

# Concerning God's promise to Cain, and how by disobedience he fell short of it.

By George Fox

And the Lord said to Cain, 'If you do well, shall you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin crouches at your door.' Here was the promise of God to Cain, but Cain disobeyed God, and did not do well; for he persecuted and killed his brother Abel about religion and worship; and therefore God pronounced, that he should be a fugitive, and a vagabond in the earth, though Cain built a city. And Ishmael the son of Hagar, who was born after the flesh, who mocked Isaac, who was born after the spirit or promise, as in Gal 4; God commanded Abraham to turn Hagar and Ishmael out of his family! and they wandered in the wilderness, a place for persecutors, though Ishmael became a great man afterwards in the earth. Gen 21.

And the Lord said, 'Because of these men, (namely, the Jews), who have seen my glory, and my miracles which I did in Egypt, and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice, surely they shall not see the land, (namely, Canaan), which I swore unto their Fathers, neither shall any of them who provoked me see it,' save Caleb and Joshua, who were of another spirit, and followed the Lord fully. And the Lord's anger was against the rest who rebelled against him, and he made them wander in the wilderness for forty years, and bear their whoredoms from the Lord, until their carcasses fell in the wilderness. Num 14, 3, Deu 1. These were those that murmured and rebelled against the Lord, and Moses, and Joshua, and Caleb; and bade them stone them with stones, and said one to another, 'Let us make us a captain, let us return into Egypt.'

Now here you may see those Jews, who had seen the glory of the Lord, and his wondrous works, and mighty arm; and yet they murmured and rebelled against the Lord, and his faithful servants, and through their disobedience they perished in the wilderness, and did not inherit the land of Canaan; and therefore take heed you christians, through your disobedience, murmuring, and rebelling against God and his faithful servants, that you are not destroyed, and perish in the spiritual wilderness, and never come to see heavenly Jerusalem, and wander in the spiritual wilderness, where there is no way, and grope in the dark, without the light of Christ, and stagger like drunken men.

And David speaks of such wicked transgressors, who make a noise [snarl] like a dog, they spew out with their mouths, swords are in their lips; these are those who wander up and down, for they are out of the path of life. But David said, 'With my whole heart have I sought you; let me not wander from your commandments;' for those who love God and Christ will keep them.

And the Lord told the Jews they loved to wander: 'they have not restrained their feet, therefore the Lord does not accept them.' And how did the Jews wander from the Lord, and his ways, both in the days of Isaiah and Jeremiah? They wandered from the Lord, and his spirit, and his law; so that the ten tribes were carried into captivity by the king of Assyria, and at last the two tribes were carried into captivity by the king of Babylon. And therefore let those who profess themselves to be christians, consider; have they not wandered from the same holy ghost, and the power and spirit of Christ that the apostles were in? Have they not gone into captivity, into the mystery of Babylon, or confusion?

And you may see God's judgments upon Moab for their pride; and the Lord said, 'I will send to him wanderers, who shall cause him to wander, and shall empty his vessels, and break his bottles.'

Now, all you proud, consider this; for there are none who are proud but those who have wandered from Christ, the way to God, who is meek and low in heart. And those who are proud, learn from the proud, and the proud comes over them. So one wanderer learns from another, but their bottles will be broken, and their vessels will clash against one another; and then your filthy liquor will be spilt.

And Jeremiah in his Lamentations 4:13-14, cries out against the Jews, and said, 'For the sins of her prophets, and the iniquities of her priests that have shed blood in the midst of them, they wandered as blind men, &c. they polluted themselves with blood,' &c.

Now let Christendom consider this, let her prophets and priests, who have shed the blood of the just, about religion and worship, consider and see if they have not wandered from Christ the way, who came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them; and when you have thus wandered from God and Christ, who then have you to save you? Have you not wandered from your savior? Therefore, blessed are they whose minds are stayed upon the Lord, they shall be kept in perfect peace.

But all you who curse people, and not only that, but seize their property, because they will not be of your way, worship, and religion. And are not your curses like the wandering bird? And so your curses do not hit nor come upon them, but upon yourselves; Pro 26:2. For Christ said, 'Bless, and do not curse,'

and those who curse, have wandered from his way and doctrine. And does not Solomon tell you, your wandering desires are vanity and vexation of spirit? And therefore those desires are not to be followed or served, for wanderers must turn to the Lord by his spirit if they are to be saved. And the Lord said, Amos 8:11-12, 'I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread and water, but of hearing the word of God. And they shall wander from sea to sea and from the north to the east; they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it.'

Now you may consider, the Jews had the words in the old testament in Amos's days, and after; and let Christendom consider, they have the words of the new testament. And do not the teachers in Christendom say, there is no hearing of God's and Christ's voice nowadays, nor receiving the word from heaven, as the apostles did? These wander to and fro, from one way, from one sect, and from one religion to another; manifesting there is a famine among them of Christ and the word of God, so that they cannot find it; which word should reconcile them to God and the scripture; and so it may be said of you, as Hosea said to the Jews; Hosea 9:6, for your silver you possess nettles, and thorns are in your tabernacles. And are not you of their spirit, who say, the prophet is a fool, and the spiritual men are mad, for the multitude of your iniquities have blinded you? And was not the cause of the Jews wandering among the nations, because they forsook God and his law, and rebelled against his good spirit? And is it now the cause of people's wandering, because they have erred from the spirit of God, and the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and from the same holy ghost the apostles were in? And yet make a profession of the words of the scripture, which was given forth by the holy ghost, like the Jews, who made a profession of the scriptures of the old testament, and always resisted the holy ghost who gave them forth. So both the Jews and christians, who are not in the same holy ghost that the prophets and apostles were in, are the wanderers, and have wandered from their habitation. But the Lord is gathering his sheep that have been scattered, and have wandered from mountain to hill; and has set one shepherd over them to feed them, Christ Jesus; and Christ's sheep know his voice, and follow him, and can praise God through Jesus Christ their shepherd, who feeds them.

And the apostle writes against the idle wanderers and teachers from house to house, and busybodies, who speak things that they ought not to repeat; all these wander from the spirit of God, in which is the heavenly fellowship and unity; and those who went in Cain's, Korah's, and Balaam's way, feeding themselves without fear, clouds without water, trees without fruit, twice dead and plucked up by the roots; then they are not likely to grow. They were raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame, wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. Now these being twice dead, first dead in sins and trespasses, and then made alive, and then dead again, yet remain trees,

wells, and clouds, but without water, rain, or fruit; so wandering stars, in Cain's, and Korah's, and Balaam's way. Cain wandered in the old world, Balaam and Korah wandered in the next world; but these which Jude speaks of, wandered from Christ, and true christianity. Now wandering stars are not fixed stars in the firmament of God's power, so wandering stars are not to be steered by, nor followed; for those who do follow Cain, Balaam, and Korah, are those who feed themselves without fear, who foam out their own shame, clouds without rain, wells without water, and trees without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots, and cannot grow; which kept not their first habitation, but have lost their first habitation; which have forsaken the right way, that are carried about with a tempest, to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. And those who keep their habitation in Christ cannot follow these wandering stars, though they might speak high swelling words of vanity, &c. and promise them liberty, &c. yet bring into slavery; but as the apostle said, follow us, as we follow Jesus Christ; for those who do so, are the fixed stars in the firmament of God's power, which bring people to the light, grace, and truth, by which they may be fixed upon Christ, from where grace comes, by which they shall see and discern those who follow Christ, and those who follow the wandering stars, by the same spirit of discerning as was in the apostles, and the church in the primitive time. For those who do not have the spirit of Christ, are none of his sheep, but those who have the spirit of Christ are his sheep, and established in him, and upon him their heavenly rock and foundation, through whom they have peace with God.

And are you not sensible how the Jews, Scribes, and Pharisees, priests, and high priests, had wandered from the holy ghost, and resisted it when the Lord Jesus Christ was come in the flesh, and also resisted him? And had they not gone into many sects? And did not Christ's prophecy come upon those who would be scattered among all nations, and their city Jerusalem should be destroyed, and did not that come to pass?

And have most christians not wandered from the holy ghost that the apostles were in, and is that not the reason that christians are led into so many sects, by the unclean ghost or spirit, and with it destroy one another, because they will not commune or conform to one another; who have wandered from the true communion of the holy ghost, and the fellowship and unity in the spirit, 2 Cor 13:14? And the fellowship of the son of God, 1 Cor 1:9, and the fellowship of the glorious gospel of salvation, the power of God, and the fellowship with the Father and the son, and one with another, 1 John 1:3.

And you may see the vagabond Jews were like Cain and Judas, persecutors and killers of the just and righteous, who kept their habitation in God and Christ. But the Lord has pronounced a woe against all such vagabonds and wanderers from God and Christ, and his law, and spirit, and command; and will reward them according to their works. And therefore, while you have time, turn to the Lord by

his spirit, 'and seek him while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near;' who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. 'Your hearts shall live who seek God.' Psalm 69:32.

*The Christians' righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, or else they cannot enter into the kingdom of God; and those who persecute the righteous, are full of dead men's bones, and their throats are open sepulchers; and those who envy their brethren, are murderers, and do not have eternal life abiding in them.*

Christ said, 'Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in nowise enter into the kingdom of God.' Mat 5:20. So it is clear that with the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, they cannot enter into the kingdom of God, which stands in Christ's righteousness; and as long as people remain in the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, they remain out of the kingdom of God.

Now, what is the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees? Is it not the righteousness of the law, 'Do this and live?' And no flesh is justified by the works [deeds] of the law, but by the faith and righteousness which is in Christ Jesus. Now what is the righteousness of the law, and the works of the law, and the righteousness of the Jews, priests, scribes, and Pharisees? Is it not outward circumcision, and observing the new moons and feasts, and their paying their tithes, first fruits, and offerings, with all their priests' garments; with Aaron's bells, lamps, candles and candlesticks, outward tabernacles, arks, altars, temples, sanctuaries, and priests' lips to preserve people's knowledge; with their Sabbath days, with their swearing, and oaths, and all their outward washings and observations of meats? Are not all these the works of the law, and commanded by the law? And by the works of the law, 'no flesh shall be justified.' Then what profit or comfort have you in doing all these things, since these are the works of the law, and that by the works of the law, 'no flesh shall be justified.' Gal 2:16. And did not the Jews, priests, scribes, and Pharisees, cry up these works of the law before mentioned, in opposition to the gospel, by which they were not justified? And were not the works of the law, the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, which Christ said to his disciples, 'Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, they shall in nowise enter into the kingdom of God?' But now in the new covenant, the righteousness of God without the law is manifest, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God, which is by the faith of Jesus Christ to all, and upon all those who believe; and therefore, as the apostle said, we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

And Isaiah said, 'All our righteousness is like filthy rags, and our iniquities like the wind have taken us away.' Isa 64:6. So this righteousness that was like filthy rags, was below the righteousness of the law, which was just, holy, and good.

And the apostle said, the Gentiles who do not follow righteousness, have attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But the children of Israel who followed after the law of righteousness, have not attained to the law of righteousness, because they did not seek righteousness by faith, but by the works of the law, for they stumbled at the stumbling stone, namely, Christ and his righteousness.

And the apostle said, 'I count all things but loss, for the excellence of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and he found in him, not having my own righteousness which is of the law, but that righteousness which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.' Phil 3:8-9. And Christ said, 'the comforter would reprove the world of their sin, because they believed not in him, and of their righteousness, and of their judgment.' So the world as well as the Jews, high priests, scribes, and Pharisees, have a righteousness, and a judgment in their sin and unbelief, which judgment, righteousness, and unbelief, are reprov'd by the same holy ghost that they were in who gave them forth, and so the wicked persecuted the righteous and just in all ages.

***George Fox***