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(Settle: continued from page 14)

only partial (Rev. 2:16). This insures that those who do repent will be restored to full fellowship, even if the majority of the assembly does not.

In this text the Lord of the churches is on the outside of this assembly (never to be confused with church buildings which are churches only by metonymy) because of their spiritual luke-warmness. Other things have crept in, things which will snuff out the light of the Holy Spirit and write Ichabod upon the door. This means the Lord will no longer indwell this church, Mt. 18:20, which is the essence of a church. His knocking, speaking, and standing before the door of the assembly of Laodicea warns them of impending danger, for He is about to disconstitute this church. No church can long remain a church of Christ when it refuses to hearken to His voice and refuses to answer His knock at its door! ♦

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The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator

To testify the gospel of the grace of God.. Acts 20:24

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Page 1

DISPENSATIONALISM

A.W. PINK

The Word of God (Concluded) “For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness... David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, “Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin” (Rom 4:3, 6-8). In view of such a plain declaration, who dares to affirm that the patriarchs were strangers unto the salvation of which we are made partakers? Christians are “heirs” of Abraham (Gal 3:18, 29), which means they possess (by faith) the identical blessings which God covenanted unto the father of all them that believe.

We have the same Gospel which was preached unto Abraham (Gal 3:8), yea, which was preached

unto Israel in the wilderness after they received the law at Sinai (Heb 4:2). The Old Testament saints were participants in the same covenant blessings which we are (2 Sa 23:5 compared with Heb 13:20). The apostle makes the redeemed Israelites equal to us in the significance of the ordinances (or “sacraments”). “Since the Lord not only favored them with the same benefits, but illustrated His grace among them by the same symbols, 1 Corinthians 10:1-11” (John Calvin, 1509-1564). They desired the same “heavenly country” which we do and God “hath prepared for them a city” (Heb 11:16), as He has for us.

Abraham “rejoiced to see my day” declared Christ, “and he saw it, and was glad” (Joh 8:56). Dying Jacob said, “I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD” (Gen 49:18). What “salvation” could he expect when he felt himself about to expire,

unless he had seen in death the commencement of a new life? Moses “refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward” (Heb 11:24-26). Job exclaimed, “I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God” (Job 19:25-26). David avowed, “Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever” (Psa 73:25-26).

What is true here in the general pertains also unto particulars. Not only was God’s dealings with His people in Old Testament times substantially the same as those with His people under the New Testament era, but in many, many details too. So instead of seeking to pit Scripture against Scripture (as the “Dispensionalists” are constantly doing), let us rather compare passage with passage, and note the blessed harmony which exists between the two Testaments. For example, do we read “He believed in the LORD; and

he counted it to him for righteousness” (Gen 15:6), then in Acts 13:39, we are also told, “By him all that believe are justified” (pronounced righteous). Did God say to His people of old, “Ye are strangers and sojourners” (Lev 25:23), so does He now address them, “I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims” (1 Pe 2:11). Are we told that “The LORD’S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance” (Deu 32:9), Paul also prayed that we might know what is “the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints” (Eph 1:18).

In Deuteronomy 33:3, we are told, “All his saints are in thy hand,” while in John 10:28, Christ says of His sheep, “They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” “Yield yourselves unto the LORD” (2 Ch 30:8). Compare with this, “Yield yourselves unto God” (Rom 6:13). “And my God put into mine heart to gather together the nobles” (Neh 7:5). Compare with this, “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Phi 2:13). “Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them” (Neh 9:20). Compare with this, “When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth” (Joh 16:13). “I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness” (Psa 17:15). Compare with this, “We shall be like him; for

THANKSGIVING

BILL LEE

The saints of God are admonished by the Apostle to “let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.” (Colossians 3:15). And while this admonition is directed solely to believers, it is our conviction that all people should be thankful. After all, believers and nonbelievers alike are living on God’s earth and breathing God’s air. And it is God who “maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matthew 5:45). But unbelievers are not thankful unto God (Romans 1:21). In fact they do not even “like to retain God in their knowledge” (verse 28).

This is the mark or characterization of the unregenerate. But the very opposite is true of those who know God and His Son, Jesus Christ. One of the chief characteristics of those who are born of the Spirit is that they are a thankful people. And one thing that you will always find about a thankful people is that they are a humble people. Being thankful unto God will always exclude pride in an individual. Very simply, you can not be thankful and prideful at the same time.

Therefore if we remain thankful unto God at all times and for all things, then we will remain the humble, faithful servants of our God that we should be. “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Ephesians 5:20). I am thankful that we have a day set aside in our country for us to pause from our daily routines and give thanks unto God. I really believe that this is very important. God has blessed us as a nation in so many ways. It is only right that He be praised and He be honored on this day.

But let us who have been saved by God’s marvelous grace, remember that we are to give thanks “always for all things.” Not just one day in the year, but always and for all things. Paul instructs us in I Thessalonians 5:18, “In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” And as we seek to follow the instructions we are given and be obedient unto the will of God concerning us, we certainly should join with the Apostle and all of the redeemed in thanking God for “his unspeakable gift”. To us every day is a day of thanksgiving for our Savior Jesus Christ. ♦

open their coffins, and fumble with the rusty vault lock so as to let in the Prince of Life? Surely no one can fail to see how deformed is such a doctrine which tries to place Christ at the death door of the lost race seeking a response where none can be given.

No matter what the men say of the text, we reject instantly this June bug exegesis.

What then is the proper interpretation?

The first thing to be considered is the context. The Lord here addresses these seven churches (Rev. 1:11). He is depicted as walking among the lamp stands. This indicates His headship over all of His churches. Note He does not speak of The Church! He does not tell John to write to the Church of Asia, or England, or America. This is both unbiblical and anti biblical. To use such terms is but to bow to Catholicism, visible or invisible! So the context demands that we understand this passage in the light of the glory of Christ who is the light Giver of every true church or assembly.

Here are seven letters to as many churches (Re. 1:3). Each letter is a unit within itself. The Lord closes each letter with "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches," (Cf. 2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13,22). This means you cannot take

verse twenty out of the middle of the letter to Laodicea and make it a little epistle all its own. This verse pertains to Laodicea and not to Philadelphia, or Pergamos, although we readily admit it may be applicable to any church which has the same problems as Laodicea had. Nor should anyone get the notion that this warning was thrown in as a little evangelistic salt to prevent this epistle from becoming doctrinally rancid. This is a church message sent to an assembly of saved people about the condition of that church, and therefore it does not refer to the salvation of lost sinners! He is not calling and knocking at the door of the sinner's heart, but He is knocking on the door of the assembly.

Of the commentaries which I have consulted on this text, Trapp is best. He put his finger on the pulse of it. While B.H. Carroll, Stevenson, and Seiss are worlds better than those mentioned above, they do not attain unto Trapp who says succinctly: "And open the door...By teachableness and obedience. This is not spoken of the first act of conversion ...but of the consequences of it."

But why is the promise in the singular if this verse pertains to the whole assembly? Because there are always situations where the whole church is guilty of some departure from the truth, but the repentance is

(Settlemoir: continued on page 16)

we shall see him as he is" (1 Jo 3:2). Read carefully Psalm 34:12-16 and compare 1 Peter 3:10-12.

"I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me" (Psa 57:2). Compare, "But our sufficiency is of God" (2 Co 3:5). "Men shall be blessed in him" (Psa 72:17). Compare, "Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph 1:3). Read carefully Psalm 89:30-33 and compare Hebrews 12:8-11. "For there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore" (Psa 133:3). Compare, "The Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting" (John 12:49-50). "Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places" (Psa 135:6). Compare "Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (Eph 1:11). "In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul" (Psa 138:3). Compare, "Strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man" (Eph 3:16).

Before pointing out some more of the numerous parallelisms between the Old and New Testaments, let us here anticipate an objection. While there be many close

comparisons between the earlier and the later Scriptures, yet there are more numerous points of dissimilarity—how are the latter to be explained? In meeting this objection, let us begin by noting that Christians are said to "Walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham" (Rom 4:12). How, we ask, could they do so if they had a different rule of faith to walk by? To this it may be answered, Abraham circumcised all the male members of his household (Gen 17:23). Ought we to do the same? If we answer, No, then the objector imagines he has scored a victory. That is his mistake, arising from failure to distinguish between two distinct kinds of divine laws. This brings us to a point of considerable importance and one upon which there is widespread ignorance today. We ask the reader to give his best attention to what follows.

The divine commands and precepts recorded in Scripture need to be classified under two heads—moral and positive—a distinction well-known among God's people in days gone by when they were better instructed. Moral duties are those which pertain prior to any command to perform them, existing in the very nature of the case. Positive duties are binding only because of the divine command and would not be duties at all did not God enjoin them. Hence, there is a double responsibility rest-

ing on us to discharge the former, but only a single one to discharge the latter. For example, the worship of God is a moral duty, something which in the very nature of the case we owe unto God—as His creatures, as the recipients of His bounties. But to worship God in a certain place (the temple), after a prescribed order, at specified times, were positive duties which God required of the nation of Israel under the old covenant. Again—to believe in Christ and surrender to His Lordship is a moral duty devolving on all who hear the Gospel, whereas baptism is a positive duty required of His disciples.

“Positive laws are taken to be such as have no reason for them in themselves, nothing in the matter of them is taken from the things themselves commanded, but do depend merely and solely on the sovereign will and pleasure of God. Such were the laws and institutions of the sacrifices of old, and such are those which concern the [ordinances-editor] and other things of the like nature under the New Testament. Moral laws are such as have the reasons of them taken from the nature of the things themselves, required in them. For they are good, from their respect to the nature of God Himself, and from that nature and order of all things which He hath placed in the creation. So that this sort of law is but declarative of the absolute

goodness of what they require. The other is constitutive of it, as unto some certain ends. Laws positive, as they are occasionally given, so they are esteemed alterable at pleasure. Being fixed by mere will and prerogative, without respect to anything that should make them necessary, antecedently to their being enacted, they may by the same authority at any time be taken away and abolished. Such, I say, are they in their own nature and as to any firmitude that they have from their own subject matter. But with respect to God’s determination, positive divine laws may become eventually unalterable.

“And this difference is there between legal and evangelical institutions. The laws of both are positive only, equally proceeding from sovereign will and pleasure, and in their own natures equally alterable. But to the former, God had in His purpose fixed a determinative time and season wherein they should expire, or be altered by His authority. To the latter, He hath attached a perpetuity and unchangeableness during the state and condition of His church in this world. The other sort of laws are perpetual and unalterable in themselves, so far as they are of that sort that is moral. For although a law of that kind may especially enjoin such circumstances as may be changed and varied, as did the whole Deca-

FEAR NOT!

“Whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.” –Proverbs 1:33

Come what may, God’s people are safe. Let convulsions shake the solid earth, let the skies themselves be rent in twain, yet amid the wreck of worlds the believer shall be as secure as in the calmest hour of rest. If God cannot save his people *under* heaven, he will save them *in* heaven. If the world becomes too hot to hold them, then heaven shall be the place of their reception and their safety. Be ye then confident, when ye hear of wars, and rumours of wars. Let no agitation distress you, but be quiet from fear of evil. Whatsoever cometh upon the earth, you, beneath the broad wings of Jehovah, shall be secure. Stay yourself upon his promise; rest in his faithfulness, and bid defiance to the blackest future, for there is nothing in it direful for you. Your sole concern should be to show forth to the world the blessedness of hearkening to the voice of wisdom. – Charles H. Spurgeon (1896), Morning and Evening: Daily readings, London: Passmore & Alabaster, Morning, July 6.

This all comprehensive door of fallen humanity which is sinful, depraved, dead! One huge door to the mausoleum of the race. And marvel of all, Christ the Prince of Life knocks at this door and waits for the dead to rise up in response to his calling and knocking, for we are told, he can do nothing to help them! Such is considered to be great evangelistic preaching by the religious masses. It especially thrills the Arminian. He swims in this perverted idea like an amoeba in a drop of pond water.

And what is wrong with this?

Everything!

It is a horribly grotesque theology, rotting from the core out. Shall the Lord of Glory who owns the keys of death and Hades knock at the door of the house of death? Shall He who shall call the dead, small and great, to stand before Him, knock? Shall He who gives eternal life to whomsoever He will, merely invite sinners to open to Him? Shall He who alone can open the heart (Acts 16:14) only knock? I ask, shall He stand outside the door of this massive necropolis and expect the death-bound inmates (bound with a death a thousand times more fast than the bond of physical death) to bestir themselves, flip

fingers on a solid part of the door or house, when we wish to signal someone of our presence at their door. The people inside are busy or asleep or whatever. The knock is to awaken or to attract their attention.

He is also calling. “If any man hear my voice, and open the door...” There is in His voice authority and power and blessing. When John describes His voice in chapter one he says, “His voice was as the sound of many waters.” Yet, Christ said to John, “Fear not.” Christ is both speaking and knocking at the door.

What is meant by the door?

The world is top heavy with sermons preached upon a misunderstanding of the door of this text. Thousands of messages are preached upon this text every year. In most of these the text is not expounded but *confounded*. There is no exegesis, only dogma. Man follows man. Every generation builds upon the false foundation of those who have gone before. In-grained false teaching is as hard to drive out of sermons, books, or minds as flies from the kitchen.

The most common meaning given to this text declares the door is the door to the heart of the unsaved sinner. This meaning is pressed upon the text, for it cannot be derived

from it. In this view of the text Christ is standing at the heart of the sinner. He wants to go into the sinner's heart to save and indwell him. So the Lord stands knocking very gently at the heart of the sinner, asking the sinner's permission to enter.

This is then expanded. It is not to be thought to be a specific sinner's heart. That would be too narrow. It is not any sinner's heart but it is rather every sinner who hears the gospel. Thus this passage is said to teach that Christ Jesus is calling and knocking at the door of the heart of every sinner.

But wait!

Even this is too small. It is not just the heart of all the sinners who hear the gospel. No! It is the heart of all the sinners of all time. From one end of creation to the other. This heart is so big as to include all the men of all ages—the total mass of humanity! In this view of things the zoom in is out of the question. The wide angle is insufficient. Only the all-encompassing fish-eye is acceptable. Here enter Lenski, Barnes, Mathew Henry, Pulpit Commentary and hordes of other commentaries with nauseous repetition.

Think of that!

logue in the commonwealth of Israel, yet so far as it is moral, that is, as its commands or prohibitions are necessary emergencies, or expressions of the good or evil of the things it commands or forbids, it is invariable” (John Owen, 1616-1683).

“By positive laws of God we mean such institutions as depend only on the sovereign will and pleasure of God, and which He might not have enjoined and yet His nature has remained the same. Such was the command given to Adam not to eat the forbidden fruit, for we can easily conceive that some other test of obedience might have been given and which, if it had been given, would have been equally binding. And all the ceremonial precepts under the Mosaic dispensation were certainly of this description, for they have long since been actually abrogated by Christ, the Law-Giver of the Church” (Ashbel Green's Lectures on the Shorter Catechism, 1762-1848).

If the above be carefully pondered, the very real distinction between moral and positive duties ought not to be difficult to grasp. The former are manifestations of the nature of God, the latter are expressive of His will. The former proceed from God's goodness and righteousness, the latter issue from His absolute sovereignty. The former are de-

signed for our good, the latter are for the enforcement of His authority. The former are necessarily unchanging, the latter may be rescinded when and as the Law-Giver pleases. These two diverse elements may combine in a single institution. That is seen in the holy Sabbath—it is a bounden moral duty that some part of our time be set apart and dedicated unto God as it is for our own good that we periodically rest from all work, but it is by a positive decree God makes known how much time and which day of the week shall be sanctified to His worship. The moral duty of the Sabbath is permanent and perpetual, but the particular day on which it falls may be changed by God as He pleases.

The natural pre-eminence of the man above the woman ensues from the order of creation, in that the man was first made and the woman for the man, as the apostle argues in 1 Timothy 2:12-13, and therefore it is the moral duty of the wife to be subject to her husband. In like manner, the original creation of only one man and one woman gave the natural or moral law of marriage—polygamy and fornication becoming the violation of the law of nature. A divine precept given for the due exercise of this principle completes the law of it, with the addition of a formal obligation. The moral nature with which we are now

endowed inclines unto actions suitable thereto. The command of God concerning the regulation thereof transforms it into a formal law.

“The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me” (Psa 138:8). Compare, “He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it” (Phi 1:6). “Draw me, we will run after thee” (Song 1:4). Compare, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him” (Joh 6:44). “Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee” (Song 4:7). Compare, “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1Jo 1:7). “How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince’s daughter!” (Song 7:1). Compare, “And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace” (Eph 6:15). “All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (Isa 64:6). Compare, “I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing” (Rom 7:18). “That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations” (Isa 66:11). Compare, “Desire the sincere milk of the word” (1 Pe 2:2). “I have loved thee with an everlasting love” (Jer 31:3). Compare, “Beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation” (2 Th 2:13). “From me is thy fruit found” (Hos 14:8). Compare, “He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much

fruit” (Joh 15:5). “The just shall live by his faith” (Hab 2:4). Compare, “We walk by faith” (2 Co 5:7). “I will strengthen them in the LORD” (Zec 10:12). Compare, “Be strong in the Lord” (Eph 6:10).

Above we have given twenty-five examples of the minute harmony which exists between the Old and New Testaments. The moral teachings of the one are harmonious with the moral teachings of the other. The promises given to the patriarchs were made to them not as Jews, but as believers and therefore the spiritual contents of them belong unto believers today. The promises given to carnal Israel are the legitimate property of the spiritual Israel now. The moral laws and precepts given under the old economy are equally binding upon those who live under the new covenant. The positive (including the “ceremonial”) laws which God gave throughout the Old Testament, and which were either special injunctions to particular individuals or typical institutions which were imposed “until the time of reformation,” (Heb 9:10) are not binding on Christians today.

In Genesis 22:2, we hear God bidding Abraham, “Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac...and offer him there for a burnt offering,” whereas in Genesis 22:12, we find Him saying, “Lay not thine hand

BEHOLD I STAND AT THE DOOR AND KNOCK

J.C. SETTLEMOIR

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” —Rev. 3:20.

Christ Jesus the Lord knocks at the door!

What condescension!

The King of glory after His suffering, after His reproach, after His death, after His resurrection and after His exaltation at the right hand of God the Father knocks, knocks at a door.

John saw Him in His exalted status in that remarkable Lord’s day appearance (Rev. 1:10). In that glorious appearance Christ Jesus manifested all the attributes of his deity. He is the First and the Last, the Way, The Truth and the Life. As the mighty Conqueror he holds the keys of death and Hades.

Remember the days of His earthly sojourn. He manifested His glory by His works. He stilled the fierce waves of Galilee from their immense height to a mirror finish and the wind ceased also. He but said to them “Peace be still,” and they bowed down to Him in obedience.

When they came to arrest Jesus in the garden, Peter jerks a short sword from under his tunic and slices off a man’s ear. Our Lord reaches out, touches the severed ear and restores it without stitch, scab or scar.

Yet, this same Jesus knocks!

Now all of this must be kept before us when we read this text. We cannot lose sight of who this One is. He is the mighty God. Before Him all men must stand for judgment. “I am He that lives, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen,” (Rev. 1:18).

But He is standing at the door as He knocks. Consider the difference between sitting and standing. Standing signifies activity and movement. To sit is to rest. To stand indicates work is being done. There is an urgency in this posture. This will not go on for a long time. If there is not a quick response from within, He will pass on. And while He is standing there before the door about to turn and go away, He is doing two things; *knocking* and *speaking*.

To knock means to strike something with a sharp blow. This is usually done with the knuckles of the

the house of God for months together and then stay at home months together? There is not stamina enough in such a religion to make it respectable. None but the religion of principle is worth having. Serve God because it is right whether you feel as you wish or not.

Do you regularly pray in secret?

Jesus commands you to do this. The closet is a most delightful place for holding communion with the “Father of Spirits.” It has strong attractions for the spiritual Christian. Do you forget your closet? Do you forget to pray? Do you engage in your worldly business in the morning without prayer? Do you when the fatigues of the day are over, excuse yourself from retiring to some secret place to pray, but intending when you lie down on your bed to offer a few petitions to God? Such petitions are often languidly and sleepily presented. The Lord pity you if you neglect secret prayer.

Do you love and read the Bible?

Is it your guide, a lamp to your feet and a light to your path? Are its sacred pages dear to you! Can you say of the word of God that it is “more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb?” Or do you read the scriptures irregularly and superficially? Is there some other book that you prefer to the word of God?

Are you glad when it is said, “Let us go into the house of the Lord?”

Do you love the place where God’s honor dwells? Are his tabernacles amiable in your estimation? Do you love the return of his holy day that you may go into his courts and bear a part in his worship? Or do you often neglect public worship? Do you stay at home when you ought to be in the house of God? Do you sleep the time away? Do you visit? What occupies your time? You know and God knows. I am afraid you will be ashamed when it is told at the judgment what it is. ♦

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upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him.” With as much propriety might seducers of souls say that these two commandments “can only be reconciled by rightly dividing the word and placing them in separate dispensations,” as to make the other arbitrary divisions of Scripture which they do. As well might they say that the book of Acts “does not belong to us because God does not require Christians to remain on an endangered ship and refuse to get into the lifeboats” See Act 27:31, as to argue that Matthew’s Gospel “is not for us” because when the Lord is pleased to grant physical healing to one of His elect today, he is no longer required to go and show himself “to the priest” (Mat 8:4).

Our unwelcome task (for the present, at any rate) is completed. From what has been before us in these papers we now draw up the following bill of indictment against the “Dispensationalists.” 1. Their starting-point is wrong. They begin at the Garden of Eden instead of going back to the everlasting covenant. 2. They rob God’s children of many of their Father’s precious promises. 3. They force into 2 Timothy 2:15 a meaning which its context in nowise warrants. 4. They are all at sea concerning the mystical Body of Christ, failing to see that the Church of God is commensurate with the entire election of grace. [Editor’s

Note: We disagree with Bro. Pink’s view of the church at this stage in his life.] 5. They introduce the utmost confusion into the study of prophecy by ignoring the fundamental distinction between carnal or national Israel and the spiritual “Israel of God.” 6. They ignore the grace of God in Old Testament times and teach the monstrous error that under the Mosaic economy sinners were saved by their own doings. 7. They repudiate the moral law of God as a rule of life for the Christian today. 8. They invidiously seek to pit Scripture against Scripture, instead of showing their perfect unity and lovely harmony. 9. They split up the one predestinated, adopted, redeemed, and regenerated family of God into various groups and cliques, many of them going so far as to insist that the father of the faithful will have no part in the inheritance of many of his children. 10. They are woefully ignorant of the vast difference there is between the commands and precepts of God which are special and peculiar and those which are general and universal, between those which are evanescent and those which are perpetual, between ceremonial and moral duties. Thus they are perverters of God’s truth, enemies of the faith, and their preachings and writings should be shunned by all who desire the pure milk of the Word. ♦

SOLEMN QUESTIONS FOR PROFESSED CHRISTIANS

J.M. Pendleton (1811-1891), Distinguished Kentucky Baptist
Pastor and Author

Are you, indeed a child of God?

You profess to be, but a profession without the possession of piety will not do. Jesus says, “not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven” Read the connection in the VII chapter of Matthew.

What reasons have you for believing that you are a Christian?

Do you find yourself referring to some former period when you were the subject of strong religious emotion, expecting to discover in that emotion reasons for your belief? But is it not better to have present evidences of your piety? Are you now conscious that you love God supremely? Is your hatred of sin a settled hatred? Do you see an attractive beauty in holiness? Do you love the cause of Christ? Do you show your love by laboring to promote it? Remember past evidences of piety are worth very little as present evidences.

Have you grown in grace since you made a profession of religion?

Is your faith stronger? Your love more ardent? Your zeal more untiring? Your hope more vigorous? Your humility more profound? And your patience more thorough? Can you forgive injuries and meekly endure provocation?

Have you overcome your besetting sins?

Levity may have been your besetting sin. Have you given it up? Perhaps you were once easily thrown into paroxysms of anger. Have you achieved a victory over your temper? “He that ruleth his own spirit is better than he that taketh a city.” It may be you were once covetous. Have you, by your pecuniary liberality, crucified your love of gold, so that it has become a pleasure to give to the Lord’s cause? Perhaps your besetting sin was an indulgence in intoxicating drinks. Have you denied your appetite and mortified your unfortunate propensity?

In what particular do you think you are like Christ?

You know he is the Christian’s pattern. You know it is the important and the sublime object of Christianity to make men like Christ? Are you like him? In what respects? In his zeal for the divine glory? In his love to the souls of

men? In his superiority to the world! In his constant realization of the importance of eternal things! In his habit of going about doing good? Are you like Christ in any of these things?

Does love to the savior prompt you to go through the routine of Christian duty, or are you prompted by the consideration that it would bring censure and disgrace upon you not to do so?

The pride of consistency operates very powerfully on some minds. It is to be feared that many in our churches often act with a view to sustain their reputation, and are not influenced by the impulsive power of love to Christ. How it is with you? Be not deceived. You cannot deceive the Searcher of hearts.

Do you prize sanctification as highly as you do justification?

Justification delivers from the curse of the law – reinstates in the favor of God – and gives a title to heaven. Sanctification frees the soul from pollution – washes away its stains- and stamps the image of Jesus upon it. The true Christian prizes the blessings of sanctification as highly as those of justification. How is it with you?

Is the happiness of holiness the more desirable in your estimation?

The desire for happiness is, I know, natural to the human heart. No one can desire to be miserable. But the true Christian, while thankful for all the happiness he enjoys, estimates holiness far more highly. He would much rather be holy than happy. Is it thus with you?

Which do you seek the more earnestly—the improvement of your worldly condition or your spiritual?

Would you rather be a richer man than a holier man? Would you rather rise in the scale of worldly respectability than in the scale of moral excellencies? Would you rather be wiser than better? The devout Christian would much rather have his spiritual state improved than his worldly condition. While others inquire, “Who will show us any good?” he says, “Lord, lift thou the light of thy countenance upon me.”

Does feeling or principle control you in your religious course?

There is a great difference between the religion of feeling and that of principle. The former resembles the wet-weather of spring—it often dries up. The latter is like the exhaustless fountain which sends forth its streams at all times. Is yours the religion of feeling? Is this the reason why you sometimes go to