

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

Chapter 36

Ephesians 6:8

Ephesians 6:8 *Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.*

THE status of a person makes no difference—whether a man is a bondman or free—when *good* is done in the name of the Lord, and for His cause, the reward shall be the same, *the same shall he receive of the Lord*. Just as when evil is conducted, the Lord rewards those who commit it,¹ He does the exact same thing when good

is performed.² Because of the divine law that men reap as they have sown,³ doing good can have no other result than receiving the same from the Lord. Because also God is inherently good,⁴ then it is impossible to be born of Him, and not possess the same love for goodness, that is at the core of the heavenly Father's righteous and holy character. What this also teaches us is this, that man is never alone in any action he commits in this world, whether he is bond or free, and whether or not, he performs either good, or evil,

1 II Sam. 3:39 ... *the LORD shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness.*

II Tim. 4:14 *Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: Jer. 18:11 Now therefore go to, speak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you: return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.*

2 Heb. 6:10 *For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*

Rev. 14:13 *And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.*

II Cor. 5:10 *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

Neh. 13:14 *Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof.*

3 Gal. 6:7 *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

II Cor. 9:6 *But thus I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.*

Prov. 22:8 *He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity: and the rod of his anger shall fail.*

Job 4:8 *Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.*

Gal. 6:8 *For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*

4 Ps. 34:8 *O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.*

I Chrn. 16:34 *O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.*

Nah. 1:7 *The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.*

Ps. 100:5 *For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.*

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simply because God sees all,⁵ knows all⁶ and shall recompense to all men, exactly to how they have chosen to live, and whom they ultimately served.

(Prov. 16:3) *Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.* To commit our works to the Lord, is to depend on Him, keenly aware that the burdens of this life, cannot be carried by ourselves. Hence, through seeking divine will, counsel, and support, and committing our works unto the Lord, we acknowledge a need for God, and that

His aid is needed in every decision and action we make.⁷ The wondrous result of a person committing his *works unto the Lord*, is that the person's way and life, shall ultimately prosper. For the Lord leads no one into a desert, but only towards green pastures and still waters.⁸ Thus, if Christians truly desire deliverance in their lives, then they must roll their burdens onto the Lord, for He alone can carry them.⁹ In doing so, this enables the Lord to lead His people to the spiritual and physical blessings, that He has always purposed for their lives.¹⁰

5 Prov. 15:3 *The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.*

Jer. 16:17 *For mine eyes are upon all their ways: they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes.*

Jer. 23:24 *Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.*

Heb. 4:13 *Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.*

Eccl. 12:14 *For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*

6 I John 3:20 *...God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.*

Ps. 139:1-4 *O lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. ²Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. ³Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. ⁴For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.*

Prov. 5:21 *For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings.*

7 Prov. 3:5-6 *Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. ⁶In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*

Jas. 1:5 *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*

8 Ps. 23:1-3 *The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. ²He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. ³He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*

9 Ps. 23:1 *The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

Ps. 34:10 *The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing.* II Cor. 9:8 *And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:*

10 Jer. 29:11 *For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.*

John 10:10 *...I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

Ps. 37:4 *Delight thyself also in the LORD: and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.*

Exod. 6:6-8 *Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: ⁷And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. ⁸And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the LORD.*

Num. 10:29 *And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel the Midianite, Moses' father in law, We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the LORD hath spoken good concerning Israel.*

Deut. 12:20 *When the LORD thy God shall enlarge thy border, as he hath promised thee, and thou shalt say, I will eat flesh, because thy soul longeth to eat flesh; thou mayest eat flesh, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after.*

Deut. 15:4 *Save when there shall be no poor among you; for the LORD shall greatly bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it:*

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Prov. 16:3) *Commit thy works unto the Lord.*—Literally, roll them upon Him, as a burden too heavy to be borne by thyself. “Thy works” signify all that thou hast to do. (Comp. Psalm 37:5.¹¹) God provides such works for us. (Comp. Ephesians 2:10.¹²)

And thy thoughts shall be established.—Thy plans shall prosper, for they will be undertaken according to the will of God, and carried out by His aid. (Comp. 1 Corinthians 3:9 [For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.]; 2 Corinthians 6:1.¹³) (END QUOTE)

The reason this subject is important in the study that every man, whether bond or free, shall receive from the Lord, the same good, as he has done, is because the only good works that the Lord will truly regard, are those first inspired and led by Him. Thus, to God, to do a *good thing*, requires that it has first been preordained by God, to do it. Biblical examples include

Moses, Gideon, Jeremiah, Othniel, Ehud, and Samson.¹⁴

One of the ways also it can be discerned, that the presence of the Lord lives in someone, and that they have been begotten of God, is evidenced by the Lord's own kind, generous, and benevolent nature,¹⁵ flowing out from them. Similar to other fruits of the Spirit,¹⁶ we know that if someone lacks divine goodness, as with love, what this reveals, is that they neither know God, nor possess any true relationship with Him. Ultimately just as love indicates possession of salvation, equally does doing *good*, reveal someone as of *God*.

III John 1:11 Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.

He that doeth good is of God. Again, just as divine love evidenced in a person's life,

11 Ps. 37:5 *Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.*

12 Eph. 2:10 *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

13 II Cor. 6:1 *We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.*

14 Moses — Exod. 3:10 *Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.*

Gideon — Jdg. 6:14–16 *And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?*¹⁵ *And he said unto him, Oh my LORD, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.*¹⁶ *And the Lord said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.*

Jeremiah — Gen. 45:7 *And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.*

Othniel — Jdg. 3:9 *And when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.*

Ehud — Jdg. 3:15 *But when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised them up a deliverer, Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite, a man lefthanded: and by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon the king of Moab.*

Samson — Jdg. 13:5 *For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.*

15 Ps. 34:8 *O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.*

I Chrn. 16:34 *O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.*

Nah. 1:7 *The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.*

Ps. 100:5 *For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.*

16 Gal. 5:22–23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,*

²³*Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

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indicates that they are born of God,¹⁷ so also shall, he that *doeth good* proves a man, as of God, and filled with His Holy Spirit.¹⁸

(Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, III John 1:11) *He that doeth good is of God*] He has God as the source (ἐκ) of his moral and spiritual life; he is a child of God. In its highest sense this is true only of Him who 'went about doing good; but it is true in a lower sense of every earnest Christian. See on 1 John 2:16; 1 John 2:29; 1 John 3:8–9; 1 John 4:4; 1 John 4:6–7.¹⁹ (END QUOTE)

There are few verses that match the simplicity of II John 1:11, revealing when salvation has truly occurred, and sadly, if it has not. Yet as simple and clear as God's Word is on this important subject, few rely on, trust in, and view the Scripture as the supreme standard for determining if someone is genuinely of the Lord, or they are not. One of the reasons also why two of the fruits of the Spirit,²⁰ *love* and *good-*

ness, should be used to determine whether salvation has occurred or not, lies in the fact, that if God's Word is not the standard to determine who has been truly saved, then many shall believe what they think, or what others think, is sufficient for entrance into heaven. If God's Word therefore is not believed, man's word will be.²¹

The connection of being a *good man*, and filled with the *Holy Ghost*, is seen in the apostle Barnabas, who through the qualities of possessing divine faith, goodness, and being full of the Holy Ghost, added much people to the Lord. (Acts 11:24) *For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.*

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Acts 11:24) *For he was a good man*—This is given as a reason why he was so eminently successful. It is not said that he was a man of distinguished talents or learning; that he was a splendid or

17 1 John 4:8 *He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*

1 John 4:16 *And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

1 John 4:19 *We love him, because he first loved us.*

18 Eph. 3:14–15 *For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,*

Eph. 2:19–22 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; ²⁰And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; ²¹In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: ²²In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Matt. 12:48–50 *But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?*

⁴⁹*And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! ⁵⁰For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.*

19 1 John 2:16 *For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*

1 John 2:29 *If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.*

1 John 3:8–9 *He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. ⁹Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*

1 John 4:4 *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

1 John 4:6–7 *We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. ⁷Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.*

20 Gal. 5:22–23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,*

²³*Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

21 Matt. 7:21–23 *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. ²²Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?*

an imposing preacher; but simply that he was a man of an amiable, kind, and benevolent disposition—a pious, humble man of God. We should not undervalue talent, eloquence, or learning in the ministry, but we may remark that humble piety will often do more in the conversion of souls than the most splendid talents. No endowments can be a substitute for this. The real power of a minister is concentrated in this, and without this his ministry will be barrenness and a curse. There is nothing on the earth so mighty as goodness. If a man wished to make the most of his powers, the true secret would be found in employing them for a good object, and suffering them to be wholly under the direction of benevolence. John Howard's purpose "to do good" has made a more permanent impression on the interests of the world than the talents of Alexander or Caesar.

Full of the Holy Ghost—Was entirely under the influence of the Holy Spirit. This is the second qualification mentioned here of a good minister. He was not merely exemplary for mildness and kindness of temper, but he was eminently a man of God. He was filled with the influences of the sacred Spirit, producing zeal, love, peace, joy, etc. See Galatians 5:22–23.²² Compare the notes on Acts 2:4.²³

And of faith—Confidence in the truth and promises of God. This is the third qualification mentioned; and this was another cause of his success. He confided in God. He depended, not on his own strength, but on the strength of the arm of God. With these qualifications he engaged in his work, and he was successful. These qualifications should be sought by the ministry of the gospel. Others should not indeed be neglected, but a man's ministry will usually be successful only as he seeks to possess those endowments which distinguished Barnabas—a kind, tender, benevolent heart; devoted piety; the fulness of

the Spirit's influence; and strong, unwavering confidence in the promises and power of God. (END QUOTE)

Matthew 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Matt. 5:16) *That they may see your good works*—The proper motive to influence us is not simply that we may be seen (compare Matthew 6:1²⁴), but it should be that our heavenly Father may be glorified. The Pharisees acted to be seen of men, true Christians act to glorify God, and care little what people may think of them, except as by their conduct others may be brought to honor God, yet they should so live that people may see from their conduct what is the proper nature of their religion.

Glorify your Father—Praise, or honor God, or be led to worship him. Seeing in your lives the excellency of religion, and the power and purity of the gospel, they may be won to be Christians also, and give praise and glory to God for his mercy to a lost world.

We learn here:

1. that religion, if it exists, cannot be concealed.
2. that where it is not manifest in the life, it does not exist.
3. that "professors" of religion, who live like other people, give evidence that they have never been truly converted.
4. that to attempt to conceal or hide our Christian knowledge or experience is to betray our trust, injure the cause of piety, and to render our lives useless. And,
5. that good actions will be seen, and will lead people to honor God. If we have no oth-

And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

²² Gal. 5:22–23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

²³ Acts 2:4 *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

²⁴ Matt. 6:1 *Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.*

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er way of doing good—if we are poor, and unlearned, and unknown yet we may do good by our lives. No sincere and humble Christian lives in vain. The feeblest light at midnight is of use. (END QUOTE)

(*Benson Commentary*, Matt. 5:16) *that they may see your good works, and glorify, &c.*—That is, that seeing your good works they may both praise God for sending such a religion into the world, and also, embracing your faith, may imitate your holy example, or may be moved to love and serve God as you do, and thereby to glorify him. (END QUOTE)

Ultimately, if the light of Christ truly lives and abides within a man, then good works will both naturally and instinctively, flow out from him. That is, he will live his life liberally, and not selfishly, generously, and not self-centeredly, and his greatest intention will be, that God is glorified through the good works done in Christ's name. (John 7:38) *He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*

(*Benson Commentary*, John 7:38) The expression, *Out of his belly shall flow rivers*, is used with allusion to receptacles round springs, out of which great quantities of water flow by pipes; and the figure therefore signifies the plenitude of spiritual gifts and graces to be possessed by believers, and the happy effects which they should produce in the world. Thus the apostles and first messengers of Christ were both watered themselves and enabled to water others, Gentiles as well as Jews, not with small streams, but with large rivers of divine knowledge and grace, so that the countries, which till then had been barren, became exceeding fruitful in holiness and righteousness. (END QUOTE)

It is also only as the Lord's people bear much spiritual fruit in their lives, that the Lord is glorified, and they, prove them-

selves to be Jesus' true disciples. (John 15:8) *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.*

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, John 15:8) *Herein*—In this—to wit, in your bearing much fruit.

Glorified—Honored.

Bear much fruit—Are fruitful in good works; are faithful, zealous, humble, devoted, always abounding in the work of the Lord. This honors God. ...

Shall ye be my disciples—This is a true test of character. It is not by profession, but it is by a holy life, that the character is tried. This is a test which it is easy to apply, and one which decides the case. It is worthy of remark that the Saviour says that those who bear much fruit are they who are his disciples. The design and tendency of his religion is to excite men to do much good, and to call forth all their strength, and time, and talents in the work for which the Saviour laid down his life. Nor should anyone take comfort in the belief that he is a Christian who does not aim to do much good, and who does not devote to God all that he has in an honest effort to glorify his name, and to benefit a dying world. The apostles obeyed this command of the Saviour, and went forth preaching the gospel everywhere, and aiming to bring all men to the knowledge of the truth; and it is this spirit only, manifested in a proper manner, which can constitute any certain evidence of piety. (END QUOTE)

In all that we have covered in Scripture in regards to goodness, good works, and living to glorify God through them, then whether or not someone is bound or free, should make no difference concerning the ultimate aim of their life. Since all of us as Christians, whether born free or bound, are all collectively purposed to be the servants of Jesus Christ.²⁵ Consequently, even a *free man*, if he is a true

²⁵ *I Cor. 7:22* For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant.

Christian, is by personal choice and a willing desire, both a slave and servant to the Lord Jesus Christ.²⁶

It is also true, if believers are honest with themselves, that they intuitively know, that they, themselves, possess nothing truly good in them,²⁷ absent the Holy Spirit abiding in their hearts. Fully aware that if the Spirit of Christ did not dwell within them, then nothing truly good would ever be purposed, and/or accomplished by them. This is because the flesh, in its fallen state, is anything but good,²⁸ but only evil.²⁹ This is also undoubtedly why a *natural man*, one who lacks the Spirit of God within him, and has never been converted, nor surrendered his life to Christ, has absolutely no desire to glorify God, let alone, do good in His name. Because the *natural man*, lacks the goodness of God, then he has no true comprehension, or understanding, or perception, why anyone would spend their entire life, either serving Christ, or living a life of

service, doing good, in His name. To a *natural man*, divine commands, standards, and/or even fruits of the Spirit, are *foolishness unto him*. (I Cor. 2:14) *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.*

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Cor. 2:14) *But the natural man*—ψυχικός, δὲ ἄνθρωπος *psuchikos de anthrōpos*. The word "natural" here stands opposed evidently to "spiritual." It denotes those who are governed and influenced by the natural instincts; the animal passions and desires, in opposition to those who are influenced by the Spirit of God. It refers to unregenerate people; but it has also not merely the idea of their being unregenerate, but that of their being influenced by the animal passions or desires. See the note on 1 Corinthians 15:44.³⁰ The word "sensual" would correctly express the idea. The word is used by the Greek writers to denote that which man has in common with the brutes—to denote that they are under the influence

Rom. 6:22 *But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.*

Eph. 6:6-7 *Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; ⁷With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:*

Luke 17:10 *So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.*

26 Rom. 6:18 *Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.*

Rom. 6:22 *But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.*

John 12:26 *If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.*

27 Ps. 53:3 *Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

Ps. 14:3 *They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

Rom. 3:10-18 *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: ¹¹here is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. ¹²hey are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. ¹³Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: ¹⁴Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: ¹⁵Their feet are swift to shed blood: ¹⁶Destruction and misery are in their ways: ¹⁷And the way of peace have they not known: ¹⁸There is no fear of God before their eyes.*

28 John 6:63 *It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*

29 Gal. 5:19-21 *Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, ²⁰Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,*

²¹*Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*

30 I Cor. 15:44 *It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.*

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of the senses, or the mere animal nature, in opposition to reason and conscience...

Receiveth not—οὐ δέχεται *ou dechetai*, does not “embrace” or “comprehend” them. That is, he rejects them as folly; he does not perceive their beauty, or their wisdom; he despises them. He loves other things better. A man of intemperance does not receive or love the arguments for temperance; a man of licentiousness, the arguments for chastity; a liar, the arguments for truth. So a sensual or worldly man does not receive or love the arguments for religion.

The things of the Spirit of God—The doctrines which are inspired by the Holy Spirit, and the things which pertain to his influence on the heart and life. The things of the Spirit of God here denote all the things which the Holy Spirit produces.

Neither can he know them—Neither can he understand or comprehend them. Perhaps, also, the word “know” here implies also the idea of “loving,” or “approving” of them, as it often does in the Scripture.

This is the simple affirmation of a fact - that while the man remains sensual and carnal, he cannot perceive the beauty of those doctrines. (END QUOTE)

Another very important point to mention, that we dare not forget, is that once a person has been taught the truth of God’s Word, and especially so concerning the subject that we are covering now, of doing good, and receiving of the Lord the same, then we know, that if this doctrine is rejected, either because of neglect, or purposefully, then that person never really was looking to discover the truth of God’s Word. Similar to the Athenians of old, if the Lord Jesus Christ’s clear gospel message—of doing good, and in so doing, bringing glory to God’s name—is foolish-

ly considered as not enough, then many will pursue a path of searching for some “new thing” to be stimulated by. (Acts 17:21) *For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.* No knowledge, let alone religious knowledge, should ever be deemed as actually *good*, if it does not prompt its adherents, to seek to actually do good in their life. And this is also why, to continue to possess an unhealthy curious desire for something “new,” especially biblically, is not a sign of religious maturity, but actually an indication of spiritual blindness. Since there is in reality nothing really new under the sun.³¹ And yet, since the earliest of Christian times, there have always existed individuals like the Athenians, *strangers* to the true gospel of Jesus Christ, who seem willing to spend their entire life, doing virtually nothing else, but to either tell, or to hear of some new thing. The sinful pattern of the Athenians, is still evident today, when those discontent with the simple message of Jesus’ gospel, of seeking to be *rich in good works*,³² instead run from teacher to teacher, sermon to sermon, and doctrine to doctrine, with the false hope of discovering something “new” and more satisfying. For lost souls such as these, mental stimulation, is valued much more, than practically living out the gospel of God’s Son.

*(Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, Acts 17:21) But either to tell or to hear some new thing—*Greek: “something newer”—καινότερον (kai-NOT-er-on) *kainoteron*. The latest news; or the latest subject of inquiry proposed. This is well known to have been the character of the people of Athens at all times. “Many of the ancient writers I bear witness to the garrulity, and curiosity, and intemperate desire of novelty among the Athenians, by which they inquired respecting all things,

31 *Eccl. 1:9 The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.*

32 *1 Tim. 6:18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;*)

even those in which they had no interest, whether of a public or private nature (Kui-noel). Thus, (thoo-SID-ih-deez) Thucydides (3, 38) says of them, “You excel in suffering yourselves to be deceived with novelty of speech.” (END QUOTE)

In direct contrast to seeking to either speak, or hear, of some *new thing*, is the substantial ministry of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, Who had as His purpose while upon the earth, of *doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil.* (Acts 10:38) *How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.*

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Acts 10:38) *Who went about doing good*—Whose main business it was to travel from place to place to do good. He did not go for applause, or wealth, or comfort, or ease, but to diffuse happiness as far as possible. This is the simple but sublime record of his life. It gives us a distinct portrait of his character, as he is distinguished from conquerors and kings, from false prophets and from the mass of people. (END QUOTE)

In the context of doing good, throughout the entire earth, and the total history of man, no one has ever done, and exercised doing more good for others, than the Son of God. Because God was with His Son, and His Son with Him,³³ then the spiritual power of God, flowed out abundantly, copiously, and so plentifully, that the good works and miracles that Jesus performed, if fully recorded, the Scripture states, the world could not contain them.³⁴

33 John 8:29 *And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.*

John 10:30 *I and my Father are one.*

John 16:32 *Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.*

34 John 21:25 *And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.*

35 Eph. 4:7 *But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*

One thing that is also visibly evident in the Son of God's earthly ministry, is the fact, that the greater anointing someone receives of the Spirit, the greater amount of good works both should, and will, be performed by them. Because God is good, then the more a person is endowed with the influences of His own holy and divine nature,³⁵ the greater desire, determination, and resolve to do good, shall be possessed. Just as the more of the Spirit of God, lives and operates in a person, then the more spiritual power, ability, and purpose he is given to do good. When this is properly understood, then it makes absolutely no difference whatsoever if a man is a bondman, or free, simply because God's Spirit, can never be limited by the restraints of man. A prime example of this can be seen in John West, who was born into slavery in 1816, and died in 1868, but served as a devout Methodist and later Adventist minister. Ultimately what West accomplished in his spiritual ministry, as a slave, was so much more, than what so many others, who were born free, have ever accomplished.

Life in Slavery

by Kevin M. Burton

Seventh-day Adventism was racially integrated throughout the first decades of its existence, a fact underlined by the recent discovery of a second African American minister who served the growing movement in the 1850s and 1860s. John W. West was born into slavery in Baltimore, Maryland, on December 25, 1816. He was later sold into the Deep South and lived in New Orleans for several years. Early in life, he developed (ky-FOH-sis)

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kyphosis, a condition usually caused by degenerative disc disease, or osteoporosis, and for much of his life he was known as “a little hunchback slave.”

When a slave, he converted to Christianity at the age of 23, in September 1840, and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church. According to West, a few weeks after his conversion he “felt it duty to go and call sinners to repentance, and to tell what the Lord had done for [him].” His class meeting soon recommended that he be a class leader (which granted him membership in the Quarterly Conference) and his class leaders’ meeting later advocated that he be granted a license to exhort. “This was granted me,” West explained, “and I increased in faith, and God carried on His work in adding souls to His people.” As the slave mission continued to grow and West increased in his ministry, his presiding elder granted him a preaching license

in 1851, authorizing him to preach regularly in New Orleans. ³⁶ (END QUOTE)

In closing, let us remember, as in Jesus’ own heavenly ministry, that before a man is actually able to do anything truly spiritually good, then he must first be anointed with the Holy Spirit.³⁷ And though no man shall be given the full measure of the Spirit, as the Son of God was,³⁸ still in regards to the measure of the Spirit given, should an individual use his spiritual gifts, talents, and/or abilities imparted to him from above, to the glory of God. And though the measure of the Spirit that a man is imparted with, may differ, and shall differ,³⁹ what does not differ is the purpose of being given the Spirit, that is to bear witness to God’s holy nature in this evil world, so that others may be saved by Him.

³⁶ Burton, Kevin M. “Born a Slave, Died a Freeman.” *Adventist Review*, Adventist Review, 19 June 2020, <https://adventistreview.org/magazine-article/born-a-slave-died-a-freeman/>.

³⁷ *Acts 10:38* How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

³⁸ *John 3:34* For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.

³⁹ *Eph. 4:7* But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.