

# *The Gospel Herald*

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“As the truth is in Jesus” (Ephesians 4:21)

For The LORD’S PILGRIMS, STRANGERS & SOJOURNERS

by

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## *I Have Never Known a Time That I Have Not Believed*

*Over the years of fellowship among the Lord’s people, I have conversed with some brethren who have testified that they could not remember a time when they did not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour; being born into a professing Christian family, whose priorities were to live devout God-honoring lives.*

*Having family devotions, prayers at meals, attending church at every meeting was an automatic family event. I have also been among some of these dear brethren who have been raised in this Christian influence, and been informed that they often question their experience as valid and genuine because they CANNOT put a finger on a time of transformation, as was the experience of others.*

*In my personal experience, I was twenty-seven years old when I was overtaken by grace and humbled by God’s sovereign mercy. There is one common denominator among the Lord’s elect people that stands out among many in the “effectual call” of God upon his sheep, and that is: **THEY ARE “ALL” BROUGHT TO SEE THEMSELVES AS SINNERS.** Although an individual may be influenced from their mother’s womb of the Christian way, and profess a belief in the person of Christ, have they been REVEALED the devastating fact that they are a sinner before a Holy God? For this revelation (in my humble opinion) is one, if not the first manifestation of a “QUICKENING” work of the Spirit that will slay the greatest of moral religionist to their knees. For, unless one is brought to the revelation of his or her sinful condition, there is no need for repentance, and self-righteousness will prevail. The awareness of sin is, of necessity, for the sinner to be grieved over his or her lost condition. For repentance, being also a divine work of grace “granted” to the poor and needy sinner, shall manifest itself if the conversion experience be truly of God.*

*Following this experience of repentance, there will be an evident inward desire to turn from the former way one was walking. One becomes aware of a **NEW KINGDOM** into which they have been “born” by the Spirit. “Old things have passed away and behold **ALL** things become **NEW**” (II Corin. 5:17).*

*Oh, beloved, how many may be vexed with the concern about their TRUE spirituality? How many have been brought up in the church and have known no other way of life, yet NEVER see themselves as a SINNER with a deceitful heart, a tongue as that of a snake, a mouth that is full of cursing, and feet that seek vengeance on those who have offended them (Romans 3:10-15) ?*

*For if there is NONE RIGHTEOUS; NO, NOT ONE THAT UNDERSTANDETH, being brought up in the most devout and Godly family does NOT make people Christians, it certainly can make them religious, but not citizens of the kingdom of God. ONLY by God's sovereign work shall the influence of one's upbringing effectually be of great blessing, and that upon the experience of the New Birth, the divine quickening of God's Spirit. Then shall one see the God-given advantage of being brought up under the umbrella of a Christian family and see the divine protection the Almighty has provided over time, sparing one from the MANY PITFALLS of sin that could vex the soul throughout life's experiences.*

*You see, dear ones, whether you have lived 50 years outside the experience of saving grace as a rank sinner dabbling in ALL of sin's habits and experiences, or you have been sheltered in the shadow of a Christian-influenced home atmosphere, God still demands "a new birth" and "new creatures" to be fit for the kingdom of God and immortal, eternal life.*

*Be careful, dear ones, not to trust in "a form of godliness" in place of being born again. Have you been revealed your sinfulness, granted repentance and caused to turn from your previous religious walk where sin had its dominion? God alone shall reveal to his sheep that they are HIS, as THEY SHALL HEAR HIS VOICE AND FOLLOW HIM.*

*The counterfeit Christian shall only persevere for a season as their sheep's clothing shall become tattered, ragged, and fall apart, but the TRUE sheep shall be manifest by the genuine wool that will always be renewed and vitally growing. Woe unto the WOLVES, for they shall be revealed in the great day of the Lord.*

*Only an elect of God, being effectually called, shall have a genuine spiritual THIRST, and a HUNGER for spiritual food to satisfy the soul; and when it is supplied, they shall NEVER hunger nor thirst for another, for CHRIST shall be their sufficiency.*

*In conclusion, a dear brother, who had pastored for a number of years in a sovereign grace Baptist Church, met me on occasion for lunch and we would fellowship, conversing the truths of scripture. He, on this one particular occasion, commented saying, "Brother, I often feel envious as I hear your testimony of how God dealt in your life and how your experience was a drastic turn around." He continued, "I have always been brought up in a conservative and strict Christian home where I cannot think of a time when I did not believe and honor the Lord Jesus Christ." I replied,*

*“Brother, we all have been called in various and peculiar situations, as designed by the Almighty. Why do you believe the doctrines of God’s grace? Why does the blood-atoned redemption sound so sweet and special to your soul? Why has your soul been vexed with unworthiness more times than not? Why do persevere in your desire and labor in the ministry, studying the scriptures, seeking food to feed God’s little lambs and sheep who are hungering for spiritual food? I continued saying, “Brother, these (IMHO) are evidences of a work of grace upon the heart, mind and soul of an individual. Do not attempt to compare your experience with another, for not all are as the apostle Paul on the road to Damascus. I have many scars that haunt my soul from years of sinful living prior to my effectual calling from sin’s dread curse. Whereas you had been spared MANY of the pitfalls that sin causes, by being brought up under the umbrella of a Christian home, with parents looking out for your soul’s best interest.”*

*Beloved of God, no matter what your experience has been regarding a conversion, where are you TODAY? Do you continue to have that FIRST LOVE that got your attention initially? Are you growing in grace and knowledge of Christ? Is He sweeter today than the years before? The true and ultimate evidence is whether you are persevering to the END! Is grace continuing to be the source of your perseverance? Are you convinced that there is NO good thing within, apart from God’s own Holy Spirit which works within, CAUSING you to both to WILL and to DO of his good pleasure?*

*Examine yourselves, dear brethren; look for the fruit of the Spirit to be manifest in your walk here below. For by the FRUIT shall you know the TREE. May God cause us to be fruit inspectors of ourselves, seeking that glorious evidence that we are TREES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, the planted of the Lord.*

*By Christ’s merits and sovereign grace, I remain in hope,*

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