Life.”

There is every reason why we should be encouraged to hope* (have confidence, assurance) for the Salvation of our souls. **In Jesus Christ** every provision for our Salvation has been made.

No matter what may have been our sins and shortcomings, **there is a Fountain open in the house of David (Zechariah 13:1) for all sin and uncleanness.** “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD; though your sins be as scarlet _____ (your name), they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” (Isaiah 1:18). This is the Word of the LORD. Shall we accept it? **Shall we believe on Him ?**

David had been bitten by the fiery serpent,--**he had been poisoned with the venom of sin**,--yet hear the words that describe his experience after looking upon the uplifted Saviour: “Blessed is he whose transgression **is forgiven**, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. . . .

I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions (rebellion, apostasies) unto the LORD; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. For this shall everyone that is godly pray unto Thee in a time when Thou mayest be found; surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. **Thou art my hiding place; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble; Thou shalt compass me about with songs (Zephaniah 3:14-18) of deliverance.**” “The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. . . The LORD redeemeth the souls of His servants, and none of them that trust in Him shall be desolate !”

– Signs of the Times, April 2, 1894

Quote -

“It is not safe for us to linger to contemplate the advantages to be reaped through yielding to Satan’s suggestions. **Sin means dishonor and disaster to every soul that indulges in it; but (for) it is blinding and deceiving in its nature**, and it will entice us with flattering presentations. If we venture on Satan’s ground we have no assurance of protection from his power. So far as in us lies, we should close every avenue by which the tempter may find access to us.

The prayer, “Bring us not into temptation,” is itself a promise. If we commit ourselves to God we have the assurance, He “will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” I Corinthians 10:13.

The only safeguard against evil is the indwelling of Christ in the heart . . . **through faith** in His righteousness !

It is because selfishness exists in our hearts that temptation has power over us. But when we behold the great love (*self-sacrifice* - John 15:13) of God, **selfishness** appears to us in its hideous and

repulsive character, and we desire to have it expelled from the soul. As the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ, our hearts are softened and subdued, the temptation loses its power, and the grace of Christ transforms the character.

Christ will never abandon the soul for whom He has died. [The soul may leave Him and be overwhelmed with temptation, but Christ can never turn from one for whom He has paid the ransom of His own Life.](#)

Could our spiritual vision be quickened, we should see souls bowed under oppression and burdened with grief, pressed as a cart beneath sheaves and ready to die in discouragement. We should see angels flying swiftly to aid these tempted ones, who are standing as on the brink of a precipice.

The angels from heaven force back the hosts of evil that encompass these souls, and guide them to plant their feet on the sure foundation. The battles waging between the two armies are as real as those fought by the armies of this world, and on the issue of the spiritual conflict eternal destinies depend.

To us, as to Peter, **the Word is spoken**, "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, [that thy faith fail not.](#)" Luke 22:31-32. Thank God, we are not left alone. He who "so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16), will not desert us in the battle with the adversary of God and man.

"Behold," He says, "I give unto you _____ (your name) power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you !"

Luke 10:19.

Live in contact with the living Christ (Romans 5:10), and He will hold you firmly by a hand that will never let go. [Know and believe the love that God has to us, and you are secure](#); that love is a fortress impregnable to all the delusions and assaults of Satan. "The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." Proverbs 18:10.

- Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, p.119

For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory !

Matthew 6:13 and 28:18-19

Quote -

"The only defense against evil . . . is the indwelling of Christ in the heart [through faith in His righteousness \(ref: I Corinthians 1:29-31\)](#). Unless we become [vitaly* connected with God](#) (John 15:1-7), we can never resist the unhallowed effects of self-love, self-indulgence, and temptation to sin.

We may leave off many bad habits, for the time we may part company with Satan; **but without a vital* connection with God** (John 15:7-10 and 6:63 and 14:10-11), through the surrender of ourselves to Him moment by moment, we shall be over-come. Without a personal acquaintance with Christ, and a continual communion (com-union), we are at the mercy of the enemy, and shall do his bidding in the end . . .”

- Desire of Ages, p.324-325

Quote –

“**The Lord requires no less** of the soul now, than He required of Adam in paradise before he fell-- perfect obedience, unblemished righteousness (not one failure, not one stain upon the garment). The requirement of God under the Covenant (Oath, promise) of grace is just as broad as the requirement He made in Paradise --harmony with His law, which is holy, and just, and good.

The gospel does not weaken the claims of the law; it exalts the law and makes it honorable. Under the New Testament, no less is required than was required under the Old Testament. Let no one take up with the delusion so pleasant to the natural (carnal, unregenerate) heart, that God will accept of sincerity, no matter what may be the faith, no matter how imperfect may be the life. God requires of His child perfect obedience.

In order to meet the requirements of the law (perfect obedience), our faith must grasp the righteousness of Christ, accepting it as our own righteousness. Through union* with Christ, through acceptance of His righteousness by faith, we may be qualified to work the works of God, to be collaborators with Christ.

- 1 Selected Messages, p.373

Quote –

“It is not now the work of the sinner to make peace with God, but to accept Christ as his Peace and Righteousness* (Ephesians 1:6-7 and 2:13-14 and Jeremiah 23:5-6). And thus man becomes One with Christ and One with God (John 10:30 and 17:21). There is no way by which the heart may be made holy, save through faith in Christ . . . !”

- Youth's Instructor, December 6, 1894