

True Obedience to God by Grace

by Asa Mahan

Christians can overcome their struggles with sin and live holy lives by relying on Christ's promise to shed abroad perfect love and obedience in their hearts.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 30:6, Isaiah 59:21, Jeremiah 31:31, John 3:16, 2 Corinthians 7:1, Ephesians 5:25, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Titus 2:14, 2 Peter 1:4

Topics: "Sanctification", "Obedience To God"

Description

Asa Mahan preaches about the struggle of Christians to maintain a childlike, affectionate, and obedient spirit towards God, which can only be achieved through complete surrender to Christ's control and reliance on His promises. He emphasizes the inefficiency of human resolutions in producing true heart transformation, urging believers to rely on Christ's ability to shed abroad perfect love in their hearts. Mahan highlights the new covenant's promises of complete obedience, forgiveness of sins, Divine presence, and sanctification, emphasizing that Christ offers believers the fullness of redemption and sanctification through faith.

Transcript

The great difficulty, which a vast majority of Christians feel, in respect to holy living, is the lack of the constant presence and influence of a child like, affection, confiding, and obedient spirit towards God,- a spirit which perpetually cries, Abba, Father, and consists in the spontaneous flow of the heart's purest and best affections towards Christ. If the mind could always be in this state, how easy it would be to avoid all sin, and perfectly to obey all the Divine requisitions! This spirit Christians often resolve to cherish. They find their resolutions, however, totally inefficient to move the heart. To remedy the difficulty, they resort to their Bibles and to prayer, and renew their resolutions with increasing earnestness. Still the heart remains comparatively unmoved; and whatever effect is produced by such means, very soon passes away, "like the morning cloud," leaving the heart the same "aching void" as before. Now, while the Christian is thus "resolving, and re-resolving," and constantly sliding back to the cheerless state from which he started, while, in spite of his efforts, he is perpetually sinking deeper and deeper in the "mire and deep waters," suppose the Divine Redeemer should pass along, and say to his weary and desponding disciple, If you will at once cease from all these vain efforts, and yield yourself up to My control, relying with implicit confidence in My ability and faithfulness, I will enter into a covenant with you, that I will, Myself, shed abroad in your heart that "perfect love which casts out all fear,"- that child like and affectionate spirit which you have vainly endeavored to induce in your own mind. I will so present the truth to your apprehension,

that your heart's purest and best affections shall constantly and spontaneously flow out toward me. I will secure you in a state of perfect and perpetual obedience to every command of God, and in the full and constant fruition of His presence and love. All this I will do in perfect consistency with the full, and free, and uninterrupted exercise of your own voluntary agency. Such a message would be to the believer, "afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted," as life from the dead. This, Christian, is precisely what the Lord Jesus Christ offers to do for you, as the Mediator of the new Covenant. With the Psalmist you can say, "I will run in the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart." Christ is now ready thus to enlarge your heart, that, under the spontaneous flow of pure and perfect love, you may do the whole will of God. Till your faith is fastened upon Christ, as the life and light of the soul, as the "quickening spirit," who alone is able to breathe into your heart the breath of spiritual life, all your efforts after holiness will be vain.

We need to look away from our condition and circumstances as sinners, and from our natural powers and abilities, to the provisions and promises of the grace of God. If the "riches of Christ's inheritance in the saints" includes complete obedience to God in this life, we certainly are under obligation to acquire that inheritance in all its fullness. Do you know, what has God provided for and promised to me, as a Christian?

The sinner is not required to "make himself clean," or to "make to himself a new heart," in the exercise of his unaided powers, but by application to the blood of Christ, "which cleanses from all sin." The grace which purifies the heart is provided; the fountain, whose waters cleanse from sin, is set open. To this fountain the sinner is brought, and because he may descend into it, and there "wash his garments and make them white," he can fulfill the command, "Wash you, make you clean," "make to yourself a new heart and a new spirit," and "cleanse yourself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." The sinner is able to make to himself a "new heart and a new spirit," because he can instantly avail himself of offered grace. He does literally "make to himself a new heart and a new spirit," ONLY when he yields himself up to the influence of that grace. The power to cleanse from sin lies in the blood and grace of Christ; and hence, when the sinner "purifies himself by obeying the truth through the spirit," the glory of his salvation belongs, not to him, but to Christ.

2 Peter 1:4 "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these you might be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

2 Cor. 7:1 "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." If to "escape the corruption that is in the world through lust," and to be "made partakers of the Divine nature," to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit," and to "perfect holiness," do not imply complete obedience, how, I ask, can that doctrine be expressed? That the Christian may be thus sanctified is the declared object for which the promises were given. Who will deny that they are adequate to this object? Unless they are thus inadequate, perfection in holiness is, in this life, practicable to the Christian.

Perfection in holiness is promised to the Christian in the new covenant under which he is now placed. To present this part of the subject distinctly before the reader's mind, we will first inquire what is the old or first covenant. Exod. 34:27, 28, "And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words; for after the tenor of these words have I made a covenant with thee and with Israel. And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments." Deut. 9:11, 15, "And it came to pass at the end of forty days and forty nights, that the Lord gave me the two tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant." "So I turned, and

came down from the mount, and the mount burned with fire; and the two tables of the covenant were in my hands." The first, or the old covenant, then, is the moral law, that law by which we are required to "love the Lord our God with all our powers, and our neighbor as ourselves." This covenant, as we learn from Heb. 9:1-4, had annexed to it the types and shadows of the ancient dispensation. "Then verily the first covenant had" attached to it "ordinances of Divine service, and a worldly sanctuary," etc.

What the new covenant is, we learn from Jer. 31:31-34, and Heb. 8:8-11, "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt (which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith the Lord); but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more."

The following blessings, specifically promised in this covenant, demand our special attention:

1. A confirmed state of pure and perfect holiness, such as the first covenant, or moral law, demands "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts."
2. The pardon of all sin, or perfect justification "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more."
3. The perpetual fruition of the Divine presence and favor "I will be their God, and they shall be my people."
4. The general spread of the Gospel among mankind "All shall know me."

Do you see that the relations of these two covenants are the same standard of character, perfect holiness, is common to both and what the old covenant requires of Christians, the new promises to them. For example,

The old covenant requires perfect holiness. Its language is, "Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God;" "He that keeps the whole law, and yet offends in one point, is guilty of all."

On the other hand, the new covenant promises to the believer perfect holiness. Jer. 31:32, "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." See also Heb. 8:10. Here, as above remarked, the very thing which the moral law requires is positively promised to the believer. Ezek. 36:25-27, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you shall keep my judgments, and do them." Is it in the power of language to express the doctrine of entire sanctification, if it is not here expressed?

Jer. 50:20, "In those days, and at that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found; for I will pardon them whom I

reserve." What other thought, let me ask, is such language adapted to convey but this, a state of entire sanctification?

Deut. 30:6, "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that you may live." Here the perfect holiness required by the law is promised in the very words of the law itself.

Again, The old covenant or moral law requires not only perfect, but perpetual holiness. Gal. 3:10, "Cursed is every one that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."

The new covenant, on the other hand, promises not only perfect but perpetual holiness. Jer. 32:39, 40, "And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me." If, to give to Christians one heart and one way, that they may fear God for ever, and never depart from Him, does not imply, not only perfect, but perpetual holiness, we may truly say that language cannot express that idea.

Ezek. 37:23, "Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions." Every one will perceive, that if the Holy Spirit has not here given us the promise, not only of perfect, but perpetual holiness, he has made as near an approach to it as is in the power of language to make, and that, if he had designed to express that promise, no stronger language could possibly have been used.

The same truth is taught with equal distinctness in Isa. 59:21, and Luke 1:74, 75, "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord: My Spirit which is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever." "That He would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life."

One other passage, which, if we had none others like it in the Bible, would place the doctrine under consideration upon an eternal rock. 1 Thes. 5:23, 24, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calls you, who also will do it." Here we have, a prayer for perfect and perpetual holiness, dictated by the direct inspiration of the Spirit of God. Who can believe that the Holy Spirit has dictated a prayer which is not "according to the will of God," and which He requires us to believe that God will never answer by the bestowment of the blessing desired of him?

The new covenant, is the covenant of grace, concealed to our first parents, in the promise, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," more distinctly unfolded in the promise to Abraham, and brought out in all its fulness in the new dispensation. As the Mediator of this covenant, Christ, as shown in the text, and in a preceding discourse, promises to believers, on condition of their faith in him, the following blessings:

1. A confirmed state of pure and perfect holiness, such as is required by the moral law.
2. The full pardon of all sin, or entire justification.

3. The perpetual fruition of the Divine presence and favor.

4. The consequent universal prevalence of the Gospel. Such are the "riches of the glory of Christ's inheritance in the saints." Such is the "completeness of the saints in him," as the Mediator of the new covenant.

Whatever the old covenant, or the moral law, requires of us, the new covenant, promises to the believer. The first covenant, for example, requires of the creature perfect and perpetual holiness. The new covenant promises to the believer perfect and perpetual holiness. Consider these passages: Jer. 32:39, 40, "And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them and of their children after them; and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me." Ezek. 36:25, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart, also, will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you shall keep my judgments and do them." Deut. 30:6, "And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart, and the heart of your seed, to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul." Jer. 50:20, "In those days, and at that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none, and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found." I Thess. 23, 24, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calls you, who also will do it." That Christ, as the Mediator of the new covenant, does, in these and kindred passages, promise to the believer all that the law requires of him.

The object of Christ in the provisions of Divine grace. It is, to lay the foundation and provide the means for the fulfilment, in believers, of all that is promised in the new covenant; to wit, the full and entire pardon of all their sins, their redemption from all iniquity, their perfection in holiness, and their perfect and perpetual blessedness, in an eternal fruition of the Divine presence and favor. I Pet. 2:24, "Who His own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes you were healed." Eph. v. 25-27, "Even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Tit. 2:14, "Who gave Himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works:" John 3:16, 17, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes 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." Rom. 8:3, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." I John 3:5, "And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin."

Such is the design of Christ, in all the provisions of Divine grace. It is to lay a broad foundation for the fulfilment, on his part, as the Mediator of the new covenant, of all the blessings promised in that covenant. This was the work which Christ undertook to accomplish, as the incarnate, atoning Savior; and, blessed be God, the work which he assumed in our behalf he finished. "I have finished the work which You gave me to do." "When Jesus, therefore, had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished; and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost."

Having finished this work, He now presents Himself to us, as "able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing he ever lives to make intercession for us." We are permitted, by faith, to "behold his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." "And of his fulness we may all receive, and grace for grace." Listen, hearer, to the "gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth," as our high priest and intercessor, as the "Mediator of the new covenant." "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever lives and believeth in Me, shall never die." "Come unto me, all you that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and you shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." "I will give to him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."

No matter what condition we find ourselves in, there is a specific remedy provided in the Gospel for complete and total victory. Do our lusts rebel? We are told, that if "Christ be in us, the body is dead because of sin;" that "the old man is crucified with Him." and that if we will "walk in the spirit, we shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." Do the world and Satan entice? We are assured that "this is the victory that over comes the world, even our faith;" that "stronger is He that is in us, than he that is in the world; and that, when we have "put on the whole armor of God," we shall be able, with the shield of faith, to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one." In short, from whatever source temptation to sin arises, we are assured that God will not "suffer us to be tempted above what we are able," but will, "with the temptation, make way for our escape." With Christ within us, and these "exceeding great and precious promises" around us, we are commanded to "reckon ourselves dead indeed to sin, and alive unto God through our Lord Jesus Christ." In the presence of such facts and promises, who would dare to say to the Christian, It is impracticable for you to "cleanse yourself from all filthiness of the flesh, and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God?"

We need an actual reception of Christ, and reliance upon Him for all these blessings, in all their fullness - a surrender of your whole being to Him, that He may accomplish in you all the "exceeding great and precious promises" of the new covenant. When this is done, when there is that full and implicit reliance upon Christ, for the entire fulfillment of all that He has promised, He becomes directly responsible for our full and complete redemption. "He that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die." To us His word stands pledged to "put the laws of God in our minds, and write them in our hearts;" to "circumcise our heart and the heart of our seed, to love the Lord our God with all our heart and with all our soul;" to "sprinkle clean water upon us, so that we shall be clean;" to "give us one heart and one way, that we may fear God for ever; to make an everlasting covenant with us, that He will not turn away from us to do us good, but that He will put the fear of God in our hearts, that we may not depart from Him; finally, to "sanctify us wholly, and preserve our whole spirit, and soul, and body, blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." "Do you believe this now?" Can you open your mouth thus wide? Dare you ask, or expect, from your Redeemer, less than this? I hear that Redeemer asking you the question, "Do you now believe?" "According to your faith, be it unto you." Let me ask you again, Do you desire to be filled with a child like love, confiding, and obedient spirit towards God, to be brought into such a state, that your heart's purest and best affections shall spontaneously flow out towards Christ, and the "peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your heart and mind through Christ Jesus?" Christ is now present in your heart, and ready to give all this purity and blessedness upon you, if you can believe that He is able and willing to do it for you, and will cast your entire being upon His faithfulness. To you He says, "If you can believe now, all things are possible to him that believes." Come to the fountain, and "wash your garments and make them white in the blood of the

Lamb." "Christ bore your sins in his own body on the tree, that you, being dead to sin, might live unto righteousness." Why should you any longer bear the burden of those sins? Especially when Christ, in view of the provisions of His grace, calls upon you to "reckon yourself dead, indeed, unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ your Lord.

We see how it is that often the peace of a young convert is very commonly destroyed, and his growth in grace prevented, by the instructions which he receives from older Christians. When the convert, alarmed at the discovery of inward corruptions, and of the numerous occasions of stumbling, in himself, arising from his temper, his appetites, his habits of sin, as well as the hardness of his heart, comes for counsel to those who ought to be able to point him at once to the remedy, and thus lead him to the "fountain of living waters," there is commonly a direct attempt to comfort him in his present state. He is told that his condition is "normal" and that he must not be alarmed when he finds sin in his heart. He is told that these sins, inclinations and tendencies will never be dislodged or overcome from his body until his dying day. If, now, he will turn from all such directions to the "exceeding great and precious promises" of Christ, and with humble confidence cast himself upon his faithfulness, then shall his "righteousness go forth as brightness, and his salvation as a lamp that burns." Then shall he prove, by blessed experience, the truth of the promise, "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up on wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

Finally, we perceive the infinite obligation that rests upon us, not to remain under the power of any sin; but to have our temper, our appetites, our inclinations, tendencies, habits, and all the powers and feelings of our being, subdued and brought into sweet and perfect subjection to the will of Christ, so that there shall be "none occasion of stumbling in us." For the accomplishment of this, full provision is made in the Gospel of the grace of God, and we have only to cast ourselves upon Christ for the fulfillment of the "exceeding great and precious promises" which He has given us, and all this blessedness is ours. It is your blissful privilege, in the use of these promises, to be made a "partaker of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." Remember what God has said, "Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." "See that you do not refuse Him that speaks. For if they escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven."

In our efforts after holiness, we may attain to a state of entire consecration to Christ. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which works in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure." Our hope of attaining to this state rests not at all upon a view of our own natural powers, but upon the provisions of Divine grace for our "redemption from all iniquity," and our perfect "completeness in all the will of God," together with the Divine aid that is promised to succeed all sincere efforts made in simple faith in Christ, for the attainment of that state. In the redemption of Christ, full provision is made for the entire sanctification of every believer. The Holy Spirit is given for the express purpose of so presenting the Lord Jesus Christ to our minds, that we may experience in our hearts the full power of his redemption. The Spirit, it should be remembered, has a perfect understanding of all truth pertaining to our salvation. He has, at all times, direct access to our hearts, and is perfectly able to present the image of Christ to our minds in such a manner, that it shall exert upon us the highest possible transforming power. He is always in us, a perpetually indwelling light, whose highest illuminations we can always enjoy, by opening our hearts with simple faith and prayer to receive it. With such provisions and such a helper, to what state ought we to expect to attain? Who is strongest, Christian, let me put the question again, "He that is in you,

or he that is in the world?" Which has the greatest power, the Spirit of the living God, together with an indwelling Christ, or your fleshly lusts, inclinations and tendencies? Shall the followers of Christ proclaim the fact, that the Spirit and grace of Christ are less strong in their hearts, than the "world, the flesh, and the devil?" that grace which changed an enemy into a son, is not adequate to render that son "perfect and complete in all the will of God?"

You must forever give up all idea of resisting temptation, subduing any lust, appetite, or tendency, or of acceptably performing any service for Christ, by the mere force of your own resolutions. If your inclinations and tendencies, which lead to sin, are crucified, you know that an indwelling Christ must do it. If you overcome the world, this is to be the victory, "even our faith." If the great enemy is to be overcome, it is to be done "by the blood of the Lamb."

The Lord Jesus Christ has provided special grace for the complete obedience and holiness of every individual. He has provided for the subjection of all our inclinations and tendencies, for a perfect victory over every temptation and incentive to sin. No matter what appears to hinder us, we can through Him, be everything that He requires us to be. The first inquiry is, In what particular respects do I need the grace of Christ? What is there, for example, in my temper that needs correcting? Where am I in bondage to appetite, or to any of my other inclinations and tendencies? What are the particular responsibilities, temptations, & events to each particular condition in life in which the Divine intervention of God has called me to act? What is the temper that I should have there to manifest, so that I may everywhere, and under all circumstances, reflect the image of Christ?

Thus, having discovered my special need, in any one of the particulars above referred to, my next object is, to take some promise applicable to the particular demands before me, and go directly to Christ for the supply of that particular need. By having my eye of faith perpetually fixed upon Christ in this manner; by always looking to Him for special grace in every special crisis; yes, for "grace to help in every time of need, how easy it is to realize in our own blessed experience the truth of all the "exceeding great and precious promises" of Divine grace! How easy it is to have the peace of God, which passes all understanding, "keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." "Our peace is then as a river, and our righteousness as the waves of the sea." The mind seems to be borne upward and onward, as upon an ocean of light, peace, and blessedness, which knows no bounds.

Christ has provided means specifically adapted to secure your entire perfection in holiness. He perfectly understood your case when He undertook the work of your redemption. Every obstacle that lies in the way of your perfect sanctification was distinctly before his mind; and He has provided means fully adequate, and specifically adapted, to remedy all the consequences of your sins. However low you may have sunk in sin, He is able to lift you out of the "horrible pit and miry clay." However hard your heart may be, He can take it from you, and give you a heart of flesh in its place. However firmly fixed your habits of sin may be, He can break them all up. However strong the power of your carnal inclinations, He can subdue them all, and give you a perfect victory over them. Whatever temptations to sin beset you, from within or around you, He can give you strength to endure them. The means to accomplish all this, and specifically adapted to your particular case, are all provided by his infinite love. "If any man be in Christ, He is a new creature. Old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." Why, then, should you remain under the power of sin? Why should you be appalled by the fixedness of your habits of sin, by the strength of your carnal inclinations, or the multiplicity and power of the temptations which beset you? Christ saw all these when He assumed the work of your redemption. For all these He has provided a specific and all-powerful remedy. Go to Christ, and you will find that in Him there is redemption in readiness for you, to

render you " perfect and complete in all the will of God." Clad in the armor of righteousness, which He has provided for you, you will find yourself able to stand against all the wiles of the wicked one.

Christ, in short, has made ample provision for every particular necessity which may come upon you in time and eternity. There is not a solitary want of yours, throughout the endless future beyond you, for which a special supply is not made in the redemption of Christ. For you there is provided a seat in heaven, a robe of righteousness, a harp of gold, a crown of glory, and a special place in the center of God's heart of eternal love

He requires and expects that you will believe that He, as your Redeemer, has made full and special provision for all your needs in that particular area; and that, in the exercise of full and implicit faith, you will look to Him for grace to meet those needs.

Such are some of the requirements and expectations of Christ from us as Christians. Here let me add, that if we do not look to Christ to be saved by him, in every sphere, and in respect of every transaction in life, our faith does not fix upon him at all as a Savior from sin. I would also add, that if Christ does not save us by subduing our tempers, controlling our appetites and inclinations and tendencies, by rendering us in the world, as husbands and wives, parents and children, in every area of our life, and the particular transactions of life, what he requires us to be, he does not save us at all. The man who expects to be a Christian in his closet, and upon the Sabbath, and a man of the world behind his counter, in his shop, or on his farm, will find at last that he has failed of the grace of God.

We may now understand the full meaning of the passage, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." The meaning of the passage I suppose to be this Christ accomplishes in and for the believer all that the law would have done, had he always perfectly obeyed its requisitions. For example, perfect obedience to the law secures to the subject a full exemption from all condemnation, and a sure title to the protection and favor of God. This the Christian enjoys through faith in Christ. Entire obedience to the law would have rendered his moral character absolutely perfect, and infinitively lovely and excellent in the estimation of God, and of all intelligent beings. A character, equally perfect, lovely, and excellent, the believer receives through implicit faith in Christ. Further, obedience to the law would have rendered the believer perfectly blessed in the love and favor of God. A blessedness equally perfect descends to the believer through faith in Christ. Again, obedience to the law would have secured to the believer a full and perfect supply of every necessity. Every demand of our being is met with equal fulness in Christ. All that the law would have done for the believer, had he perfectly obeyed its requisitions, Christ does for him, and infinitely more

You will learn, Christian, to what to attribute every act of sin, and all your care, and trouble, and perplexity about the "many things" of this life. All these, together with every wrong feeling which arises in your mind, have their origin in one source exclusively, UNBELIEF, a lack of confidence in that special redemption of Christ, which, but for unbelief, would meet every possible exigency of our whole existence.

We also can understand the secret of always having a heart melted with love and tenderness. It consists in a full sense of our own infinite guilt and vileness and then see the boundless love of Christ, in making such full and perfect provision for our entire necessities, and as being ever present in our hearts, to confer upon us the full benefits of this eternal redemption. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God!" Such a thought, when it once takes possession of the mind, has omnipotent power to melt the heart, and cause its purest, sweetest, and best affections to

roll for ever around one "blissful center."

We must learn to only use the promises, in order that we may obtain the good which they present to us. As the design of the promises is to free us from the "corruptions that are in the world," and render us "partakers of the Divine nature," they are addressed and adapted to every possible condition in which we may be placed, and as a remedy for every evil, natural and moral, in which we may be involved. They descend to the sinner in the lowest depths of guilt and depravity, for the purpose of lifting him out of the "horrible pit and miry clay," and rendering him a partaker of the "Divine nature." They meet the Christian, in a state of partial holiness, for the purpose of raising him to a state of "perfect love," and then of carrying him upward and onward, from glory to glory, through time and eternity. Now, to use the promises so as to become possessed of the blessings which they offer to us, four things are necessary,

1. That we know our need.
2. That we apprehend the particular promise of Christ, which was designed to meet that particular necessity.
3. That we repose full confidence in Christ's ability and faithfulness to fulfil the promise which he has spread before us.
4. That we cast our whole being upon him, for the specific purpose of securing a fulfilment of the particular promise before us.

For example, the sinner is brought to feel himself to be in a lost condition. Here he is met with the declaration of Christ, "I came to seek and to save that which was lost;" together with the promises, "Look to Me and be saved;" "Whosoever comes to me I will in no wise cast out." Let the sinner cast himself at once upon Christ, for the definite purpose of securing a fulfilment of those specific promises. Are you in darkness, reader? Go directly to Christ for the fulfilment of the promise, "I will lead the blind by a way which they know not." Is your heart hard and unfeeling? Go to Christ with the definite promise, "I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh," and cast yourself upon his faithfulness for the fulfilment of that promise. Are your appetites, or your inclinations and tendencies the "occasion of stumbling" to you? Carry these particular objects to Christ, and plead the definite promises, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead, because of sin," and "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new." Do temptations beset you? Go to Christ with the promise, "Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation make a way for your escape, that you may be able to bear it." Are you about to enter into new and untried scenes, or spheres of action? Go to Christ with the specific promises, "Lo, I am with you always," and "My grace is sufficient for thee." Are you "hungering and thirsting after righteousness?" This promise you may now plead with Christ, "They shall be filled." Does the water of life begin to flow in your heart? This promise now rises before you, "Whosoever drinks of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." In short, whatever your condition or state of mind may be, remember that you are addressed by your Savior with some specific promise, perfectly adapted to your peculiar case. Your life depends upon your casting yourself at once upon the faithfulness of Christ, for a fulfilment of that promise. In so using the "exceeding great and precious promises," you may, with absolute certainty, be rendered a "partaker of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

Now, Christian, if you will believe it, Christ will be to you all that he was to them. "He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" and you may share as fully as they did in the infinite fulness of the love and grace of Christ. If, however, you would enjoy this full redemption, all the powers of your being must be brought under the perpetual influence of this one principle, "Looking to Jesus." Do your sins rise up before you, and fill you with apprehensions of coming retributions, "Look to Jesus." Do you desire to be wholly freed from the power of sin, and to have your entire character presented to God, "without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing," "Look to Jesus." Are you burdened with care, or do the storms of affliction gather round you, "Look to Jesus." Is your temper unsubdued, do your appetites and inclinations and tendencies rebel, and call for unhallowed gratification, "Look to Jesus." Do temptations beset you, from within or around you, "Look to Jesus." Do you need wisdom and grace for any exigency whatever, "Look to Jesus." Whatever your condition or necessities may be, hear his gracious voice, "Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest to your souls."

Christ offers entire freedom from all sin, and the transformation of our entire character into a likeness to his own. "I," says Christ, "will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you." "And thou shalt call his name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins." "But we all, with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." This is held before us as a promise. Such a change Christ stands pledged to produce in us IF WE WILL BELIEVE IN HIM.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/asa-mahan/true-obedience-to-god-by-grace/>

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