02 -- DIVISION -- FREEDOM FROM SIN POSSIBLE -- (JAN. 13-FEB. 6)

13. I said, I will take heed to my ways that I sin not with my tongue. -- Psalm 39:1.

Conversation and conduct, lip and life, "tongue" and "ways" are always closely associated. One tempts the other or shields the other. We will surely sin in both unless we "take heed" to both. But the psalmist evidently thought it was possible to be saved from sin in "ways" and "tongue." Therefore, guard the life and the lip.

14. Herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and inward men. -- Acts 24:16.

Would St. Paul have exercised himself to have what he never could get? Yet a conscience void of offense toward God and men is the very essence of entire sanctification. It is never attained by easy-going laziness, but by vigorous physical, mental, moral and spiritual exercise. It is the most wholesome exercise we can take for ourselves and -- for others.

15. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid! How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? -- Romans 6:1, 2.

A question is the strongest kind of an affirmation. St. Paul affirms that God forbids our abuse of his grace to continue in sin. Grace is intended to save us from all sin. Then, by that question " How?" He as positively and emphatically affirms that it is absolutely impossible that those who are dead to sin should live any longer therein. There can be no stronger word than "dead."

16. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. -- Romans 6:6.

Note those strongest possible words "crucified" and "destroyed." A dead man cannot serve. The crucified "Old Man" cannot serve sin. This is not merely our "theory." St. Paul says we know it. It is both theory and experience, and practice.

17. Being made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness. -- Romans 6:22.

Here is another strongest possible expression: "Free from sin." In the fullest sense only those who are "free from sin" bear the richest, ripest mellowest "fruit unto holiness."

18. Stand in awe and sin not. -- Psalm 4:4.

An awful sense of God's omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, majesty, holiness and justice, coupled with an awful sense of "the exceeding sinfulness of sin," and of its terrific penalties (sometimes in this life, but surely in the next) ought to be enough to bring us to a stand in a life of sin.

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

The late Bishop Hedding defined sinning as "a willful violation of a known law of God." Every true child of God is saved from all known and willful violations of God's law. If he is not so saved from committing sin be is a child of the devil. But Christ was manifested to destroy the devil's works. Without exception -- "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin."

20. He shall save his people from their sins. -- Matthew 1:21.

Christ was called "Jesus" because he is our Savior from sin. Surely he cannot fail in accomplishing the one only work of his incarnation, which is to "save his people from their sins."

21. The Lord said unto Satan, hast thou considered my servant Job . . . a perfect man? -- Job 2:3.

"Show us a perfect man!" Consider Job. God pronounced him "perfect." Will you contradict God? Better "mark the perfect man" for your association and imitation, pleasure and profit.

22. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy. -- Revelation 3:4.

In the most unlikely and adverse places God points out worthy and undefiled souls who shall walk with him in white. If they remained undefiled in Sardis, is it not possible for you to abide so in the place where you live?

23. Zacharias . . . and Elizabeth . . . were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. -- Luke 1:5, 6.

Behold this husband and wife righteous before God! What must have been the joys of such a union with God and with one another! What an edifying spectacle of family religion! What shining examples of religious and ecclesiastical fidelity!

24. We are witnesses, and God also, how holy and justly and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you that believe. -- I Thessalonians 2:10.

It must have taken a brave conscience, void of offense toward God and man, that could challenge the scrutiny of God and his Church to its holy, just and blameless behavior. There was no self-conceit in this challenge, but a self-knowledge that feared no exposure.

25. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. -- Ephesians 1:3,4.

We most cordially accept the doctrine of the divine foreknowledge and choice and foreordination and election that we should be holy and blameless before God in love. We avail ourselves of it. This doctrine and destiny, experience and life, are most wholesome and very full of comfort.

26. Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. -- Mark 6:20.

Very influential, yet very bad men, sometimes fear, observe, gladly hear, and even obey in many things, a fearless preacher whom they know to be just and holy. His ministry may not always be popular with such men, but it will be powerful and profitable and preventive.

27. Thine iniquity is taken away and thy sin is purged . . . I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, whom shall I send? . . . Then said I, Here am I! Send me. -- Isaiah 6:7, 8.

The very impressive context shows that unclean character, conversation, conduct and associations appear startlingly in their own convicting and woeful light when our eyes see "The King, the Lord of Hosts." But a live coal from off God's altar cleanses all iniquity and sin away. Then, and not till then, is the cleansed person ready as be should be for God's call to work for the salvation of others.

28. Them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. -- II Timothy 2:22.

Then there are some who have pure hearts. What a prayer must that be that comes from a pure heart! It must surely be what is meant by "praying in the Holy Ghost." It must be availing ourselves of the intercessions of the Holy Ghost (Romans 8:26). It must be praying with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit (Ephesians 6:18). A pure heart gets beyond merely thinking its prayers. "The dumb devil" is cast out. If it never called (aloud) on the Lord below, it does when it becomes pure.

29. Ye are sanctified. -- I Corinthians 6:11.

The context shows that with the very same positiveness St. Paul asserts their justification and their sanctification; yet some cannot imitate him in this; they are very positive that they are justified, but not so positive that they are sanctified. Better be equally sure of both!

30. Noah was . . . perfect in his generations, and walked with God -- Genesis 6:9.

Only such perfect characters as Noah can maintain the very closest walk with God; but it matters not what your name is, you can enjoy Noah's religious perfection and walk as he did with God.

31. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. -- Romans 8:2.

In this verse, "Spirit "stands over against sin," and "life" stands over against "death." Not at random, but by the force of law, the Spirit of life frees us from the contrary operation of the law of sin and death. It is the suspense of a lower law by a higher One. It is the annihilation of an inferior by a superior force. It is the living personal Holy Ghost, by the perfect law of liberty, completely counteracting the law of sin and death