

#60 He that Believeth no 14 My Conscience bearing me record

1 A few weeks ago brother Hoffman spoke from Brother Branham's sermon "A Thinking Man's Filter", and we know Brother Branham spoke in that sermon how the Word of God must become our filter for all the inner senses, and he let us know that he himself had to forget his own thoughts in order to catch what God was trying to show him by looking at that cigarette package which he refused to touch.

2 Remember, how he said, something spoke to him, "Turn back and pick that up." And he thought, "Pick up a cigarette pack, not me." But that voice was persistent and said, "Turn back and pick up the cigarette pack." And he said, "I went down; there was an old empty pack, and I seen something." And that something he saw became a sermon called a Thinking Man's Filter and it really opened our eyes to how God wishes for His Word to become the filter in which we see everything and hear everything, and in fact even our conscience needs be filtered through the Word of God, and so we saw how Br. Branham's conscience wanted nothing to do with this Pack of cigarettes, but the Word of the Lord spoke and he listened bringing his conscience to bear record of the Word of God.

3 In fact in 2 Corinthians 1:12 we see the apostle Paul speak of what he calls the testimony of our conscience, and if it is a testimony then that testimony is actually a witness, and the making known of that witness. Let's read it together

4 2 Corinthians 1:12 For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

5 So we see how brother Branham had to subject His own thoughts and conscience to the Lords thoughts in order to receive this teaching himself. And this story tells us that we don't always understand the direction that God has for our life, but we must surely come to know that He will never let us down, and therefore we can see how God used brother Branham's conscience to direct him into a greater understanding.

6 For if we testify to an event without any understanding of what that event is, our testimony won't really make any sense at all. And if he had rejected that leading without looking at what God was showing him, there would be no understanding of this great principle of God.

7 Just as the Cloud that appeared over the Arizona skies in 1963 meant nothing to millions of people who saw it and didn't understand it's scriptural significance. When Brother Branham explained what it was, and what had taken place, we have come to understand the scriptural proofs of his meeting with the Seven angels as seen in Revelations 10:1-7, 1 Thessalonians 1:7-10, and 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18 and various other scriptures. Therefore what took place and what we see in those pictures become more real to us as never before. We have begun to see the beginning of the end, and we have come to understand what Brother Branham meant when he said there is a

difference between the Appearing and the Coming.

8

The same thing applies to the time when Brother Branham was preaching the Rapture and he said, "The Shout is the Message." Brother Vayle was sitting there in that service and he thought, "Now, brother Branham, I've heard you say some very strange things, but this is one of the strangest." And as he was thinking that thought something interrupted that thought and spoke from within him, and said, "when has he ever been wrong". And then he heard himself thinking, "The shout is the message." In other words, a filter came through for him and spoke out and said, "When has he ever been wrong?"

9 I believe that filter was his conscience bearing record by the Holy Ghost.

10 That's what 2 Corinthians 1:12 is all about, For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

11 Therefore, this verse reads like this, Therefore our rejoicing comes from the witness of our conscience bearing record with God's Word, So we see that Paul said because his conscience bore record with the word and thus his actions and speech bore record the same, he could thus rejoice within himself for being obedient to the heavenly vision.

12 Now, when we speak of this "witness of our own Spirit" or the "witness of our own conscience", this is not the same thing as we have taught concerning Romans 8 where God bearing witness with our Spirit that we are the sons of God. But this is our own conscience bearing witness within us of God's Word living itself out in our very own lives.

13 Unless we can identify with the things that God has manifested openly in this hour, we have no hope. In fact Brother Branham said in his audio letter to brother Vayle, "God then, in order to proclaim this, has to send a prophet in order to inject this, make this real again, to show the people the hour that we're living in? Because if they only see it in the hour past, then there's no hope for the church. The church must see it in the present tense. So God sends His prophet to manifest, present tense of it. You see? And then, after it's over, then history is. Now, you might inject that, Brother Lee."

14

So you see, a witness is no good if they don't have the right filter or understanding of what they have witnessed. That's why it was important that Brother Branham said, "My ministry is to declare Him, that He is here." That ought to tell us that He was a witness to something, and that something is the presence of the Lord. That is why in the message "False Anointed Ones at the End-Time", Brother Branham could say, "Now, I want you to know this is sure. And you that listen to this tape, you might have thought today that I was trying to say that about myself, being that I was packing this Message. I have no more to do with it than nothing, no more than just a voice. And my voice, even against my better judgment..."

15

Now, remember, Jesus Himself said in John 7:31, "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true." And if a

person's witness is not true, then what is it? It's a false witness. That's why I have trouble with the people today who want to just soft peddle every thing, and all this so called phony love. Love is Corrective and it's based upon the Truth.

16 In Ephesians 4:15 Paul taught us that the Five fold ministry was to "Speak the Truth in Love that we might grow up..." And in Hebrews 12:6 He said, "For whom the Lord Loves, He chasteneth, and scourgeth..." And to chasten and scourge means to teach or instruct, and to discipline when you're not getting it.

17

So you see, brother Branham was a true witness because he had no ulterior motives. He just said what He saw, and He knew what He was speaking about. That's why Brother Branham said, "I wasn't the One that appeared down on the river; I was only standing there when He appeared. I'm not the One that performs these things and foretells these things that happens as perfect as they are; I'm only one that's near when He does it. I was only a voice that He used to say it. It wasn't what I knew; it's what I just surrendered myself to, that He spoke through. It isn't me. It wasn't the seventh angel, oh, no; it was a manifestation of the Son of man. It wasn't the angel, his Message; it was the mystery that God unfolded. It's not a man; it's God. The angel was not the Son of man; he was a messenger from the Son of man. The Son of man is Christ. He's the One that you're feeding on. You're not feeding on a man. A man, his words will fail, but you're feeding on the unfailing Body-Word of the Son of man."

18

I hope by this point that you can see how important it is for a witness to not only see, but to understand what he sees. Because, how can you be a true witness if you do not understand what it is that you claim to be a witness to. It's not enough for a minister to say "I am a Witness" and yet not understand what they were a witness to? How can you call yourself a witness to something if you know nothing about the thing you claim to witness? To me, if a man comes forth to declare himself a witness of something, he had better be able to tell you not only what he saw, but what it is that he saw, and if he doesn't understand himself what he saw, then he's not only a poor witness, but potentially a false witness as well.

19

Brother Branham said, from Lean not to Your Own Understanding "You know, the Bible said you can believe a lie and be damned by it. See? That's exactly the truth. They form, no matter what the Word of God says, they lean to their own understanding. They lean on it; they believe it; they think it's the Truth. You can keep believing a lie over and over and over till it's the truth to you. That's right. But how do we know whether it's Truth or not? God proved it's Truth, 'cause it's in His Word and He a-vindicates It. He does His own interpretation of It."

20

And again from his sermon Israel in the Homeland 53-0329 82 Brother Branham said, "the Pillar of Fire has begin to move again. But Pentecost is so organized, it can't go...?... It was so organized, crystallized until it can't go. That's right. That's true. But the Pillar of Fire is moving out, brother, and there's people that's going with It.

21

Anointed Ones at the End-Time Notice! Come up to the borderline and quit. 195 Going to their home, and when they come up to the place to cross over, they doubted the Word!.....What happened? They perished in the wilderness. They stayed right there and organized themselves, and died, every one of them,.....

198 "Where the carcass is there will the eagles be gathered.....Where the fresh meat is, the Word of the Season, there the eagles will gather." But after it's rottened then the vultures will swarm to it. See, see? See what I mean? When a kill 's made here comes the eagles, but after it lays there and rotten, then here come the vultures. The

eagles won't have nothing to do with it. Jesus said, "Where the carcass is, where the manna fell, the night the manna falls fresh, there the eagles will gather for it." That's the manna for the day. See?

214 Notice! But after it gets rotten, maggots get in it, then here comes the vultures. They can't smell it till it gets rotten.

215 Said, "I AM sent me." I AM, not I was, or will be, I AM, present tense, the Word now. Not the Word that was or Word that will come, the Word that's now.

219 "For it is impossible for those which were once enlightened and didn't move on with the Word as it come to pass..." They're dead, gone.

22

Then if our witness is not true, then what hope have we got? Therefore what I propose evening is to help us to see the importance of God's Word upon our own conscience, that it might rule the conscience and bring our conscience into captivity to every Word that proceeds from the Mouth of God.

23

Now, Sunday we mentioned how Brother Branham listed the conscience as one of the five inner senses of the spirit that man uses to make contact his soul, in order to bring the body into subjection to the soul.

24 The five inner senses are, #1) Imagination #2) Conscience #3) Memory #4) Reasoning #5) Affection. Now of these five senses there is only one that actually controls the Soul, and that is conscience. Imagination allows the Soul to conceptualize and reason allows it to weigh out and discern, but the conscience is that seat of control that actually causes the Soul to either accept or reject the Word and therefore bring forth a right-wise-ness to the individual. Memory, imagination and reasoning are all passive, and affection is the outlet that brings the Spirit into an active state, but the thing that ties the passive together with the active is the Conscience, because it is the seat or control. No action can take place until the conscience has filtered the situation and gives forth it's approval. Therefore the conscience is the most important of our inner five senses.

25

Now, The reason we are looking at this idea of how our conscience bears witness is because that is exactly why this whole discussion of John 14:12 came about. For years we thought brother Vayle had taught that John 14:12 was only one person, William Branham. And that is because brother Vayle always spoke of the greater works of John 14:12 as being only one man. He was speaking on vindication, and so he was not interested in our works with are hardly anything in comparison. But that didn't do away with the fact that there are works of Christ in the church. It is just he was emphasizing the greater works being that God did more in one meeting of Br. Branham's than he did in the entire 3 years ministry of Jesus.

26 Yet when I was preaching the sermon Spoken Word is the original Seed I come across where brother Branham said "I will prove whether you are a believer or not", and then he read John 14:12. And I knew he was not talking about himself because he said "you". And he was talking about the believer, and the evidence of being a believer.

27 Then my conscience said, "go back and look at that again", and I did. And when I saw something there that was contrary to how I had taught it myself, I had to back up and look at it again. Just like so many times, when the

Angel came to brother Branham and corrected him on a particular aspect of his teaching, and being obedient to the heavenly vision he made the correction when it came to him.

28 And this is the point I am trying to make. Our conscience will bear record by the Word, and the Word has got to be our filter. Not what others might say, but what did God say about it. And if our conscience does not bear us record by the Word then we do not have the Word as a filter over our conscience.

29

Sunday we read from brother Branham's sermon *Christ Revealed in His Own Word* pp. 130e where brother Branham said, "Notice, we cannot; we must not, listen to any other man's word. We don't care how smart, how educated. The Bible in Proverbs says "we must cast down reasoning". See? Now, here in this second realm... First realm is your senses of see, taste, feel, smell, and hear; that's in your outer body. On the inner body, which is the spirit, is reasoning, and thought, and so forth. We must cast all that down. Can't reason, say, "Now, wait, if God is a good God..." And we're told so much today that He is. "If He is a good God, then if I be sincere, though I can't see that in that Bible being right, though I be sincere, I'll be saved." You'll be lost. "If I go to church and just do the things that I believe it's right and try to hold up for what I think is right, well I..." You're still lost. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof is the ways of death". See? You won't be saved; you'll be lost. See, see? It must be that inside control man.

30 So it's not how sweet you can be, and it's not how loving you are although those are admirable qualities, but it's what Does God's Word say about it. And is His Word the Filter over your conscience or is it not? Then if it is then when the conscience says, I have always believed the Word meant this, but here I see it may mean something else, then what do you do about it? If you stay with the same meaning because your church espouses that meaning, then he said you are lost. That's all there is too it.

31 If your filter over your five inner senses is your church, you are lost. It must be God's Word or we are lost. And that is why I am hammering away at these things. Not to be different, but to get us to stop, and look at what the prophet taught concerning it.

32 So when brother Branham says, *Perseverance* 62-0608 P:101I couldn't even stand one of them if He didn't say, "The works that I do shall you also, and more than this shall you do." I know the King James says "greater" but it's actually "more." See? Greater, He couldn't do no greater. He raised the dead, stopped nature, done everything. See? So it's just more of it, because there'd be more people. The Spirit was just in one man there. Now, it's universal around the world in all of His people. Believe.

33 And what are we going do when brother Branham defines the greater works three different ways?

- 1) Creation from nothing, whereas Jesus in his ministry created fish from fish and bread from bread, and wine from water.
- 2) The greater works means more of the same or in a greater measure, not greater in quality but greater in quantity.
- 3) The greater works is imparting life to others.

34 Now, I can show you quite a few quotes in each of these three categories, so what are we going to do if our doctrine says different from a vindicated prophet? Are we going to back up and say, "it could mean all three since Scripture has compound meaning?" You are better off saying that, than to hold to your dogma and go to hell doing so. And that is what I have done. My Conscience bearing me record in the Holy Ghost by God's Word bringing correction to my own error.

35 Now, look, it is not wrong to say what we taught that William Branham is the Greater Works of John 14:12 but what is wrong is when we say and John 14:12 is only William Branham. Then we have added to and placed limitations upon God's Word.

36 In my discussion with brother Vayle he said a few things that are very definitive to me. First he said "I never said much about John and when I did, I used brother Branham as an example of the greater works in our day".

37 Now what this told me is that Brother Vayle had not spoken concerning John 14:12 to start a doctrine that William Branham alone was John 14:12. But what brother Vayle said was "I used brother Branham as an example of the greater works in this day", and then he went on to say, "I can see where a 5 pound pail and a ten pound pail are both greater than, and it could be said that the church as a whole combined is greater than what Jesus as a man had".

38 So by his own words he never relegated John 14:12 to just one individual as some thought. And this tells me that any time we place a period after what we believe instead of a comma, we are in danger of denying the Word of God when God interprets it by His bringing it to pass. He also said "Scripture has compound meaning," and when we deny this we deny a whole lot of what God has for us to know and do.

39 In other words, if brother Vayle himself admitted that he was never making a blank take it or leave it statement that William Branham and he alone is John 14:12 then why should we? And if our conscience hears statements by William Branham and we just pass them through without even thinking about their meaning, then do we even have the Word of God as the filter of our conscience?

40 How many people say they believe William Branham and yet they haven't got a clue as to what he said. Even he said when people say, I believe every word you say brother Branham, his reply to that is that he said, "that only means you can read".

41 So, Sunday we defined the Conscience and how it operates within the Spirit and how it influences our soul. But what I want to really drive home this evening is what makes the Conscience that you might have a good conscience.

42

Paul said in Romans 9:1 "My conscience bearing me witness by the Holy Ghost?"

43

Again in Acts 23:1 he said, "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day;" And if our conscience

is directed by the Word, then have we as Peter describes, "the answer of a good conscience toward God." " And in Acts 24:16 Paul further defined a good conscience as "a conscience which is void of offense."

44

Now, the word offense here is the Greek word, ap-ros-kop-os and it means to lead others into error. Therefore to have a conscience that is absolutely void of all offense, we must know and possess....

45

First, a right understanding of the Word of God, of his "holy, and acceptable, and perfect will" concerning us, as it is revealed in Romans 12:2. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

46 And how can you prove the will of God if you do not even know what His Will is?

47

For how is it possible to walk by a rule, if we do not know what it means.

48 Hebrews 5:14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

49 Hebrews 12:11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

50 1 Timothy 4:7 But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness.

51 2 Timothy 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

52

Secondly, there is required by God that which very few men have attained, and that is a true knowledge of ourselves; a knowledge both of our hearts and our lives, of our inward tempers and outward conversation: Seeing, if we know them not, it is not possible that we should compare them with our rule.

53 1 Corinthians 2:11-16 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. 16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

54 Romans 7:18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

55 1 John 3: 2-3 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

56

Thirdly, there is required and there must be an agreement and a conscious effort within our hearts and lives, and tempers and our conversation, and our thoughts, and our words, and our works, that we willingly wish to blend all these with the written Word of God as our absolute and filter. For, without this, if we have any conscience at all, it can be only an evil conscience. As Job said, Job 31:1 I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?

57 And Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that word constraineth means To compel by physical, moral, or circumstantial force; And for us to do that it shows a willing effort to do so.

58 Mark 12:29-30 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

59 Fourthly, there is required, an inward perception of this agreement with our rule: And this habitual perception, this inward consciousness itself, is properly a good conscience; or, in the other phrase of the Apostle, "a conscience void of offense, toward God, and toward men."

60

Therefore, whoever desires to have a conscience that is void of offense, must first make sure that he lays the right foundation. He must remember what Paul said, "other foundation can no man lay, than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ," and we know that He is the Word. And we must also be mindful, that no man can build on this revelation of Christ without having a living faith, or a faith which has been made alive. In other words, once you can truthfully declare, "The life which I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God;" then you may stand in this faith knowing that it works mightily in you.

61 John Wesley in quoting from Hebrews 11 said, "Faith alone is that evidence, (Faith alone is the conviction) whereby the eyes of our understanding being opened, and divine light pouring in upon them, allows us to see the wondrous things of God's Word". It is by faith that we behold "the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," as we look into the mirror of Gods Word and no longer see ourselves.

62

By this alone the blessed love of God can be "shed abroad in our hearts," which enables us to love one another as Christ loved us. And by this is the gracious promise fulfilled unto all the seed of God, where God said, "I will put my laws into their mind, and I will engrave them in their hearts"

63 Let's read Hebrews 8:10-12 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: 11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. 12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

64 Therefore, by an act of God in this hour, He has come down to produce in our soul, by His Word made manifest, a fulfilling of His Covenant, which is a "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

65 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

66 Notice, the weapons of our warfare are through God a pulling down of every strong hold or death grip that has us beaten down. And Notice also in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 we have a promise from God that we are to be at rest and peace and it will only come at His Appearing when He places His Doxa in us.

67 That is also what we hear Peter tell us in 2 Peter 1: 2-4 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, 3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

68
Therefore as Jesus said, "an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit, so a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit." therefore as everything we have need of pertaining to life and Godlikeness comes from God's Word, then, even our Grace and Peace are multiplied by that very same Knowledge of God, therefore, we can rest knowing that as the heart of a believer, and therefore likewise his life, is thoroughly conformed to the rule of God's commandments in a consciousness whereof, he can give glory to God, then we can also come to the place where Paul was when he said, "This is our rejoicing, the witness of our conscience," that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world."

69
And this conversation that we have in the world means more than just the things that we say, because the actual meaning of this word means to take in our manner of conduct or behavior. In other words, every inward as well as outward circumstance, whether it relates to our soul or body. It includes every action from our heart, or tongue, our hands, or any bodily member. It extends to all our actions and words; and to the setting in motion of all our mental faculties and talents; to the place where we utilize the same with respect either to God or man. In other words, we are consistent in our attitude and in our conscience whether we are dealing with God or the devils own children. And I think that is where we so often fail. We are one way with God, but we change colors and act contrary when it comes with those who are not one with us.

70
He said, "We have had our conversation in the world;" even in the world of the ungodly: Not only among the

children of God, but among the children of the devil, among those that lie in wickedness. As our God is good, and doeth good, so the God of this world, and all his children, are evil, and do evil to all the children of God. Like their father, they are always lying in wait, or "walking about, seeking whom they may devour;" using fraud or force, secret wiles or open violence, to destroy those who are not of the world; continually warring against our souls, and, by old or new weapons, and devices of every kind, laboring to bring them back into the snare of the devil, into the broad road that leads to destruction.

71

But he said, "We have had our "whole manner of conduct," in such a world, "in simplicity and godly sincerity."

72 First, in simplicity: This word simplicity doesn't mean simple minded as though you are ignorant, but it means single-mindedness, as Jesus said, in Luke 11:34 The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when [thine eye] is evil, thy body also [is] full of darkness. And the meaning is this: If therefore this eye of thy soul be single, or singly focused, having one focus, then all our actions and conversation shall be "full of light," and a true witness of the light of His Glorious Presence, of love, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. We are then simple of heart, when the eye of our mind is singly fixed on God; when in all things we aim at God alone, as our God, our portion, our strength, our happiness, our exceeding great reward, our all, in time and eternity. This is simplicity; when a steady view, a single intention of promoting his glory, of doing and suffering his blessed will, runs through our whole soul, fills all our heart, and is the constant spring of all our thoughts, desires, and purposes.

73

Secondly, "in Godly sincerity." The difference between simplicity and sincerity seems to be chiefly this: Simplicity regards the intention itself, and our sincerity; the execution of it; and this sincerity relates not only to our words, but to our whole manner of behavior. It speaks of actually hitting the mark, which we aim at by simplicity.

74

Therefore, Godly sincerity implies that all that we speak and do, as Paul said, "we do as unto the Lord and to the glory of God" that all of our words will not only be focused toward his presence, but actually conducive to receiving His Presence, and knowing that all of our actions will flow in an even stream, uniformly subservient; and that, in our whole life, we shall be moving straight toward God, and that we shall be continually walking steadily on in the highway of holiness, in the paths of justice, mercy, and truth, and as we walk in the light, knowing that He also is in the Light, it not only brings us into fellowship, but into the Presence of the Supreme Judge as well.

75

This sincerity is termed by Paul as a Godly sincerity, or the sincerity of God; in order to prevent our mistaking or confounding it with the sincerity of the Heathens; For as soon as the grace of God, (his pardoning love), is manifested to our souls, the power of his Spirit, takes place therein. And now we can perform, through God, what to man was impossible. Now we can order our conversation aright. We can do all things in the light and power of that love, through Christ which strengthens us. We now have "the witness of our conscience," which we could never have by fleshly wisdom, "that in simplicity and godly sincerity, we have our behavior ordered in the world."

76

This is the only grounds for True Christian joy. Therefore he that hath this testimony in himself rejoices evermore. "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior." I rejoice in him, who, of his own unmerited love, of his own free and tender mercy, "hath called me into this state of salvation," wherein,

through his power, I now stand. I rejoice, because his Spirit witnesses to my spirit, that I am bought with the blood of the Lamb; and that, believing in him, "I am a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." I rejoice, because God's love to me brings forth in me a desire to love him, and to love for his sake every soul he hath made. I rejoice, because he gives me "the mind that was in Christ:" - Simplicity, a single eye to him, a focus that is not my own, in every motion of my heart; he gives me power to fix my loving soul on Him who "loved me first, and gave himself for me;" to focus on him alone, - Purity, desiring nothing more but God; "crucifying the flesh with its afflictions and lusts; "setting my affections on things above, not on things of the earth" - Holiness, a recovery of the image of God, a renewal of soul "after his likeness:" - And Godly Sincerity, directing all my words and works, so as to produce for a reflection of his glory. In this I will rejoice, because my conscience beareth me witness in the Holy Ghost, by the light he continuously pours in upon it, that I "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith I am called;" that I "abstain from all appearance of evil," fleeing from sin and as I have opportunity, to do good, in every kind, to all men; that I may follow my Lord in all my steps, and do what is acceptable in his sight. I rejoice, because I both see and feel, through the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, that all my works are wrought in him, yea, and that it is He who worketh mightily in me". My rejoicing comes because He allows me to see by the light of God, which shines in my heart, with the purpose of giving me strength, to walk in his way; and by his grace, I will not turn from the right hand or to the left.

77

1 Peter 1:3-9 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: 9 Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

78 This joy doesn't come from natural causes: It doesn't come because you have good health or a bed of ease;: Because it's equally strong whether you're sick or in pain. In fact suffering actually makes it grow stronger. But, most Christians have never experienced this joy, which fills the soul when their body is worn out by pain. And this joy never comes by outward prosperity, or the favor of men, or of having plenty of worldly goods; Because the scriptures tell us that when our faith has been tried as with fire, which is all manner of outward afflictions, it is then that the children of God begin to rejoice in Him, whom not seeing we love, even with joy unspeakable. And never have men rejoiced like those who were treated as "the off-scouring of the world;" who wandered to and fro, in hunger, in cold, in nakedness; who had trials, not only of "cruel mockings," but, "moreover of bonds and imprisonments;" who "counted not their lives dear unto themselves, so they might finish their course with joy." 1 Peter 4:12-14

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Secondly, the joy of a Christian does not arise from any blindness of conscience, because this joy doesn't come until the eyes of your understanding are opened; and you know it not until you have spiritual senses, fitted to discern spiritual good and evil and you have never been so sharp-sighted before: You receive a perception of the smallest things, and you don't close the eyes of your conscience any more:

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Your joy does not come like the sleeping virgin who does not know what is happening. But your joy comes from knowing that you are in the day of the Lord.

81

Neither does the joy of a Christian arise, Thirdly, from any dullness or callousness of conscience. A kind of joy, it is true, may arise from this, in those whose "foolish hearts are darkened;" whose heart is callous, unfeeling, dull, and without spiritual understanding. Because of their senseless, unfeeling hearts, they may rejoice even in committing sin; and this they may even call liberty! - which is nothing more than a drunkenness of soul, a fatal numbness of spirit, and the stupid insensibility of a seared conscience. On the contrary, a Christian has the most exquisite sensibility; such as he could not have conceived before. He never before had such a tenderness of conscience as he has now, since the love of God has reigned in his heart. And his glory and joy comes from the fact that God hears his daily prayer: -

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In conclusion, I would like to say that our Christian joy comes from the love of God that is shed aboard in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, and therefore we are happy to keep his commandments and we rejoice in walking according to His covenant of grace, in holy love and happy obedience. We rejoice in knowing that, "we have already been justified through his grace," and we have "not received that grace of God in vain:" And that God did this freely, (Not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but through the blood of the Lamb) His own Son, He has past tense already reconciled us back to himself. Therefore this becomes our strength and our joy and this is what sustains us through the trial of our faith, and we gladly "fight the good fight of faith." We rejoice, through him because He lives in our hearts by faith, and it is through Him that we may "lay hold of eternal life." This then, is our rejoicing, that as our "Father worketh hitherto," so (not by our own might or wisdom, but through the power of his Spirit, freely given in Christ Jesus) we also work the works of God. And may he work in us whatsoever is pleasing in his sight! To whom we shall praise for ever and ever!

83

If we could have the musicians come forward while we bow our hearts in a word of prayer...Now, let's sing that Scripture song together, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior, for He that is mighty hath done unto me great things, and holy is His name...My Soul doth magnify the Lord, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my Spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior, for He that is mighty hath done unto me great things, and holy is His Name ."