

What Doth the Lord Require?

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To my wife, Opal, who has been my faithful companion for fifty-five years; to my son, Max, who has spent his life, to date, in the field of education; to his companion, Betty Lou; to our grandchildren, Rick and Sandy; and to all who may take the time and put forth the effort to read this book, it is affectionately dedicated.

Preface

IF THIS BOOK is any different from other books of similar content, it would be in organization and in the fact that the scripture references are written out rather than just citing the reference. True, this will require more space, but there will be more assurance that the reference will be read. After all, the power is in the Word of God, not in the word of men.

The book is organized around a very important question: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and *what doth the Lord require of thee*, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8). Moses asked the same question as recorded in Deuteronomy 10:12. Both Micah and Moses asked the same question, but they worded their answer a little differently. Each writer, in his answer, merely makes a general statement which is a summary of God's requirements. While we are living under a different law than that under which Micah and Moses lived, we are responsible to the same God.

In view of the brevity of life, the certainty of death, and the length of eternity, the question: "What doth the Lord require?" becomes one of the most important questions that can challenge the thinking of any man. God has not left us in the dark about what He requires of us. He has revealed the things He requires of us and has recorded them in an in-

spired Book which He has providentially preserved and made accessible to all mankind.

Before considering the question: "What doth the Lord require?" perhaps it will be well to consider God's right to make some reasonable requirements of man. This we shall consider in Part One of the book; then in Part Two we shall give some consideration to what those requirements are as revealed in His Word.

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Contents

PART ONE

God's Right to Make Requirements

CHAPTER	PAGE
i God Is the Creator of All Things	3
2 God's Son Is Our Savior	25
3 God Has Revealed His Will	52
4 God's Word Is Our Guide	77
5 God's Church Is Our Refuge	99

PART TWO

What the Lord Requires

6 What God Does Not Require	143
7 All Must Respect God's Authority	165
8 What Does the Lord Require of Sinners?	179
9 What Does the Lord Require of Erring Christians?	216
10 What Does the Lord Require of Christians?	238

PART ONE

God's Right to Make Requirements

I God Is the Creator of All Things

THERE ARE a number of reasons why God has a right to make some reasonable requirements of man. It is important that we know what those requirements are. It is equally important that we know why God has a right to make those requirements. Inasmuch as God is the Creator of all things, including man, He has every right to make some requirements of that which He has created and to hold man responsible for meeting those requirements.

Reputable scientists agree that there are five fundamental facts of science: time, force, action, space, matter. Scientists had to spend much precious time, labored effort, and valuable money in order to discover those fundamental facts. It is neither incidental nor accidental that God did not have to spend either time, effort or money in order to discover those facts. Being the Creator of all things He knew these facts before He began the work of creation, and caused Moses, by inspiration, to include them in the first verse of the only authentic account of creation that has ever been given. In the first verse of the Bible we read, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Take a close look at those ten words: "In the beginning (time) God (force) created (action) the heavens (space) and the earth (matter)."

The Bible is not a treatise on science, yet Moses, the inspired author of the first five books of the Bible, somehow knew about those facts and saw fit to preface his account of

creation with those facts upon which scientists agree. Is not this evidence that Moses was writing by inspiration? Moses' account of creation as found in the first two chapters of Genesis makes more sense than all the explanations and theories given by man as to how the universe came into being. Let us take a closer look at the first inspired statement of Moses.

Time

"In the beginning." This deals with time. When was the beginning? No one knows. No one can find out. God did not see fit to reveal this fact. Before this mighty act of creation there was no such thing as time; there was only eternity which was inhabited by God who was the Creator of all things. In eternity there is no past, present, nor future. Eternity had no beginning and it has no end; it has always been and it will always be. We are so accustomed to thinking in terms of time that it is difficult to think in terms of eternity. We see days begin and days end, weeks begin and weeks end, months begin and months end, years begin and years end, lives begin and lives end; but eternity had no beginning and it will have no end. God set the clock of time "in the beginning."

Force

The next important word in Moses' first sentence is "God." God is the greatest *known force*. By this force the universe was set in motion, and by the same force it is kept in motion. Without this force nothing could have been; without it nothing could be. It is generally accepted by all that there can be no effect without a cause. We may sometimes see an effect and be unable to discover the cause. The universe is a very noticeable and undeniable effect. There must be an undeniable cause. The only logical explanation of the cause that

brought the universe into being and keeps it in motion is God—"in the beginning God."

Yet some men who cannot sensibly explain from whence they came, why they are here, nor whither they are bound have the temerity to say there is no God. It would be wrong for me to make this statement but it was right and proper for David to say, by inspiration, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God . . ." (Psa. 14:1). This verse expresses the position taken by the atheist. This untenable position leaves the atheist with one great problem. His problem is to explain how we can have an effect without a cause. No one can successfully deny that the universe and all the motion that is connected with it is an effect of something. How does it come that we set our watches by the sun? All astronomers are agreed that all the suns, moons, stars and planets are in motion. They travel in their respective orbits at different and unbelievable rates of speed, yet they are always on time. So accurate is their time schedule that by mathematical calculation man can predict an eclipse of the sun or moon a thousand years from now, and when the time comes the eclipse will be on schedule to the very minute, unless man has made an error in his figures. Does this just happen, or is there a cause which produces this effect? Just what is the cause? Let the atheist explain.

The popular theory which atheists and infidels are tirelessly seeking to prove, and which millions are trying to persuade themselves to believe, is that both man, the universe, and all that is in it are the result of the process of evolution. Despite all their labored effort to prove their theory, it still remains a theory, nothing more and nothing less. They would have us believe that the universe evolved from a gaseous mass which one time revolved in space, and that both plant and animal life evolved from a single sexless cell. This raises a question which no proponent of the theory of evolution has been able to answer: whence came the gaseous mass and this one-celled plant or animal, and who is

responsible for the order we see in the universe? I was once in a geology class in a university when the professor who was teaching the class and the theory of evolution was asked this question. His answer was: "Well, back of it all there has to be a Higher Power." Certainly, a power which could create such a one-celled plant or animal or such a gaseous mass could have created the universe. The proponents of theistic evolution make room for a higher power, but those who believe in organic evolution refuse to make such a concession. Theistic evolution is the theory that God created life, but that He chose to create man and the various species of animals through a process of gradual evolution. Both organic and theistic evolution are contrary to the inspired account of creation given by Moses in Genesis.

The existence of this boundless universe is not only proof of God's unlimited power, but also of His wisdom. Power must have the direction which wisdom alone can give, or little could be accomplished. The writers of the Bible speak frequently and eloquently of the wisdom of God. David said, "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches" (Psa. 104:24). Solomon said, "The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens" (Prov. 3:19). Daniel said, "Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his" (Dan. 2:20). Paul put it this way: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11:33). While on his missionary journeys Paul often encountered opposition from the Greeks. They were the most highly cultured and best educated people of their day. Socrates, Plato and Aristotle had lived some 300 years before Christ. When Paul came to Athens and Corinth preaching salvation through a man who was crucified, the Greeks thought such teaching was ridiculous and beneath their dignity. Paul masterfully countered their opposition in these words: "For

the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by its wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men"(i Cor. 1:18-25).

Millions have been led out of the quagmire of sin up to the sun-lit peaks of the mountains of faith; transferred from a life of hopelessness and despair into a life of exquisite peace and joy; "transferred from the power of darkness, into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1:13). The wisdom of men cannot effect such a change. It can be accomplished only by the "foolishness of God." Man, with all his wisdom, cannot improve upon God's plan either by addition or by subtraction; and he dare not try.

Incidentally, it might be well to note that the word *God* comes from the Hebrew word *Elohim*, which is plural in number. It is the family name of the Godhead which consists of three members—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God used the Son and the Holy Spirit in creating the universe. In giving an account of each creative day, Moses said, "And God said." God spoke the universe into existence. "For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Psa. 33:9). Moses also said, "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen. 1:2). Again, God said, "Let *us* make man in *our* own image: after *our* likeness" (Gen. 1:26). Both *us* and *our* are plural in number. All three mem-

bers of the Godhead were involved in the creation. In the New Testament we read, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made" (Jno. 1:1-3). In verse 14 of the same chapter, John said, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." In the beginning, Jesus was known as the Word. In Ephesians 3:9, Paul said, ". . . God created all things by Jesus Christ." In Colossians 1:16, in speaking of Christ, Paul said, "For by him were all things created . . ." The apostle John said, "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one" (1 Jno. 5:7). That is, they are one in purpose, aim and objective. All three had an important part in effecting the plan of human redemption. God originated the plan, Christ executed the plan, and the Holy Spirit revealed the plan.

Action

The third fundamental fact of science is *action*. "In the beginning (time) God (force) created" (action). The word *create* means "to produce something from nothing; to bring into being." We often speak of the creations of men. Actually, man can create nothing; only God can create anything. Man does not have the power to bring into existence something out of nothing. He merely uses materials already in existence, and by changing either the form or relationship or both he invents or makes something new. An automobile is not something man created; it is just something he invented and made. He changed the relationship of materials already in existence. Infinite action and wisdom were involved in creating the universe and all that is in it. It was well thought out, designed and executed; it did not just happen by chance.

Man can make a watch that is valuable and useful in

keeping time, but he did not create it; he merely changed the relationship of its parts. Who would believe for one moment that all the parts of a watch which may have been made in factories widely separated could or did by chance come together and produce a time piece? A design always requires a designer; a watch requires a watchmaker. So, too, the universe requires a Creator. Watches have to be wound and set from time to time, and eventually they will wear out. The heavenly bodies are all in constant motion, yet they need no oil, do not require repair, and never wear out. They move with such precision that we set our watches by them.

Man was the last thing that God created. He was the crowning work of God's creative power. After He had created all other things, God said, "Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness . . ." (Gen. 1:26). God intended for man to be superior to all animals, for after He had created man, He said to him, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Gen. 1:28).

When God said, "Let us make man in our own image, " He evidently had reference to His moral and spiritual likeness. Jesus said, "God is a Spirit" (Jno. 4:24). A spirit has no body or parts. God endowed man with intelligence which makes him superior to animals. The computer is perhaps the most intricate and one of the most valuable pieces of machinery that man has ever made, but it lacks the quality of intelligence. It has to be programmed and fed the material with which it works or it is useless.

It is apparent that God loves variety. Botanists tell us that no two leaves are identical. Meteorologists say that no two snowflakes have ever been identical. By the same token, we can say no two persons are identical. Only a divine Being possessed with infinite power and wisdom could make so many things and make no two alike. Every human being has a brain, but no two of them function identically.

Psychologists tell us that we use only a small portion of our brain power. Perhaps it is because we are too lazy to develop and use the power God has given us. By nature some persons have greater brain power than others. They have different degrees of intelligence; they have different types of minds. Motors have different horse power; men have different mind power.

Psychologists speak of the threefold power of the mind: intellect, sensibilities and will. With the intellect man can acquire information, retain it, arrange it, and elaborate it. To acquire knowledge is to learn; to retain knowledge is to remember; to arrange knowledge is to reason; to elaborate knowledge is to imagine. The mind must be trained in order to use any one of these faculties to the maximum.

"Sensibilities may be grouped under four heads: emotions, affections, desires, and sentiments. Feelings are springs of human actions." " . . . Man has two dominant feelings: the desire for happiness and the aversion for misery" (Thornton and Sharp, *How To Study*).

The will is the mind's power to act voluntarily. It is the executive part of our nature—the part that takes hold of us and makes us do things. Some people have keen intellect; some have sensitive feelings; some have strong wills. We may have varying degrees of any one or all of these faculties of mind. Little wonder that all persons are different! Before we can convert any person, we must inform the intellect, touch the heart, and move the will.

Man is different from animals in that he is a triune being: part body, part soul, and part spirit. Paul said, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole *spirit* and *soul* and *body* be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:23). The apostle who wrote the Hebrew letter said, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of *soul and spirit*, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and

intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). It is difficult to distinguish between the soul and the spirit. W. E. Vine, in his *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, makes this distinction between the soul and the spirit, on page 54 of the Addenda: "Generally speaking the spirit is the higher, the soul the lower element. The spirit may be recognized as the life principle bestowed on man by God, the soul as the resulting life constituted in the individual, the body being the material organism animated by the soul and spirit." Then on page 55 he continues, "Apparently, then, the relationship may be summed up, '*Soma*, body, and *pneuma* and *psuche*, soul, can only be distinguished' (Cremer)." The distinction between the soul and spirit is so difficult to make that Paul sometimes spoke of them as one. In the second Corinthian letter he said, "For which cause we faint not; but though the outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Cor. 4:16).

Whether Vine's distinction between the soul and spirit is right or wrong, it does seem to be in accord with the account which Moses gives of the creation of man. Moses said, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground (body), and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (spirit); and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7).

As long as the soul and spirit remain within the body there is life. The moment the soul and spirit leave the body there is death. The word *death* means "separation." There are two ways man may die: physically and spiritually. While in the Garden of Eden, God said to Adam, ". . . Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:16-17). Because Adam disobeyed God and ate of the forbidden fruit, God said to Adam, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground: for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen 3:19). This penalty of death was far reaching, for it was

to include all men. Paul said, "Wherefore, as by *one* man (Adam) sin entered the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12). We do not inherit the guilt of Adam, but we do inherit the penalty. "And as it is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27).

Space

"In the beginning God created the heavens" (space). This is the fourth fundamental fact of science. Men are more conscious of space now than ever before because we are living in the Space Age. Men have been to the moon, man-made satellites are now orbiting the earth, some are now travelling to planets far more distant than the moon. God told man to subdue the earth, but He never said anything about his conquering space. This is far beyond the capability of man. Space is like eternity, it apparently has no end. Man had to devise a special measuring reed in order to even talk about the immensity of the heavens. They speak of this measuring reed as a light year. How long is a light year? It is the distance a ray of light travels in 365 days. Light travels at the rate of 186, 000 miles per second. When we multiply the 60 seconds in a minute by the 60 minutes in an hour by the 24 hours in a day, then multiply that astronomical number by the 365 days in a year, we have what astronomers call a light year. They use this measuring reed in measuring the universe. A ray of light travels about six trillion miles in one year. The statistics which follow were put out by astronomers several years ago. It is possible their estimates are changed now since they have learned so much more about space in recent years, and have more powerful telescopes. At the time these statistics were put out, astronomers estimated the boundaries of the universe as 36 sex trillion miles apart. The Milky Way, or the galaxy of which our earth is a part, is composed of about one billion stars. This, they call an island universe. Astronomers

estimate that scattered around in space there are some 500, 000 such island universes. This would add up to 500 thousand billion stars. God really did something when He created the heavens.

It is also interesting to consider the enormous size of some of the heavenly bodies. The sun is many times the size of the earth, but we are told that the largest known star is sixty million times the size of the sun. The diameter of the earth's orbit is said to be about 186 million miles. David could see only with the natural eye, yet he was amazed at what he saw. He said, "When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (Psa. 8:3-4). It is evident that David was impressed with the magnitude of what he saw. On another occasion David was impressed with the beauty and glory of the heavens rather than with their stupendous proportions. He said, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard" (Psa. 19:1-3). How can anyone view the heavens on a starlit night and say, "There is no God"?

Matter

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (matter). Matter is the fifth fundamental fact of science. While the earth is just a microscopic speck as compared with the rest of the universe, it is some 8000 miles in diameter and 25, 000 miles in circumference. It is the only part of this great universe that is definitely known to be able to sustain life. All the earth and everything that is on it including all plant, animal, and human life, is made of matter.

When men build either humble dwellings or ornate temples they have to secure material, whether it be wood,

stone, or steel. They go to the forest for the wood, to the quarry for their stone, and to the earth for iron out of which they make steel. They have to have material to work with. God had no material; consequently, He created the material out of which He made the universe. The molecule is the building block which God used in making all things. Molecules are made up of one or more atoms. Atoms are composed of electrons and protons. It is next to impossible for man to conceive of the smallness of these particles of matter. Scientists tell us to divide an inch into 100 million parts and take one of the parts and we will have the diameter of an atom. A molecule is some seven times the size of an atom. An electron is much smaller than an atom. Divide an inch into ten billion parts and take one of the parts and you have the diameter of an electron. Five hundred billion electrons can fit on a pinhead. They say protons are really small. Divide an inch into 100 trillion parts and take four of the parts and you have the diameter of a proton. Yet out of these particles of matter God created the universe which is so enormous that it extends some 36 sex trillion light years in diameter. Geologists know much about the structure of the earth; they know a little about the structure of the moon; but as yet they know nothing about the structure of the other heavenly bodies.

God, in His infinite wisdom, knew how to make adaptations. He made the universe, of which the earth is such a small part; then He made animals, and finally man to dwell upon earth. He knew how to adapt light to the eye, and the eye to light; sound to the ear, and the ear to sound; odor to the nostrils, and the nostrils to odor; taste to the tongue, and the tongue to taste; the wings of the bird to air, and air to the wings of the bird; the fins of the fish to water, and water to the fins of the fish. In like manner, He made the earth a suitable habitat for man and animals.

God placed over the earth a coating of soil which contains all the elements essential to plant life. He made the myriads

of plants so their roots could penetrate into the earth and utilize those life-giving elements. He made some animals herbivorous, others carnivorous. Some live on the herbs and vegetation produced by the soil, others live by eating other animals. Man is both herbivorous and carnivorous, living off both animals and vegetation.

Neither plants, animals nor man can live long without light. Light is the source, either directly or indirectly, of all life. Hence, God placed the sun in the heavens to send forth its life-giving rays, making plant and animal life possible. Too much sunlight is just as dangerous as too little. God knew how to arrange for the proper amount of sunlight. He made the earth to rotate so the various parts of the earth would have about equal amounts of light and darkness, thus preventing the surface of the earth from getting either too hot or too cold. Following the flood God made a covenant with Noah in which He assured Noah that "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (Gen. 8:22). Most vegetation requires seasons in order for it to germinate, grow, bud, blossom, bear fruit and to mature. To make seasons possible God knew the proper slant to give the axis of the earth. Rotating on its axis once every 24 hours gives us the proper exposure to light. Revolving in its orbit about the sun, at a slant of about 23 degrees, every 365 days gives a large part of the earth change of seasons. Atmosphere is just as essential for plant and animal life as light. As yet man does not know about other heavenly bodies, but we do know that our atmosphere is perfectly adapted to life upon earth; without it there could be no life. God knew that water is just as essential to life as either light or atmosphere, therefore He has provided for an abundant supply of water. In order to assure the proper distribution of water, God has arranged for a system of high or low pressure. As these systems of high and low pressure make their way around the surface of the earth, clouds appear and disappear at very

well regulated intervals, producing wet or dry weather, more or less as needed to sustain life. Do you think that man, with all his vaunted knowledge, could improve upon God's plan? Do you think that all this just happened? How can rational and educated man see all of this great plan and then say, "There is no God"?

Man is the most important thing that God has created. He reserved man to the last of His creative work. After man was created in the image of God, God said to him, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it . . ." (Gen. 1:28). In speaking of the achievements of man in subduing the earth, G. Dallas Smith said:

The mind of man fairly reels and staggers in its attempt to grasp the wonderful and stupendous achievements of man in his efforts to subdue this old earth. He has tunneled the mountains, bridged the rivers, and fathomed the deep. He has felled the forests, inhabited the plains, and turned the barren desert into a blooming oasis. He has sought out the very secrets of the universe and builded to the sky his temple of knowledge. By him the spirits of air, water and earth have been harnessed and made to do man's every bidding. They propel his ocean steamers, his railway cars and his mighty engines. They make his garments, build his houses and harvest his crops. They illuminate his cities, fan the heated atmosphere into cooling breezes, or banish wintry winds. They enable him to fly many miles above the earth, or to travel for many days near the bottom of the ocean. For him they make ice in the tropics or grow oranges in the snow. They flash his news around the world in a moment, carry the sound of his voice for thousands of miles, and even preserve it after he is gone. So, when viewed in the light of his mental achievements, man is certainly no less "fearfully and wonderfully made."

(From *Lectures On What Is Man*, p. 88).

After God had created man, He not only said, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: " but He continued by saying, "and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Gen. 1:28). God intended that

man, whom He created in His own image, should be greater than and superior to all animals. We can see from our own observation that man has pretty well subdued the earth and that he has dominion over all the lower orders of creation. Man is superior to animals in that God endowed him with intelligence. By using his God-given intelligence man has been able to subdue the earth and to have dominion over animals. Now, if he could just learn to subdue and keep self under control, the world would be a better place to live. God sent His Son as our Savior and gave us the Bible as our guide so we could learn to subdue self and learn to live in peace with ourselves and our fellowman. In this respect most of us have a long way yet to go. As previously pointed out, man has a body, a soul and a spirit. God has shown His wonderful concern for man in that He has made ample provision for all three parts of his nature.

In speaking of the body, Paul said, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. 5:1). Our body is earthly, it was made of dust; like a tabernacle, it will be unpinned and taken down. In the Garden of Eden, speaking to Adam of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, God said, ". . . Thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17). Here, God meant that Adam would die spiritually, which he did because he disobeyed God and ate of the forbidden tree. Because of his disobedience, God drove Adam from His presence in Eden. He was thus spiritually separated from God. Death means separation. We are born into this world pure and without sin. Jesus said, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:14). We do not inherit the guilt of Adam: we inherit only his weakness. We do not become sinners in God's sight until we are old enough to distinguish between good and evil. Adam died spiritually when he sinned; he did not die physically until he

was 930 years old. But because of Adam's sin we must all die physically. Paul said, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; even so death must pass upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12). Since time began only two men, Enoch and Elijah, have not had to die, unless they are still among the living. Enoch and Elijah walked with God, and God saw fit to take them directly into the eternal state. Death is an appointment that God has with all men. God has never failed to keep an appointment. Some day we will meet that appointment with God, unless we are among those living when Christ returns.

It is comforting to know that even though we must die Christ has made it possible that we can live again. In Hebrews we read, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2:14). Christ not only died, but on the morning of the third day He burst asunder the bars of the grave, thus making it possible that though we must die, we can live again. At the tomb of Lazarus before raising him from the dead, Jesus said, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (Jno. 11:25-26). In the greatest treatise ever written on the resurrection, recorded in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul said, "Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:51-54).

What will happen to the soul and spirit, or the "inner

man, " when the body is raised from the dead? Moses said, when God created man, that He "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7). The prophet Zechariah said, "The burden of the word of the Lord for Israel, saith the Lord, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him" (Zech. 12:1). The God that created our bodies formed our spirit within us. In speaking of death, Solomon said, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Eccl. 12:7). Only the body dies, the spirit lives on.

As we have found, God made wonderful provision for the body which He formed out of dust. It stands to reason that He would not have neglected to make adequate provision for the inner man which is immortal and shall never die. In Luke, the 16th chapter, Jesus gives some light on what happens to the inner man when it leaves the body. Jesus said: "There was a certain rich man which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they who would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence" (Lk. 16:19-26). Jesus must have

given this full account of what happened to two men, of different character, for some good reason.

To sum up, this is what Jesus said: (1) There were two men, one rich, the other poor; (2) Both men died; (3) Lazarus was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom; (4) The rich man found himself in torments; (5) The rich man was in great suffering; (6) Lazarus was comforted; (7) The rich man begged for help; (8) There was a great gulf between them; (9) There was no passing from one side to the other. We get a number of much-needed lessons from the experience of these two men: we must all die; the kind of a life we live here determines where the inner man goes after death; in one place, Paradise, we will be comforted; in the other we will be tormented; we will be conscious; after death it is too late to change our place of abode; we will remain in this place until the resurrection. Certainly we should give much thought to how we live while here, for the way we live here will determine where the inner man awaits the resurrection and the judgment. Jesus does not leave us in any doubt as to what will happen at the judgment. In picturing the judgment, Jesus said, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left" (Matt. 25:31 -33). Then in verse 34 He says, "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." In verse 41 He says, "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Matthew gives an account of the most transcendently sublime events that ever occurred upon this earth. "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and

his raiment was white as the light. And behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matt. 17:1 -5). In these verses we have set before us the three states of man: the fleshly, the intermediate, and the eternal state. Peter, James and John were in the flesh: Moses was in the intermediate state, for he had been dead for 1500 years, but now returns to earth and is recognized; Elias, or Elijah did not die, but God took him up from earth in a whirlwind and a chariot of fire, directly into the eternal state. The evident purpose of the transfiguration was to teach the great lesson concerning who has authority, hence, the One we are now to hear. Concerning His Son, God said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him." They were no longer to hear Moses and the law, nor Elijah, the representative of the prophets; but under the Christian dispensation we are to hear Christ and submit to His authority. It also teaches that there is an intermediate state, represented by Moses, where we are conscious and await the second coming of Christ and the resurrection.

Every human being born upon this earth has an immortal soul which shall never die. At death, only the body dies. It is the soul and spirit that animates the body. Death means separation, so when the soul and spirit, or inner man, leaves the body, the body dies; but the inner man goes to the intermediate state, as did the rich man, Lazarus and Moses, to await the resurrection. This raises a question, Just when does the soul enter the body? God has not seen fit to tell us. Dr. O. S. Jaquith was for fifty years on the medical staff at the Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis, Indiana. He was also a devout and consecrated Christian. In a conversation with him on this subject, I once heard him say that he believed the

God's Right to Make Requirements

moment conception took place in the womb the soul entered the body, along with all the genes which will determine the appearance and the personality of the person when born. Little doubt that this is true, yet some people believe in, practice, and want to legalize abortion, or legalized murder.

Just as God has made wonderful provision for the body of man while he lives upon earth, He has made just as wondrous provision for the inner man, both while here and in the hereafter. The inner man is spiritual and, consequently, must have spiritual food. When Satan tried to get Jesus to turn stones into bread to appease His appetite, Jesus answered, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). Man may be as wealthy as Midas, having enough money to buy all material things which heart and tongue could desire, and still be among all men most miserable. He is unhappy but does not understand why. He does not know that the inner man is crying out for something he does not have and is unable to buy. When animals are adequately fed, if in good health, they can be perfectly content; but not so with man. That inner longing must also be satisfied. Truly, "Man doth not live by bread alone."

Many people, like Solomon, have to learn this lesson the hard way. Solomon was the wealthiest king that ever sat upon the throne of Israel. In his quest for happiness, he said, "I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity. I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it? I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I should see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life" (Eccl. 2:1-3). He then goes on to say that he made himself great works, built houses, planted vineyards, made gardens and orchards, made pools of water, had servants, gathered silver and gold—he left nothing undone that should bring happiness. How did it work out? "Then I looked on all the

works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun" (Eccl. 2:11). Solomon had overlooked one very important thing—he had made no provision for the inner man.

In speaking of the food which God has provided for the soul, Jesus said, as recorded in John, chapter 6, " . . . My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world" (Vs. 32-33). "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world"(v. 51). In speaking to the woman at Jacob's well, Jesus said, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life" (Jno. 4:13-14). Are you eating of that living bread, and drinking of that living water? Just what is the condition of your soul?

Neither has the Creator of our bodies, and the giver of our spirits, overlooked our innate longing for life. Jesus said, " . . . I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (Jno. 10:10). He has provided for a more abundant life both here and hereafter. After telling His disciples that He would soon have to leave them, perceiving their sorrow, He said, "Let not your hearts be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (Jno. 14:1-2). In that home there will be fullness of joy and pleasures forever more.

The Creator of all things has given us a wonderful body which is animated by an immortal soul. He made us in His own image, endowed us with intelligence, thus making it

possible for us to understand, think, reason and believe. He has adapted the earth so it is a suitable habitat for us as we make our earthly pilgrimage. He has made provision for our inner man, both here and hereafter. Our Creator has every right to require something of us in return.

2 *God's Son Is Our Savior*

GOD HAS every right to make some requirements of man, not only because He is man's Creator, but also because He sent His Son to be our Savior. God, in His power created, in His wisdom planned, and in His love offered salvation to man. His power is inexhaustible, His wisdom unlimited, and His love boundless. But no plan, however good, can accomplish its purpose unless it is executed. Christ is the second member of the Godhead. His work was to execute the plan God had originated.

Man needed a Savior because he was lost in sin. Jesus said, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost"(Lk. 19:10). After showing that both Jew and Gentile are all under sin, Paul sums up man's condition as follows: "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is *no* fear of God before their eyes" (Rom. 3:9-18). Then he said, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). In describing the hopeless condition of the Gentiles,

Paul said, "At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). In short, man was doomed to sorrow, degradation and woe. Something must be done about the problem of sin. Who was equal to such a tremendous task?

Jesus gives the best answer to this question. He said, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (Jno. 3:16-17). Jesus was equal to this task because He was co-Creator of the universe. John said, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men" (Jno. 1:1-4). Then, in speaking of Jesus, Paul said, "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Col. 1:16-17). In order for Christ to execute God's great plan to save man from sin, it was necessary for Him to leave His home in heaven and come to this earth, so long cursed by sin, and take upon Himself the form of man. The author of the Hebrew letter said, "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me" (Heb. 10:5). In describing Christ's coming to earth Paul said, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto

death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:5-8). In order that we may more fully appreciate the salvation which Christ has placed within reach of all men, let us think about some of the outstanding facts that have to do with His earthly existence and His continued existence in the presence of the Father where He now reigns as King over His kingdom.

HIS INCARNATION

In speaking of the Incarnation, Isaac Errett said:

The stupendous fact, on which, as a foundation, the whole superstructure of the New Testament history is reared, is the Incarnation—Divinity revealed in humanity—God manifest in the flesh. Obliterate this fact, and the biography of Jesus, as given by the four evangelists, becomes a mass of extravagances and absurdities impossible of rational belief, and the gospel springing out of this biography is an egregious fraud . . .

However skeptical men may be as to this fact which, by its overpowering luster, dazzles the vision, it is nevertheless true that it is the very fact, of all others, supremely needful to the human race—the rescue of man from despair.

(Evenings With The Bible, Vol. 3, p. 30).

It required but a few minutes for man to sin, and thus unfit himself to remain in God's presence in Eden. But it took God 4000 years to perfect a plan which could make possible his return. The Incarnation was a part of that great plan.

In the Law of Moses, God revealed much to man concerning His power, justice, and holiness; however, the Law of Moses is not an adequate revelation of God to man. Many of God's attributes are revealed to us in the great book of Nature; but wondrous as its revelations are, it leaves the soul that hungers and thirsts for righteousness unsatisfied. Both the Law of Moses and the book of Nature leave man ignorant of God, unless God shall make Himself known in His relations to humanity in some more approachable form. It is easier for most of us to learn from a demonstration or from an example than from a precept. God knew that this was

true; therefore, He chose to reveal Himself to man through His Son. The incarnation of Christ and His life upon earth is the great demonstration. In Christ we have Divinity—God manifest in the flesh.

In these days of radio and television we listen daily to the news that comes to us from all parts of the world. This news may be of interest to us politically, economically or socially. But the greatest news that ever came to man was brought by an angel to a woman. Listen to this newscast, "And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Lk. 1:30-33).

Millions of people had been born before that time, and millions have been born since; yet, but few times before, and at no time since, has God considered the birth of anyone of such great importance to the world that He has sent an angel to announce his birth. At the time this great announcement was made, the world had long been waiting for the promised Messiah. The moment had now come when a Son was to be given to a virgin, a Savior to the world, a sacrifice to sinners, a temple to Divinity, and a new principle to a new world. The angel came not to the palace of the great, but to a poor maid who later became the wife of a carpenter. Truly, God's ways are higher than man's ways.

The modernists of our day refuse to accept the thesis of the virgin birth of Christ. Let us read the account as given in the Bible: "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold,

the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:18-21).

All who reject this account of the virgin birth are forced to reject the Bible as an inspired book. If it is not inspired, why accept it at all, more than the writings of any other man? Certainly it would require no more power to cause a child to be born without an earthly father than it required to form the first man from the dust of the ground, to breathe into his nostrils the breath of life, and thus to cause him to become the first living soul. True, it is miraculous; so, too, are hundreds of other things we read about in the Bible.

During the first century after Christ, there were certain philosophers known as Gnostics who did not believe that Christ had a body but rather that He was a phantom, or Spirit, which merely appeared to have a body. To counteract this false doctrine, John said, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us)" (1 Jno. 1:1-2). Again he said, "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of anti-Christ, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now is already in the world" (1 Jno. 4:2-3). Furthermore, Paul said, "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1 Tim. 3:16).

In order for Christ to shed His blood to atone for sin; in order for Him to become our mediator, that He might reconcile man to God, it was imperative that "a body be prepared for Him." He had to become just as human as you and I, yet remain as divine as His Father in heaven. The Incarnation was necessary in order that God's Son might become our Savior.

There Is Power In His Blood

Why was it necessary for the blood of Christ to be shed? God's Word has the only answer. To the Ephesians, Paul said, "Wherefore remember, that ye being in times past Gentiles in the flesh, who were called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph. 2:11-13). Paul makes it clear that man was hopelessly lost in a world so long enshrouded in the darkness of sin. It was only by the precious blood of God's only Son that sin-cursed humanity could be brought back to God.

In speaking of man's need of cleansing, Isaiah said, "Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1:18). How shall our garments so deeply dyed in sin be cleansed? Hear Zechariah, "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. 13:1). The fountain here referred to was the blood of Christ. This fountain was opened for the very people who blasphemed, rejected, and crucified the Son of God. If He died for them, none need despair.

It is interesting to note the prominence of blood throughout the Bible. Adam's first two sons, Cain and Abel, brought an offering to God. Cain brought of the fruit of the ground; Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock. God rejected Cain's offering but accepted Abel's because it was a bloody sacrifice. In both the Patriarchal and Jewish dispensations, the only acceptable approach to God was through the blood of animals. During these two periods, millions of animals were offered in sacrifice to God. Rivers of blood were shed. Every time an animal's life was taken, and every time its blood was shed, it pointed forward with prophetic finger to the shedding of the blood of Christ, who truly was the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world. Paul said, "Almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without the shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. 9:22).

However, by virtue of the blood of animals alone, no sins were ever forgiven. The blood of animals was merely a shadow which prefigured the blood of Christ. "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins" (Heb. 10:4). In this chapter the author has just stated that the law was a shadow of good things to come. There were many shadows in the law. We know that it is impossible to have a shadow without a substance to cast the shadow. The blood of animals was but one of many shadows of the law. It was the blood of Christ that cast the shadow. In contrasting the efficacy of the blood of Christ with that of animals, the author of Hebrews said, "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb. 9:13-14). In emphasizing the cleansing power of the blood of Christ, John said, "But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 Jno. 1:7). The

blood of Christ is the only detergent powerful enough to remove all of the spots from our souls so long and so deeply dyed with sin.

Who receives the benefit of the shedding of Christ's blood? Was it effective in cleansing the sins only of those who lived this side of the cross? No, the people who lived in both the Patriarchal and Jewish dispensations were the beneficiaries of its cleansing power just as much as are we who live this side of the cross. The power of Christ's blood was both retroactive and prospective. It had power to forgive sins before it was shed as well as after it was shed. Before Christ died, sins were forgiven by virtue of the blood yet to be shed, just as now sins are forgiven by virtue of the blood that has been shed. Before the death of Christ, they showed their faith by offering the animals which the law required. This side of the cross, we show our faith by obeying the gospel and by observing the Lord's Supper, in which we eat the bread which is emblematic of His broken body, and drink the fruit of the vine which is emblematic of His shed blood. Apparently, many people who profess to be Christians do not properly appreciate the shedding of Christ's blood in their behalf; neither do they realize the danger of failing to show their appreciation. In discussing this danger, the author of Hebrews said, "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant,

wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" (Heb. 10:24-29)

It is evident that the author is here emphasizing the importance of assembling regularly with the saints to worship God in the spirit of beauty and holiness. One important part of the worship is to partake of the Lord's Supper, and thus commemorate the death of Christ and the shedding of His blood for us. He makes it plain that those who neglect to thus assemble sin wilfully, and furthermore, that if we thus sin wilfully, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. But what does remain? "A certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." By neglecting to regularly observe the Lord's Supper, we thus count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing. We may be limited in our ability to serve, but we can all show our appreciation for what He has done for us. God will not tolerate ingratitude. We should be eternally grateful to God for giving His Son, and to Christ for shedding His blood because by His blood we are redeemed (1 Pet. 1:18-19); purchased (Acts 20:28); ransomed (Matt. 20:28); reconciled (Rom. 5:10); justified (Rom. 5:9); forgiven (Eph. 1:7); brought near to God (Eph. 2:13); and granted eternal life (1 Thess. 5:10).

We hear many sermons on the blood of Christ, but too often we are not told how we come in contact with that cleansing power. In speaking to the elders of the church at Ephesus, Paul said, ". . . feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). What did Christ purchase with His blood? Paul says He purchased the church. What is the church? In speaking of Christ Paul said, "And he is the head of the body, the church" (Col. 1:18). Please note that the body and the church are one and the same thing. How do we get into the body? Paul said, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" (1 Cor. 12:13). "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). Where is your blood? It is in your

body. How may we get in contact with your blood? We will have to get into your body. Where is Christ's blood? It is in His body, the church. How may we get in contact with Christ's blood? Does it not follow that we will have to get into His body, which Paul says is the church? According to the Scriptures no person can come into the church, the body of Christ, where he comes in contact with the soul-cleansing blood, without having his mind or heart changed by faith and his life changed by repentance; then, upon the confession of his faith, he may be scripturally baptized into the church which is Christ's body.

The Wonderful Counselor

Isaiah is often referred to as the Messianic prophet because he made so many prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah. In one of the most beautiful of his prophecies he said, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6). Someone, unknown to me, has said in commenting on this verse, "As we read this text we are made to think of the great cathedral of time in which there are five great bells. As Isaiah, the bell-ringer, strikes those chimes, there float into the centuries harmonies born in the heart of God."

Truly, He was wonderful in every aspect of His existence whether we think of Him before, during, or after His incarnation. He was wonderful in His existence before He was "made flesh." As a member of the Godhead He had part in creating the universe. He was wonderful in His conception, for He was conceived of the Holy Ghost and was born of a virgin. He was wonderful in His birth, for no sooner was He born than an angel announced His birth to the shepherds. Luke said, "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory

to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Lk. 2:13-14). Four thousand years had gone into the preparation for this wonderful event. By it hundreds of prophecies were fulfilled. The most wonderful Being that trod this mundane sphere made His debut under the most humble circumstances, born in a stable and cradled in a manger.

In speaking of His growth and development, Luke said, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" (Lk. 2:52). He grew intellectually, physically, spiritually and socially. At the age of twelve His parents took Him to the feast of the passover. As they returned, after making a day's journey, they discovered that Jesus was not with them. They returned to Jerusalem, "And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers" (Lk. 2:46-47). After He began His ministry, having heard His teaching, "The Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" (Jno. 7:15). After He had preached the most powerful sermon that ever fell upon human ears, Matthew said, "And it came to pass, when he had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matt. 7:28-29). On one occasion His enemies sent some men to arrest Him. When they returned without Him, they were asked why they had not brought Him. "The officers answered, Never man spake like this man" (Jno. 7:46). So far as anyone knows, He never saw inside a school, He never attended any university, He held no degrees, He quoted no one, but often said, "Behold, I say unto you." Truly, He was wonderful in His wisdom and authority.

No man ever possessed such wonderful power. He had complete mastery over all the forces of nature. He turned water into wine. In poetic language, John Milton said, "The

conscious water knew its Lord and blushed." He stilled the raging tempest, walked on the storm-tossed sea, made the barren fig tree wither, and raised the dead. He had power to open blind eyes, unstop deaf ears, heal palsy and cleanse lepers. Likewise, He was wonderful in His self-restraint. After He had fasted forty days, Satan suggested that He turn stones into bread and thereby satisfy His appetite and also prove His claim that He was the Son of God. Jesus could have done both, but He answered, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). He could have come down from the cross, but refused.

No one has ever had such impact upon civilization as has Jesus. His influence has continued to grow as the centuries have come and gone. He towers above all teachers, preachers, philosophers, orators, leaders, and philanthropists. His influence and teaching have changed millions of lives from vile corruption to spotless purity and from sorrow and despair to joy and happiness.

Not only was Jesus wonderful in His conception, birth, wisdom, power, self-restraint, mastery of nature, and in influence; but He was a wonderful Counsellor. Today, the need for counsel is generally recognized. In our school systems we have specially trained men and women who devote either a part or all of their time to vocational and educational guidance. This service has come to be recognized as essential to any effective educational program. In business, when we need legal advice, we consult an attorney; when we need financial advice, we consult a financier; when our health fails, we consult a physician. When much is involved, we cannot afford to make a mistake. Solomon said, "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety" (Prov. 11:14). Most people freely admit their need of guidance, advice and counsel educationally, legally, and physically; but apparently there are many who do not feel, or will not admit, their need of counsel spiritually. In

this case, the soul's eternal destiny is involved; consequently, we should exercise the greatest care in selecting a counsellor.

In the world today there are thousands of people anxious to give religious counsel, but this does not mean that their counsel is always safe or reliable. Their counsel may be sincere, yet be both unsound and unsafe. To Job God said, "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" (Job 38:2). Nothing can disqualify a counsellor more effectively than a lack of knowledge of the field in which he poses as a counsellor. Certainly this disqualifies some who pose as counsellors in the field of religion today. God said, "Woe to this rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin" (Isa. 30:1). From this verse it seems that the children of Israel preferred the counsel of men to the counsel of God. Human nature has not changed, for the most casual observation will convince you that many today prefer the counsel of men to the counsel of God. At one time, when the apostles of Christ were being persecuted, their enemies took counsel to put them to death. But Gamaliel, a wise counsellor, said, "Now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God" (Acts 5:38-39). To the Colossians Paul said, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. 2:8).

From these scriptures we learn that the counsel of men is not only unsafe, but it is often dangerous, and may jeopardize the salvation of our soul; consequently, the only safe thing for us to do religiously is to seek Divine counsel. David said, "The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations" (Psa. 33:11). Solomon said, "There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand" (Prov.

19:21). To this Isaiah added, "O Lord, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth" (Isa. 25:1).

Only Jesus can give us unimpeachable counsel on such vital questions as: From whence did I come? What is my present relationship to God? What is my future destiny? Am I a saint or a sinner? In whom must I believe? What must I do to be saved? How may I be infallibly safe? What are my duties as a Christian? All of these, and many more questions, He has answered in His Word. We should all find comfort in these words, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory" (Psa. 73:24).

"The Sun of Righteousness"

In the last chapter of the Old Testament we read, "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall" (Mal. 4:1-2). Scholars differ as to what the prophet means by "the day cometh, that they shall burn as an oven." Some think he is referring to the destruction of Jerusalem, which was drawing near; others, that the strictness of the new law is figuratively referred to as an oven burning the refuse. Certainly, verse two refers to the exultation and glorification of righteousness which was to be achieved under the new covenant, which was near at hand. In a general sense this is a prediction of the manifestation of Christ in the flesh, when He came "to seek and to save that which was lost." It has been said that the darkest hour is just before dawn. This was surely true in this case. There were four hundred years between Malachi and Jesus. During that

time the voice of inspiration had been unheard. The world was enveloped in spiritual darkness. That silence was broken when the voice of John the Baptist thundered forth in the wilderness.

The darkness began to pale into dawn when Jesus was born in Bethlehem. The sun had risen when Jesus entered upon His ministry. The "new day" began when the Sun of righteousness sent forth the illuminating rays -of the Holy Spirit, enabling the apostle Peter to proclaim the gospel in fact and fulness on Pentecost and to bring forth new spiritual life. In commenting on Malachi's statement, "With healing in his wings, " Adam Clarke says, "As the sun, by the rays of light and heat, revives, cheers, and fructifies the whole creation, giving, through God, light and life everywhere; so Jesus Christ, by the influence of his grace and Spirit, shall quicken, awaken, enlighten, warm, invigorate, heal, purify, and refine every soul that believes in Him; and, by his *wings* or *rays*, diffuse these blessings from one end of heaven to the other; everywhere invigorating the *seeds of righteousness*, and *withering and drying up the seeds of sin*. The rays of the *Sun* are the *truths* of his *Gospel*, and the *influence* of his *Spirit*. And at present these are universally diffused" (*Clarke's Commentary*, Vol. 4). There are several points of likeness between the "Sun of righteousness" and the sun at the center of our solar system.

1. *Just as the sun is the center of our solar system, Christ is the center of the plan of salvation.* Christ was prefigured and foreshadowed by many of the great men of the Old Testament. In the entire Bible there is one central family, one central person, and one central thought. The one central family was the family through which Christ was brought to the world; the one central person was Jesus; the one central thought was the redemption of man, brought to us through Christ. Everything in the Old Testament points forward to Christ; everything in the New Testament points backward to Christ.

2. *Other heavenly bodies revolve around the sun; all else in the Bible is subordinate to Christ.* Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were

His ancestors. The prophets pointed forward with prophetic finger to Christ. John the Baptist was the forerunner of Christ. The apostles were the assistants of Christ. The gospels are a biography of Christ. The epistles set forth the doctrine of Christ. Christ has been our Mediator, He is our Intercessor and He will be our Judge. He is the foundation of the church, the door into the church, and is the head of the church. He is the way, the truth, and the life; the good Shepherd, the Great Physician, the Lamb of God, and the Captain of our salvation.

3. *The sun and Christ are the source of physical and spiritual light, respectively.* Jesus said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (Jno. 8:12). In speaking of Christ, John said, "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not" (Jno. 1:4-5). Then in verse 9 he said, "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Without natural light provided by the sun, there could be no life upon earth. Light is essential to vegetable life; vegetable life is essential to animal life; both vegetable and animal life are essential to human life. If there is no light, there can be no life. This is equally true spiritually. Without the light of the Sun of righteousness, there could be no spiritual life. The atmosphere which surrounds the earth is the medium through which the light of the sun is brought to earth in just the proper amount to produce and maintain life. Likewise, the gospel of Christ is the medium through which the light of Christ is brought into the world. Paul said, "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid from those who are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4:3-4). We are being told today that some of the products in current use are releasing an element that is destructive to the layer of ozone in our atmosphere, thus permitting too much of certain rays

of the sun to reach the earth. Those rays are thought to be responsible for the current epidemic of skin cancer. The devil is using much of his time in trying to destroy the gospel. To the extent that he succeeds, mankind will be increasingly afflicted with the cancer of sin, which will result in spiritual death.

4. *The source of all beauty.* Christ is the source of all moral and spiritual beauty. It is the sun which causes the vegetation which beautifies and adorns the earth. Christless lives may be compared with the landscape in winter—nothing beautiful or attractive. The Sun of righteousness works an unbelievable change in the Christian's life. The sun causes the earth to bring forth fruitage; the Sun of righteousness causes those who receive His life-giving rays to bring forth the fruits of righteousness, "Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5:22-23). New interests and desires, new hopes, aspirations and ideals, new principles, new habits manifest themselves in our lives when we receive rays from the Sun of righteousness.

5. *Greatest enemy of disease germs.* There is no greater purifier than the rays of the sun. Disease germs cannot live long when exposed to the full light of its powerful rays. What is true of disease germs which destroy the body is equally true of the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life which are the spiritual disease germs which destroy the soul. No one knows better than Satan how destructive the rays of the Sun of righteousness are to the germs which cause sin. It is for this reason that Satan uses so much effort to refract the rays of the Sun of righteousness. Satan wants to keep men in spiritual darkness, because it is there alone that the germs of sin will thrive and do their deadly work. Jesus said, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (Jno. 3:19). Not only do men love darkness because they do not want their evil deeds to be discovered but also because they do not want their peace of mind disturbed.

They prefer to have their conscience seared so they will not be disturbed by its constant goadings.

6. *The rising sun brings a new day.* The Patriarchal dispensation is often referred to as the starlight age because there was but little light emanating from the Sun of righteousness. The Jewish dispensation is spoken of as the moonlight age because there was more light, yet people were still groping their way. During the present or Christian dispensation, the Sun of righteousness is shining in all its glory. All who will may see.

The Misunderstood Christ

Much of the trouble that exists in the world, whether it is between man and man, nation and nation, in families, or in the church, is a result of misunderstanding. No person who ever lived upon earth has been more misunderstood than has our Savior.

1. *His mission upon earth was misunderstood by His contemporaries.* When Jesus was born there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem saying, "Where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him" (Matt. 2:2-3). Herod, near the close of his own reign and naturally anxious concerning the succession to the throne, was troubled to hear that the founder of what he thought of as a rival dynasty had been born. All Jerusalem was troubled with him because they dreaded a conflict between two claimants to the throne. Both Herod and Jerusalem were thus troubled from the mistaken notion that the kingdom of the Messiah would clash with the secular powers. This was the first evidence that the mission of Christ was misunderstood. This first misunderstanding resulted in great sorrow because, in order to get rid of this supposed competitor, Herod slew all the children that were under two years of age. Not only did sorrow result

from this first misunderstanding of Christ, but there is much sorrow now because His mission is still misunderstood. However, the greatest sorrow will be at the judgment, when those who have had the opportunity but have made no effort to understand Him hear Him say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41).

2. *He was misunderstood by His own nation.* John says, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (Jno. 1:11). They did not receive Him because they did not understand Him. The Jews had now, for some four hundred years, been a subject nation. They were familiar with the history of their great nation, knowing quite well the power and glory which it had enjoyed in the days of David and Solomon. They were acquainted with what the prophets had foretold concerning the Messiah. They were looking for an earthly king who they thought must of necessity be a great general who would lead a mighty army from victory unto victory, until the ancient splendor of the earthly kingdom was restored to Israel. The appearance and character of Jesus did not comport with their idea of a king. He did not look, talk, or act like the kind of a king they were expecting. They could not reconcile His teaching about laying up treasure in heaven, loving your enemies, and blessing those who curse you with their concept of the mission of the promised Messiah; consequently, they declared Him to be an impostor and had Him nailed to the cross—all because they did not understand Him.

3. *He was misunderstood by His most trusted disciples.* Thinking that He was to be an earthly king, they asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" (Matt. 18:1). On one occasion, the mother of James and John requested that her sons might sit, one on the right hand and the other on the left, when Christ came to power. There were times when His disciples sought to take Him by force and make Him king. Even after His death, burial and resurrection and just before

His ascension, the eleven apostles who had heard His soul-stirring sermons, observed His sin-free life, and witnessed the history-making events which took place at His crucifixion asked Him, saying, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6).

4. *Today there is much misunderstanding of the purpose of the miracles He performed.* All who accept Christianity believe that Jesus performed many mighty miracles during His ministry. It is true that He opened blind eyes, made the dumb to speak, and healed all manner of diseases. But it is equally true that He cast out devils, raised the dead, stilled the tempest, and caused the barren fig tree to wither. His power was equally effective whether in the realm of disease, the realm of departed spirits, the realm of nature, or the realm of death. Some people claim to be able to heal diseases by miraculous power today. Their reasoning is that if Jesus healed and the apostles healed men today should be able to do the same thing. But if men can perform that type of miracle today, how does it come that they cannot walk on water, stop the raging storm, and raise the dead? If they can perform one type of miracle, why not the other?

There is a difference between divine healing and miraculous healing. All healing is, in one sense, divine, but it is not miraculous. Doctors admit that all they can do is to help nature. The healing that Christ did was miraculous; that is, it was done independent of natural methods. Certainly, all Christians believe in praying for the sick. All Christians believe that God answers prayer. God's answer involves divine power but not miraculous power. We pray for our daily bread, but God does not give it to us by miracle, though He does make it possible to have it. We pray for the sick, then comply with God's natural laws by treating the disease, and believe that He blesses our efforts; but not by miracle.

To believe in miraculous healing today because Christ healed miraculously is to misunderstand the purpose of Christ in performing miracles. When God introduced the

Jewish dispensation, He selected Moses as the mediator through which the law was to be given, then made it possible for him to perform miracles in order to convince the Jews that God had selected him as their deliverer and lawgiver. It was for exactly the same purpose that Christ performed miracles. Listen to John, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (Jno. 20:30-31). What was the purpose? That ye might believe! Christ was introducing the Christian dispensation; consequently, He performed miracles to prove that He was sent of God as the deliverer and Savior of men.

During the period when the church was in its infancy and before the New Testament was written, the apostles laid their hands on the leaders of the early church and imparted to them spiritual gifts. What was the purpose of these gifts? In speaking of the preaching of the apostles, the writer of Hebrews said, "God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will" (Heb. 2:4). In explaining the duration of these spiritual gifts Paul said, "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away" (1 Cor. 13:8-10). In other words, when the New Testament is written there will no longer be any need for miraculous gifts; consequently, they will be done away. Now that we have the New Testament which produces faith (Rom. 10:17), spiritual gifts and miraculous power are no longer needed. Spiritual gifts stood in the same relation to the original building of the church as does the scaffolding which is used by a carpenter in building a house. The scaffold helps him in

the construction, but when the house is completed, he removes the scaffolding.

What a shame that the greatest person who ever walked the footstool of God should be so completely and sadly misunderstood. We can understand Him only by laying aside all prejudice and pre-conceived ideas and studying His Word with an open and unbiased mind.

"Prince of Peace"

In his great prophecy concerning Christ Isaiah said, "And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6). Some men in our past history have been given much coveted awards and have made a place in history for themselves because they have been able to avert wars or have succeeded in terminating wars. We need more statesmen of that kind today. However, only Jesus deserves the title, "Prince of Peace, " because He was the greatest peacemaker the world has ever known. The angels which heralded Christ's birth said, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Lk. 2:14). Notice those between whom Jesus has made peace.

1. *God and man.* Sin caused man to become estranged from God. Isaiah said, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isa. 59:2). Adam and Eve introduced sin into the world in the Garden of Eden, thus separating man from God. All men have followed their example, and the cleavage has widened through the years. No sooner had man sinned than God set in motion a plan which embodied His eternal purpose whereby man could eventually be reconciled to Him. God desired that man, whom He had created in His own image, should spend eternity with Him. Before this plan could be consummated, something must be done about the problem of sin. This great

plan began to unfold when God told Satan that the "seed of the woman should bruise his head." The "seed of the woman" was Christ. By His death on the cross and His subsequent burial and resurrection, Christ bruised Satan's head in that He made it possible that even though man must die he has the assurance that he will live again.

In order for any person to serve effectively as a mediator or peacemaker, it is necessary for him to be acquainted with both sides of the controversy. In this respect Christ was perfectly qualified to make peace between God and man. Being "God manifest in the flesh, " He knew all about God's side of the controversy. Being the son of Mary, He was just as human as you and I. He knew the problems peculiar to men in the flesh. The author of the Hebrew letter said, "Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted" (Heb. 2:17-18). In speaking of Christ Paul said, "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us unto himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself . . ." (2 Cor. 5:18-19). Through Christ, peace was made possible. Please note that it is man that must be reconciled to God, not God to man. Man was responsible for the estrangement. God made overtures for reconciliation. God perfected the plan; man must accept the plan.

2. *Between man and man.* Much of the unrest that exists in the world today results from strife between man and man. In the voyage of life people who make no profession of Christianity manifest the attitude that every man is out for himself, and "let the devil take the hindermost." As a result of this selfishness we see unjustified competition. We see jealousy, which leads to envy which is "the rottenness of the bones"; hatred, which leads to murder; pride, which is an abomina-

tion in the sight of God. Many people in the world couldn't care less about the rights of their fellowman, or who their neighbor is. A certain lawyer once asked Jesus the question, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus told him the story of the good Samaritan, as recorded in Luke 10:25-37. A certain man fell among the thieves who left him half dead. A priest saw him lying by the roadside, but he passed by on the other side; a Levite did the same; but a certain Samaritan, seeing his condition, rendered first aid, took him to an inn, and offered to pay all his expenses.

Someone has pointed out that in this parable Jesus has pictured a miniature world in which we can all find ourselves. We see four classes: (1) the hurt man, (2) the heedless man, (3) the hurting man, (4) the helping man. It has been suggested that in this parable Jesus describes three planes of living: the robber represents the law of the jungle—I am going to live at all costs—or "the survival of the fittest"; the priest and the Levite said, in effect, "I'll live and let live"; the Samaritan, "I'll live and help live." This parable also presents three philosophies of life: "What's thine is mine, I'll take it"; "What's mine is mine, I'll keep it"; and "What's mine is thine, let's share it." Not until we learn who our neighbor is will we be willing to "live and help live" or say, "What is mine is thine, let's share it." No one knew as well as the Prince of Peace how to make peace between man and man.

3. *Between man and himself.* Paul speaks of man as having a body, a soul, and a spirit (1 Thess. 5:23). It is a bit difficult to distinguish between the soul and the spirit. For our purpose we shall not make any distinction. Paul uses the term, *inner man*, apparently to include both. He said, "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Cor. 4:16). Ever since that distant day when Satan entered the Garden of Eden and persuaded man to sin, there has been constant strife between the outward and inward man. This strife will persist in the mind of the alien sinner until he does something about the

problem of sin. Paul very effectively described this disturbing strife in Romans 7:13-23. At the conclusion of his discussion of this great battle between the flesh and the spirit, Paul raises the question which must be in the mind of every conscious alien sinner: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Then he gives this reassuring answer: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord . . ." (Rom. 7:24-25).

Only Christ, the "Prince of Peace," can give us victory over sin and Satan. As long as we remain under Satan's power, we can have no peace of mind unless our conscience has become so seared that we no longer feel its pangs. Can you think of anything more valuable than peace of mind? Only a genuine, sincere Christian can possess this priceless treasure. In writing to Christians Paul said, "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:7). Isaiah said, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee . . ." (Isa. 26:3).

Peace of mind and happiness are not necessarily the same thing, but they do have much in common. The quest for happiness began when Satan first induced man to sin in Eden and as a consequence of his disobedience man was driven from God's presence. Some have sought happiness in wealth; many have sought it in pleasure; while others have thought that popularity is the royal road to peace and happiness. Solomon was the most wealthy man who ever sat on the throne of Israel, but he found neither peace of mind nor genuine happiness in his wealth. Failing in this, he decided to try pleasure. He said, "I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity. I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it? I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom: and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the

days of their life" (Eccl. 2:1-3). He surrounded himself with everything that money could buy. He tried wine, women and song. What was his conclusion? He said, "Therefore I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of spirit" (Eccl. 2:17). So it has been, so it is, and so it will ever be.

The story is told of a young woman whose parents had died, leaving her wealthy. She decided to seek happiness in pleasurable enjoyment. She traveled around the world visiting every country. She gratified every sense to the utmost and yet was not satisfied. On her way home she was leaning over the rail of the ship, looking into the blue waters of the great deep. Thinking of her vain efforts to find happiness she said aloud to herself, "I have sought happiness, but I have failed to find it: I have gone around the world and I have seen and heard much, but I am not happy, and now if I could only find peace." Then she heard a solemn voice behind her say, "O that thou had hearkened to my commandments! Then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the wave of the sea." She turned and saw an elderly man standing near her. He had heard her speech and had given her the right answer. If only the millions in this pleasure-mad world could be made to realize that genuine peace of mind can be found only in Christ. Jesus put it this way, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt 4:4).

Even after we have become Christians we must see that we "walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:15-16). Peter said, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). Recognizing this danger Paul said, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Cor. 9:27). Furthermore he warned Christians against the persistent efforts of the "roaring lion" in these

words: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (Rom. 6:12).

Obedience to the gospel delivers us from past sins, but we must not forget that Satan still lives. He has not been annihilated, only subdued. As a Christian one has his foot on Satan's neck—keep it there. The old serpent will try to squirm out and again inject his poisonous fangs. He does not want anyone to permanently escape his domain. Even Christians still have battles to fight and victories to win. Paul exhorted Timothy to "fight the good fight of faith" (1 Tim. 6:12). It is necessary to "put on the whole armor of God" in self-defense. Only in Christ can we find genuine peace of mind. Only by accepting the "Prince of Peace" can we be "more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37)-

Conclusion

We should be eternally grateful to God who sent and to Christ who came into this world where all men were lost in sin. We should be thankful that He was willing to take upon Himself the form of a servant and to be made in the likeness of man; to shed His blood to redeem us from all iniquity, to become the world's greatest Teacher and most Wonderful Counsellor. Though He was the most misunderstood man who ever lived upon earth, yet He is recognized today as the light of the world. He has achieved the well-deserved title of Prince of Peace. In return, He has every right to require reverence and obedience of man.

3 *God Has Revealed His Will*

GOD HAS every right to make requirements of man. He has made abundant provision for man's every need, temporal or spiritual. As we have found, God created man and after man sinned away his right to remain in His presence, God in His mercy sent His Son to be our Savior. God originated the only plan by which man could be fitted and prepared to enjoy again the presence of his Creator. Christ, because of His great love, died to execute that plan. But man, in his lost condition, could not have been brought back to God unless some provision were made to make that plan known. The plan must be advertised.

Three men may enter into a business relationship for the purpose of manufacturing and marketing some useful product. They mutually agree to serve in the capacity for which they are best fitted by nature, training and experience. One becomes president of the corporation, another becomes vice-president in charge of production, the third becomes vice-president in charge of sales. Consequently, the business becomes a success because each partner contributes to the business in the way he is fitted to serve.

The Bible makes it clear that there are three members of the Godhead—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In order to understand the plan of salvation, it is necessary that we understand the work of each of the three members of the Godhead and the relation of the work of each member to the

work of each of the other members. Certainly, the work of all three members of the Godhead is important. All three were essential to complete the plan. Please notice that John says there are three members of the Godhead: the Father, the Word (that is, the Son), and the Holy Spirit (1 Jno. 5:7). Yet he says these three are one. In what sense are they one? Are they one in person or personality? If so, it would be improper to speak of them as three in number. After speaking of the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, in the next verse John says, "For there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one." It is reasonable to believe that the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit are one in the same sense; that is, they agree in one. In the Godhead there are three separate and distinct personalities—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—yet they are one. They are one in nature, i. e., all three are infinite and eternal. Not only are they one in nature, but they are one in purpose, aim or objective. Although their objective is the same, each has a separate work to do in the accomplishment of that objective. Their common objective is the redemption of man—the salvation of dying humanity. This great objective could not have been accomplished without the combined work of all three, yet each had a separate work to do in bringing about the accomplishment of this task which was commensurate with the knowledge and wisdom of Deity.

We frequently speak of the husband and wife as one, but in so doing we do not mean that they are one in person. They are two separate and distinct personalities, yet they agree in one; they cooperate in the accomplishment of their common objective. In erecting a building, the contractor, the architect, and the workmen are one in purpose. Their common objective is to erect the building. All are essential, yet they are separate personalities with a common objective. Each has a separate work to do. If any one of the team fails,

the work will be a failure. In the same sense the Godhead is one. Let us consider briefly the work of each member.

To perfect a plan which would meet the needs of all men of all kindreds, nations, tribes and tongues, men from every walk of life—rich or poor, king or peasant, black or white, red or yellow, learned or illiterate, with ever-changing interests in this ever-changing world—was a tremendous undertaking. The undertaking would have been great if it had dealt only with the men of one generation. But this plan, which could be effected only by the combined efforts of the Godhead, had to do with all men in all ages to come. As the centuries pass man's interests, opportunities and environment change but both his temporal and spiritual needs remain basically the same. Men today, with all their knowledge and training, are unable to work out a plan that will effect peace upon earth even in our time, to say nothing about generations yet unborn. But the plan of salvation as revealed in the New Testament will, if universally adopted, bring peace on earth and good will to men now and in all ages to come.

Only the God who created this immeasurable universe and formed man in His own image had the wisdom to accomplish such a tremendous undertaking. It was the work of God to originate this great plan, devise the scheme, outline the policy, and then to furnish the blueprint for man's salvation.

But no plan, policy or blueprint can accomplish the purpose for which it was devised unless it is executed or carried out. God placed the responsibility of executing or carrying out this perfect plan upon his Son. Christ said, "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (Jno. 3:17). In order to execute this plan it was necessary for Christ to leave heaven and come to earth that He might live among men and set a perfect example before them. It is easier for us to understand a demonstration than it is an explanation. Having set a perfect example, He could say, "Follow me." But His life

among men was not sufficient to execute the plan. It was necessary that He die on the cross and shed His blood for our sin. According to God's plan, salvation from sin could be effected only by the shedding of the blood of His only Son. With His blood we are redeemed; with His blood we were purchased. In His death He bruised the serpent's head and made it possible for us to live in spite of death. Before this plan could effect the salvation of man, however, it was necessary for the plan as originated by the Father and as executed by the Son to be published or made known to the world. It *must be* advertised!

Perhaps there is no other subject in the Bible that has caused more confusion and about which there is less agreement and more misunderstanding than the work of the Holy Spirit in carrying out His part in effecting the plan of human redemption.

From the beginning of time the Holy Spirit has had a very important work to do. In giving an account of creation, Moses said, "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen. 1:2). So it is evident that the Holy Spirit had a part in the creation of the universe. Then, in speaking of the prophecies of the Old Testament, Peter said, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:21). This makes clear to us how the Old Testament was written. Moses did not live until 2500 years after the creation. How could he have written accurately of the great historical events contained in the book of Genesis? Peter has explained it: ". . . holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." How did the prophets of the Old Testament know hundreds of years before it came to pass what was to happen in subsequent centuries? They made hundreds of predictions which have been fulfilled to the very letter. The only explanation of these accurate predictions is that ". . . holy men of God were moved by the Holy Ghost." In other words, they were inspired men. The Old Testament is a product of the Spirit.

In like manner, the New Testament is a product of the same Spirit. God sent Christ into the world to execute the plan of salvation which He had originated. While here, Christ selected twelve men to be His ambassadors, or apostles. They beheld His mighty miracles and heard His matchless teaching. However, knowing that they were men, Jesus knew that they could not remember all they had seen and heard. Consequently, He promised them the Holy Spirit to assist them after He took His departure from earth. On one occasion He said to the twelve, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (Jno. 14:26). Again He said, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth . . ." (Jno. 16:13).

Just before He ascended to heaven, Jesus said to the apostles, "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Lk. 24:49). The apostles went to Jerusalem and tarried for ten days. On the day of Pentecost, the Spirit came with power upon them and they began to speak with other tongues. Guided by this great power, Peter preached a sermon which caused 3000 Jews to obey the gospel. By this same power the apostles continued to preach and write until the church was fully established and the New Testament was written. In speaking of their inspired writings Paul said, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Hence the New Testament, like the Old, is a product of the Holy Spirit. It gives us all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3), and thoroughly furnishes us unto all good works. Thus we see that God planned, Christ executed, and the Spirit revealed the plan of salvation. The plan is

complete and we are warned not to add to it, subtract from it, or substitute for it. Peter said, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11).

So far as our salvation from past sins is concerned, the only instruction that any man receives comes from the Word of God. It tells everyone to do exactly the same thing. There is no such thing known to the New Testament as a direct operation of the Holy Spirit. There is no case in the New Testament where the Holy Spirit apart from a human instrument ever told a man what to do to be saved. Before the written New Testament was completed, the truth was in inspired man, hence the need for an inspired preacher to tell sinner and saint what to do. After the New Testament was completed, men were no longer inspired. The truth was then in the inspired Book. Now, we must go to the New Testament to find out what God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit would have us to do to be saved and how to work out our own salvation. In other words, the Holy Spirit today does *not operate directly* upon the sinner, independent of the Word, but. *indirectly through the inspired word of God. This Word is our only guide today!*

As the scheme of redemption unfolds in the New Testament, it is interesting to note that those who received the Holy Spirit did not always receive it in the same measure or to the same degree. God has always used the instrumentality of the Spirit, when and as needed, to carry out and make known His plan. There are three measures of the Spirit that are extraordinary, and have passed away. There is one measure of the Spirit that is still effective in the lives of Christians. Let us notice those different measures of the Spirit, with special emphasis upon the person or persons to whom, and the purpose for which, it was given.

The Holy Spirit

Jesus said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). This being true, whatever the Spirit did

from the day of Pentecost forward was done by the authority of Christ. In giving an account of the baptism of Jesus, Matthew said, "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water; and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him" (Matt. 3:16). At the same incident John the Baptist said that God had told him, "Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost" (Jno. 1:33b). There is no record of anyone else thus receiving the Holy Spirit. There is no wonder that Jesus could say, "It is the spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (Jno. 6:63).

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

When Christ was talking to the eleven apostles just before His ascension, He said, "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts 1:5). This shows that it was the apostles that were to receive the Spirit, and that they were to receive it by baptism; that is, by being overwhelmed, or immersed with the Spirit; furthermore, that the promise was to be fulfilled within a few days. Just ten days after these words were spoken this promise was fulfilled. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4). In order to know for sure just who it was that was baptized with the Spirit on this occasion, it is necessary to note the closing verses of the preceding chapter. There you will find

that the apostles were gathered together awaiting the promised power. While they waited they selected a successor to Judas, who had hanged himself. In Acts 1:26 we read, "And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven." The next verse says, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, THEY (that is, the apostles) were all with one accord in one place." This proves that it was the apostles who received the baptism of the Spirit.

At the last supper, while talking with the twelve just before His death, Jesus promised the apostles that He would send them another Comforter. He also made clear the purpose for which the Comforter was to be sent. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (Jno. 14:16-17). Another purpose for which Jesus sent the Spirit upon the apostles is expressed in the following, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (Jno. 14:26). As expressed here, the purpose was twofold: (1) to teach them all things, or to make known to them His will so they could teach it to others, and (2) to remind them of the lessons which they had heard Him teach. Without the aid of the Spirit, their memories would have been no better than the memory of the average man; consequently, it was necessary for them to have supernatural assistance in order that they might recall the wonderful lessons they had heard Him teach while He was in their midst. While talking with the same group, Jesus said, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he shall show you things to come" (Jno. 16:13). The Spirit was sent upon

them to make them infallible teachers and to qualify them to reveal to the world the great plan which God had originated and which Christ had come to execute.

After His resurrection, just before His ascension, Jesus gave to the apostles the Great Commission, in which He told them to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. In Luke's record of the giving of the Great Commission, we find this instruction, "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Lk. 24:49). Jesus knew that the salvation of souls yet unborn depended upon the gospel which He was bidding them to proclaim. He wanted to impress upon their mind that this was serious, important business. They dare not begin this important work until they were fully qualified; hence, they must await the "power from on high" which was to guide them in all they said and taught.

In addition to the apostles, there was one other group that received the Holy Spirit directly from heaven. This was the household of Cornelius—Gentiles. We should study the tenth chapter of Acts carefully to see why Cornelius and his household thus received the Spirit. Was it to make them Christians or was it for some other purpose? The Jews had long been God's chosen people. They did not believe that God ever intended to save the Gentiles; consequently, they felt themselves superior, looked down upon the Gentiles and despised them. Even the apostles shared this belief. But the Old Testament makes it plain that in the fulness of time God intended to save the Gentiles. Some 700 years before Christ came, Isaiah had said, "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name" (Isa. 62:2). This is just one of many such references to the salvation of Gentiles. The time had now come. Consequently God used the plan described in Acts 10 to correct this mistaken idea of the Jews.

Cornelius was as good a man morally as one could hope to find. Without any doubt he was a faithful follower of the patriarchal law, under which all Gentiles had lived prior to this time. But the time had now come when Cornelius and all other Gentiles should do something more than be morally good and faithful to the patriarchal law. According to God's plan, the gospel was first to be preached to the Jews. This had now been done. The Jews had heard, believed and obeyed the gospel, and the church up to this time consisted only of Jews. The Lord now told Cornelius to send men to Joppa and call for Peter who would tell him what "thou oughtest to do." When the messengers from Cornelius reached Peter, he quite naturally would have been reluctant to even enter the house of a Gentile. In order to prepare Peter for his mission, the Lord caused Peter to fall into a trance. He saw a great sheet knit at the four corners let down from heaven. It was filled with all manner of beasts, both clean and unclean. A voice from heaven said, "Rise, Peter, kill, and eat." Peter refused to eat because he was a faithful Jew and God had told them not to eat of meats He had placed on the unclean list. This sheet was let down three times and each time the voice said the same thing. While Peter was wondering about the meaning of this vision, the messengers from Cornelius arrived and invited him to come preach to the household of Cornelius. Just before the messengers arrived, the Lord told Peter that three men had come to see him and instructed Peter to go with them, nothing doubting. Although he did not yet fully understand why he should enter a Gentile's house, he went. While Peter was enroute, Cornelius had assembled his kinsmen together. When Peter arrived, Cornelius told him that the Lord had instructed him to send messengers to invite him to tell him what he should do. It now began to dawn upon Peter what the great sheet let down from heaven meant. He could now understand the meaning of the voice which said, "Rise, kill, and eat." The day of "clean and unclean meats" had passed. Peter said, "Of a truth I

perceive that God is no respecter of persons." In order to remove any lingering doubt that Peter might have as to whether he should preach the gospel to the Gentiles, we find the following: "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on them that heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days" (Acts 10:44-48).

We should not overlook the fact that the household of Cornelius were converted not because they received the Holy Spirit directly but because they heard, believed, and obeyed the gospel as preached by Peter. They received the Holy Spirit miraculously not to convert them but rather to convince Peter, his fellow Jews, and later the other apostles that God intended to accept the Gentiles into the church.

The Spirit Given by the Laying on of Hands

The two cases which we have just discussed were the only Bible instances after Jesus ascended in which anyone ever received the Holy Spirit directly. As we have found, the Spirit was poured out upon the apostles to make them infallible teachers and to qualify them to reveal the Lord's will. The Spirit was poured out on the household of Cornelius to convince the Jews that God intended to save the Gentiles. In no case was He given directly to convert sinners.

With the aid and guidance of the Spirit, the apostles continued their work of preaching the gospel and establishing churches. As a result of their untiring efforts, churches sprang up over all the ancient world. While the church was

yet in its infancy the New Testament was not yet written. The apostles could not be present with all the many congregations all the time because they had to go elsewhere preaching the Word. Consequently, in the absence of the inspired apostles and in the absence of the completed written New Testament which we now have to thoroughly furnish us unto all good works, the early congregations needed something to guide them in the Lord's work. In order to meet this great need, the apostles laid their hands upon members of the church in order to impart to them the Holy Spirit. None except apostles could do this. Other early Christians who received the Spirit by the laying on of the apostles' hands did not have the power to impart to others the Holy Spirit as did the apostles who were baptized in the Spirit.

Philip, the evangelist, went to Samaria and preached the gospel. As a result, a church was established there. "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen on none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost" (Acts 8:14-17). Let us notice a few things which this passage teaches us: (1) These Samaritans were already Christians, but as yet they had not received the Holy Ghost. (2) It was necessary for the apostles to go to Samaria. (3) The apostles prayed that these Samaritan Christians might receive the Holy Ghost. (4) The apostles laid their hands on them. (5) The Samaritan Christians thus received the Holy Ghost.

Another instance which makes clearer the result of the reception of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of the apostles' hands is found in Acts 19:1-6. Here we find twelve people who had been baptized unto John's baptism, after it had been superseded by the baptism of the Great Commission; consequently, it was necessary for them to be rebap-

tized. After they had been baptized, we read in verse 6, "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake with tongues, and prophesied." Thus we see that they received miraculous powers through the laying on of the apostle's hands.

The nature of the gifts of the Spirit is made clear in 1 Corinthians 12:8-11. "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: but all of these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." With this great diversity of abilities in a congregation, it is easy to see how they could carry on the Lord's work, even in the absence of both the apostles and the New Testament.

Paul wrote the first Corinthian letter to correct a great number of evils which had crept into the church at Corinth. Among other evils, they were apparently somewhat puffed up because of the plenitude of spiritual gifts which they enjoyed. Some of the gifts were more showy than others. It was natural for them to desire the more showy gifts. Among other things, he discusses the tenure of these gifts. Do we still have such gifts in the church today? Let Paul answer. In chapter 12, verse 31, he says, "But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way." He continues in chapter 13 with a discussion of charity, or love, which is the more excellent way. The church at Corinth was greatly in need of more brotherly love. Having described charity and having shown its importance, he then shows that love is permanent and abiding whereas spiritual gifts will pass away. He says, "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away" (1 Cor. 13:8).

Paul thus illustrates the limitation of the tenure of spiritual gifts. In verse 9 he continues, "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part." In this chapter the apostle is saying that during this period before the New Testament was fully written, i. e., during the regime of spiritual gifts, they could know only in part and could prophesy only in part. Some knowledge was revealed to one man, more to another, and thus they were guided little by little as there was occasion for increased knowledge. Paul continues in verse 10, "But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." What is it that is to be done away? The answer must be found in the context which says, "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away" (1 Cor. 13:8). This system or regime of spiritual gifts was temporary and was to be done away. In verse 10 Paul leaves no doubt, "But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." But what is "that which is perfect"? In the light of the context it is clear that "that which is perfect" refers to the New Testament in its completed form. The word *perfect* as here used, according to W. E. Vine, means *complete*. When John laid down the pen of inspiration on the Isle of Patmos, God's plan was complete or fully revealed to man. James speaks of it as "the perfect law of liberty" (Jas. 1:25). Paul says that the scriptures "thoroughly furnish . . . unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:17). Peter said that "his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness . . ." (2 Pet. 1:3). Since we now have the complete revelation of God to man there is no longer need for spiritual gifts.

When we are building a house we must have some scaffolding. When the house is completed we remove the scaffolding. The regime of spiritual gifts stood in the same relation to the church while it was being established that the scaffolding stands in relation to the house while it is being

The age of miracles is now past. Miracles were used as a means to an end. When the end was accomplished the means was no longer needed. Christ performed miracles to cause people to believe on Him (Jno. 20:30). The apostles performed miracles for the same reason. In the absence of the New Testament early Christians had the same need of miraculous power. When God introduces a new order, He always accompanies that new order with miraculous attestation. God gave Moses power to perform miracles when He gave the Jewish law. So, He gave Christ, the apostles, and early Christians miraculous power when He introduced the Christian dispensation.

Thus we see that the Spirit was given to the apostles in what is called a baptism. The apostles imparted the Holy Spirit to baptized believers by the laying on of hands. Each of these was extraordinary and has passed away because no longer needed. There is one other matter about the Spirit which we should consider.

The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

It is important that we distinguish clearly between the Spirit's operation in the Christian's life now and the preceding operations which have accomplished their purpose and passed away with the age of miracles. Concerning the indwelling of the Spirit, let us notice several important points.

1. *The Spirit dwells in all Christians.* Notice these scriptures: "And we are his witnesses of these things; and so also is the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him" (Acts 5:32). "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Rom. 5:5). "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9). "What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of

God, and ye are not your own" (1 Cor. 6:19). In view of these scriptures it is clear that the Spirit dwells within Christians.

2. *The heart must be made a fit dwelling place.* "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols ? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them; and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 6:16-7:1). The Holy Spirit cannot and will not take up His abode in the heart of any man until it has been cleansed with the blood of Christ through obedience to the gospel.

3. *Those in whom the Spirit dwells do not have miraculous power.* In New Testament times, miraculous power was possessed only by Christ, the apostles, and by those on whom the apostles laid their hands. The gifts of the Spirit were limited to baptized believers in Christ. The indwelling Spirit does not now give anybody miraculous power. The age of miracles has passed. No man needs or has miraculous power today. Miracles had an important place in helping perfect the plan of salvation, but that plan has long since been perfected.

4. *Consider how the Spirit dwells in Christians.* Man knows but little about the functions and operations of his own spirit and must confess his ignorance as to how it is connected to his body. There is much speculation about how the Spirit of God dwells in His children. But there are some things of which we may be sure: God is a Person; Christ is a Person; the Holy Spirit is a Person; they constitute the Godhead. *God dwells in Christians*, "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us" (1 Jno. 4:12). *Christ dwells in Christians*, "And this is his com-

mandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us" (1 Jno. 3:23-24). *The Holy Ghost dwells in Christians* as is shown in verses quoted above. It is reasonable to believe that all members of the Godhead dwell in Christians in the same way. Do the scriptures tell us how any one of the three dwells in us? In Paul's prayer for the Ephesians, he said, "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts *by faith* . . ." (Eph. 3:16-17). If Christ dwells in the Christian by faith, God and the Holy Spirit also dwell in us by faith. They all dwell in Christians the same way, i. e., by faith. They dwell *representatively*.

How do we get faith? Paul says, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Certainly, were it not for the word of God, we could have no faith. Paul furthermore says that, "the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16). It is this power of God in the gospel that moves sinners to believe, repent of their sins, confess their faith in Christ, and be buried with Him in baptism. It is this power of God in the gospel that causes the human will to submit to the divine. It is the same power that "delivers us from the power of darkness, and translates us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1:13).

There is great power in a message. Prior to our entrance into World War II, our country was in a state of listlessness, apathy, and unconcern. We were divided into warring factions, each seeking to devour the other. On December 7, 1941, the message was flashed over the air that Pearl Harbor had been attacked. That message did something to our country. There was no more listlessness, apathy or unconcern, no more fighting among factions. As if electrified, we became

one! Overnight we found the courage, zeal and determination necessary to win the war. A message does have an impact upon men.

The greatest and most soul-stirring message that has ever reached the heart of man is the story of Christ's redeeming love as told in the gospel. The gospel tells sinners what to do to become Christians. Faith in Christ, when translated into obedience, will change the sinner's heart, life, and relationship to God. The same gospel that tells sinners what to do to become a Christian also tells the Christian what to do to serve God effectively and to worship Him acceptably. In proportion as we follow His instruction we are guided by the Spirit. In proportion as His Word dwells in us we are filled with the Spirit. It will help us resist Satan and be "more than conquerors through him that loved us." This is one reason why Paul said, "Let the word of God dwell in you richly in all wisdom" (Col. 3:16).

There is no direct indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the Christian, any more than there is a direct operation in the heart of the sinner. If I believed that the Holy Spirit had a direct indwelling in the heart of the Christian I would not be prepared to deny the direct operation of the Spirit in the heart of a sinner. The direct indwelling would be a direct operation, the difference would be only in the persons, not the thing done or the act performed. If the Holy Spirit does not operate directly in the heart of the sinner, but does operate directly in the heart of the Christian, the only difference, I say, is in the PERSON and not in the ACT, or the action.

I propose to establish the fact that the policy of the Holy Spirit's influence is definite; and that upon whomsoever it works, it is a rational, intelligent influence. There is no direct operation of the Holy Spirit on anybody, saint or sinner.

The rich indwelling of the word of God in the heart of the Christian is the indwelling of the Spirit of God. I offer a parallel passage to prove it. Writing to the Ephesians, Paul said, "Be filled with the Spirit" when singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; but to the Colossians, he wrote, "Let the word of God

dwell in you richly" when singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Was he giving different advice? No, he was giving the same advice in different words.

To the Ephesians, he said, in singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, "Be filled with the Spirit." But to the Colossians, he said, in singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, "Let the word of God dwell in you richly." So the rich indwelling of the word of Christ is the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ.

(Foy E. Wallace, *Bulwarks of Faith.*)

Does the Spirit who dwells in Christians guide them independently of the Word? We have no reason to doubt the sincerity of the many religious groups in the world but must admit that they are very different in their teaching and practice. In much of their teaching they are diametrically opposed to each other. One group meets in a great religious conference and prays sincerely for God to send the Holy Spirit to guide them in all their deliberations. As the conference comes to a close they leave, honestly thinking that the Holy Spirit has guided and will continue to guide them. About the same time other religious groups, equally honest and sincere, meet at another place, pray to the same God for the same purpose, and leave their meeting with the same confidence. Likewise other religious groups have their respective conferences, synods, and assemblies. When they return home, however, they continue to teach different doctrines and continue to oppose one another. The unbelieving world is made to suffer. The world knows that all cannot be right and differ as they do. The unbeliever comes to the conclusion that they may all be wrong, so he just forgets about religion. Perhaps that is the reason Christ prayed, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (Jno. 17:20-21). Is it reasonable to believe that the same Spirit would tell one group to do one thing, then tell another

group to do another thing? We have no confidence in a man who will tell different stories about the same thing. Such a man is not worthy of confidence.

"God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34). God consistently tells the same story about the same thing and is therefore worthy of the utmost confidence. God has told the story of redemption in His Word. Many different men wrote the Word, but they all wrote by the guidance of the same Spirit. There are no contradictions in their writings. The only way for us to find out what God wants us to do to become a Christian, to live a Christian life, or to do His work acceptably is to "search the scriptures daily." It tells everyone the same thing. If followed, there will be unity instead of division. It is often said that we understand the Scriptures differently. We do not understand them differently, but we misunderstand them differently. "Twelve times twelve equals 144." We may misunderstand that simple problem and get different answers, but when we understand it we will all get the same answer. Is God's Word less reliable than the principles of mathematics?

Does the Holy Spirit interpret the Word for us? Many very conscientious people pray earnestly for the Holy Spirit to aid them in their interpretation of the Scripture. But how does it happen that they get different answers? Does the Holy Spirit tell one person that the word *baptism* means to sprinkle, and tell another that it means to pour, and yet another that it means to immerse? Does it tell one person that our salvation is a matter of predestination and foreordination on the part of God, and another person that we are saved by faith only, and yet another that we are saved by works? Yet these sincere people get these different answers and sincerely believe that the Holy Spirit is helping them in their understanding. No, the Holy Spirit has done His work. He has revealed God's will to us. When we understand it we will all get the same answers to our questions just as we do in mathematics. The Bible is its

own interpreter. All we need do is to take God at His word, and "study to show ourselves approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15).

The Holy Spirit in Conversion

There are but two kinds of authority—primary and delegated. All primary or inherent authority belongs to God. Christ's authority was delegated to Him. He said, "All power is GIVEN unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). Christ, in turn, delegated authority to the apostles and sent the Holy Spirit upon them to guide them into all truth, thus making sure that they would "tell it like it is, " Using this God-given authority, the apostles wrote the New Testament. Our authority for what we believe and practice religiously must come from the Word. Isaiah said, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20). Peter said, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; . . ." (1 Pet. 4:11). John warned against adding to or subtracting from the Word. Moses said, "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it" (Deut. 12:32).

Most of the religious bodies now in existence have very different concepts as to what constitutes conversion. Some insist that all the sinner need do is to say, "Lord Jesus, come into my heart, " and He will take over your life, and you will never be the same again. Some insist that the sinner must have some weird, unexplainable experience in which he hears a voice that speaks peace to his soul. Yet others say that all the sinner need do is to "hit the sawdust trail, sign a card, and then join the church of your choice." Has God endorsed any of these methods? Just what contact does the sinner have with the Spirit? Is it direct or indirect? Does either God or the Holy Spirit speak directly, independently of the Word, to

sinners to tell them what to do to be saved? A careful study of the cases of conversion as given in the book of Acts, sometimes called the book of conversions, makes it unmistakably clear just what constitutes conversion in the sight of God.

In Acts 8:26-40 we have a record of the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch. In considering this case of conversion, we must keep in mind that it took place during the period before the New Testament was written. At that time the Spirit was in the inspired man, not in the inspired Book, as He was after the New Testament was completed. Though religious the eunuch was a sinner. He had not heard, believed and obeyed the gospel. In his conversion, three forces are mentioned: the angel, the Spirit, and the evangelist Philip. All were necessary at that time. Notice, the angel spoke to Philip, the preacher, not to the sinner. The angel told the preacher where to go. Furthermore, notice that the Spirit spoke to Philip, and told him what to do—join himself to the chariot. Philip found the eunuch reading from the great prophecy of Isaiah concerning Christ. Having discovered that the eunuch did not know the meaning of what he was reading, "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus" (verse 35). It is evident that in preaching unto him *Jesus*, Philip had said something about being baptized, for the eunuch requested Philip to baptize him. Philip did so. Baptism is an important part of every conversion. Please notice that the only contact the sinner had with either the angel or the Spirit was indirect, i. e., through the preacher. In every case of New Testament conversion the contact is always indirect, never direct. Since we have God's complete will revealed to us, we do not necessarily have to have a preacher to tell us what to do. We can go to the inspired Word and find out for ourselves; then we can secure the service of a preacher, or of some other person, to assist us in our confession and baptism.

In the ninth chapter of Acts we have an account of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, later known as the apostle Paul.

The Lord appeared to him in a light from heaven. The heavens were opened and Saul saw and talked with Jesus. We should be careful not to confuse this miraculous appearance with Saul's conversion. Did the Lord appear to Saul at this time to convert him or for some other purpose? Let Paul answer. In making his defense before Agrippa, Paul relates this instance: "And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise and stand on thy feet: for i HAVE APPEARED UNTO THEE FOR THIS PURPOSE, TO MAKE THEE A MINISTER AND A WITNESS BOTH OF THESE THINGS WHICH THOU HAST SEEN, AND OF THOSE THINGS IN THE WHICH i WILL APPEAR UNTO THEE" (Acts 26:15-16). In order to qualify as an apostle, it was necessary for Paul to have seen Christ. This occasion gave him that privilege. But how was Saul converted? If the Lord appears to sinners in some miraculous way speaking peace to their souls, this would have been a wonderful opportunity. But nothing is said about such an experience here. On the contrary, when Saul asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" the Lord answered, "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou MUST do" (Acts 9:6). Saul went into the city, where he remained in blindness for three days. In the meantime the Lord appeared to Ananias and told him to go into the city and contact Saul. Though reluctant at first, having been assured of the Lord that it was safe to go, Ananias went, found Saul, preached unto him the gospel and said, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Here again, we see that the sinner's contact was indirect, or through the Word as spoken by the preacher.

In the tenth chapter of Acts is recorded the conversion of Cornelius. The plan is the same. Although the Lord was talking to Cornelius, He did not tell him directly what to do to be saved. Rather He said, "And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the seaside: he

shall tell thee WHAT THOU OUGHTEST TO DO" (Acts 10:5-6). Peter came and preached the gospel to him. Cornelius heard, believed, and was baptized (verses 47-48).

There is no conversion recorded in the New Testament where either God or the Holy Spirit ever told the sinner directly what to do to be saved. At this time it was necessary to have an inspired man to bring the message of salvation to the sinner because the New Testament, which contains the will of God and the words of the Spirit, was not yet written. Now, the sinner can hear it from the preacher who gets his information from the New Testament or he can read it directly from the New Testament.

If God should speak directly to one sinner and tell him what to do to be saved independent of the Word while by-passing other sinners, thus allowing them to die in their sins, God would be a respecter of persons. But God makes it clear that He is no respecter of persons. All sinners must come to the same source, the Word of God, in order to learn what to do to be saved, just as all Christians must go to the same source, the Word, in order to learn what to do to worship and serve God acceptably. If all sinners and all saints will come to the Holy Scriptures with an open mind and a receptive heart, allowing the Bible to be its own interpreter, then do exactly what it says, without addition, subtraction, or substitution, and "speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11), then there will be unity in the religious world on the subject of conversion.

Conclusion

God's revelation to man is now complete. The apostle John wrote the last book and the final chapter. In his last chapter he warned man of the danger of changing God's plan either by addition or subtraction. Jude exhorted the brethren to " . . . Contend earnestly for the faith which was ONCE FOR ALL delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3, R. V.). God created, Christ

executed, and the Holy Spirit has revealed. The plan is now complete. Man's responsibility is to acknowledge God as Creator, to accept Christ as Redeemer, and to follow the teaching of God's Word as revealed by the Holy Spirit.

4 *God's Word Is Our Guide*

IT HAS been said that man's wants are many but that his necessities are few. It is true that there is no end to the wants of some people, but it is equally true that our essentials are not nearly so numerous. Circumstances sometimes have much to do with determining our actual needs. When man is hopelessly lost, one of his greatest needs is for a guide who knows the way. Certainly anyone would appreciate a guide under such circumstances. When man was hopelessly lost in sin and could not find his way out of this dense wilderness, in His goodness and mercy God saw fit to provide the only Guide who knew the way. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (Jno. 14:6). Jeremiah said, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps" (Jer. 10:23).

God has always provided the necessary guidance for His people. Because of unbelief Israel was forced to wander forty years in the wilderness yet God did not leave them without divine guidance. By this guidance they finally reached the promised land. David said, "For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death" (Psa. 48:14). "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory" (Psa. 73:24). When we plan a trip which will take us through unfamiliar territory, one of the first things we do is to secure a reliable road map. As we

make the journey from the cradle to the grave, we are strangers to the land through which we must pass because we have not passed this way before. Peter said, "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul" (1 Pet. 2:11).

Since God created man, " . . . he knew what was in man." He knew his proneness to error, his fallibility, and how easily he could be deceived and misled. God knew that to be misled in the journey of life would prove fatal for both time and eternity. In order to prevent our being misled God has given to us an infallible guide Book. The 119th Psalm, written by David, is one of the most remarkable chapters in the Bible. It contains 176 verses and, with one or two exceptions, every verse refers to the Bible. In the 105th verse David said, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Our journey through life is beset with dangerous snares and pitfalls. We need a guide to help us find the way and a light to help us avoid the pitfalls. Only God's Word can answer both these great needs. Let us think briefly about God's Word as our guide.

It Is a God-Given Guide

In an article which appeared several years ago in *Parents Magazine* entitled "Learning to Know Your Bible, " the author said, "There are sermons, more often called prophecies, with a fortune-telling interpretation put on the word prophecy. These were written by men who, alive to the tremendous social evils of the day, saw the dangers which lay ahead and warned of destruction to the nation and individuals. It is not difficult to compare these ancient prophecies with the modern social leaders who, aroused by the social injustices of our times, are foretelling with passionate words the dangers ahead unless we can achieve justice, stop poverty, and avert war."

Today we are prone to categorize people. In politics we

speak of them as liberals or conservatives, left wing or right wing. In religion we call them modernists or fundamentalists. We could properly classify the author of this article in *Parents Magazine* as a modernist. The colleges and universities of our country and many of the theological seminaries of our land are saturated with this type of rank modernism. A large per cent of the preachers who today fill the pulpits deny the divine authenticity of the Bible, do not believe in the virgin birth of Christ, do not believe in a hereafter, and disbelieve that there is such a state as heaven or hell. To them, this earth-life is all there is. Consequently, they ignore the gospel of Christ which Paul declared to be the power of God unto salvation, and have substituted for the true gospel a "social gospel" which has solely to do with man's happiness and well-being while here upon earth. Those who teach and those who accept this modernistic philosophy are highly intelligent and well learned, yet there are a number of very important things which they do not know—things to which they have, perhaps through prejudice, closed their minds. They refuse to consider honestly the internal evidence which abounds in the Bible and which proves conclusively that the Bible is of divine origin. Let us consider some of the many internal evidences that the Bible is a God-given guide.

1. *Man could not have written such a Book without divine guidance.* Modernists insist that the Bible was written by man. Fundamentalists declare that it is divinely inspired. Which position are we going to accept? Both cannot be right; one must be wrong. It was either written wholly by man or it was written by man with God's help. These two conflicting views were put to the test several years ago in the famous Scopes trial in Tennessee. Mr. Scopes was a science teacher who had been teaching in the public schools that the Bible was written by man. He was brought to trial because most of the people in Tennessee did not subscribe to the theory of organic evolution being taught in their schools. Clarence Darrow, a noted criminal lawyer of Chicago, was employed by the

defense. The state secured the able services of the famous silver-tongued orator, William Jennings Bryan, three times candidate for President, to defend the Bible.

In the course of the trial, Mr. Bryan put before Mr. Darrow a challenge. In substance Mr. Bryan said, "Now we have both agreed that the Bible was written by about forty men. We know that these men, some of them, lived as much as fifteen hundred years apart. They never had a chance to see one another and plan what they would write. Furthermore, we agree that many of them were not well-educated men in our terms of reference today. Yet when their writings were compiled into one book, that book contained one central thought, one central person, and one great nation. Moreover, it is recognized today as the greatest book that has ever been written. If these unlearned men, who had never seen one another, could produce such a book in their day, certainly the same number of men should be able to produce as good a book today." Mr. Bryan challenged Mr. Darrow to select forty of the most highly intellectual and well-educated men of the day, give them access to the great libraries of the world, let them have as many conferences as they liked, give them all the time they desired, let them compile their thoughts and findings and, when their writings were compiled into one book, let that book be compared with the Bible. If, he argued, in the estimation of qualified and unbiased men their book should compare favorably with the Bible, he would admit that the Bible was written by man without the aid of inspiration. That challenge has never been accepted, nor will it ever be, for modernists know that such an effort would be doomed to failure.

2. *Fulfilled prophecy.* In explaining the source from which the prophets of the Old Testament got their information, Peter said, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost"(2 Pet. 1:21). This is the only sensible explanation of how the Old Testament prophets could foretell,

with one hundred per cent accuracy, events that were to take place anywhere from a few years to seven hundred years before they occurred.

Before briefly considering a few of these prophecies, let us see how accurate men have been in predicting future events. Voltaire, the great French infidel who died in 1778, predicted that in one hundred years Christianity would be swept from the globe and the Bible lost. Thomas Jefferson once predicted that in fifty years from then there would not be a Bible in America except in some curiosity shop. But what really happened? Today the Bible is the most read and the most popular book in the world. No other book sells anywhere near the number of volumes each year as does the Bible. Charles Russell predicted that Christ would return to earth in the year 1914. Instead, the first World War began and Christ has not come yet. All of men's attempts to prophesy have proven dismal failures.

By way of contrast let us examine the accuracy of a few of the prophecies of the Old Testament. After the city of Jericho had been taken by the Israelites, Joshua said, "Cursed be the man before Jehovah that riseth up and buildeth the city Jericho; with the loss of his firstborn son shall he lay the foundation thereof, and with the loss of his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it"(Josh. 6:26). For many years the city of Jericho lay in ruins. It was some 500 years before anyone undertook to rebuild it. Ultimately a man named Hiel rose up to rebuild it. But what happened? The author of First Kings, one of the books of the Old Testament, said of Hiel, "He laid the foundation thereof with the loss of Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof with the loss of his youngest son Segub, according to the word of Jehovah which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun" (1 Kgs. 16:34). Joshua's prophecy was made 500 years before the events took place yet he was 100 per cent accurate. How? Peter had the right answer: "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Among the prophecies of Isaiah we find this: "And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the Lord. Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left saith the Lord" (2 Kgs. 20:16-17). This was a plain prediction of what was to come to pass. Was it false or true? The pen of a reputable secular historian gives the answer. "Thus when Judah once more rebelled, a terrible punishment came upon her. Nebuchadnezzar defeated an Egyptian army, but he made no effort to attempt the annexation of the country. His bitterest anger was reserved for Judah. In 586 B. C. Jerusalem was stormed, its temple and palace were leveled to the ground, its inhabitants slaughtered or deported, and the kingdom of Judah was no more. From that day Palestine was controlled by a foreign power"(M. L. W. Laistner, *A Survey of Ancient History*, pp. 178-179). Thus we see that a reputable historian who was not trying to prove anything concerning the Bible but only stating the facts of history proves that Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled to the very letter. How long before it came to pass did Isaiah predict this event? It was just 127 years. Can man do that today? You know the answer.

Let us read one more of Isaiah's predictions. He said, "Thus saith the Lord . . . that saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up the rivers: that saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundations shall be laid. Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have upholden, to subdue nations before **him**; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut" (Isa. 44:27 to 45:1). This was another prophecy that had to do with the destruction of Babylon. Who was Cyrus? What was the "deep" that was to be "made dry"? What were the "two leaved gates"? What does he mean by the "loins of kings" being "loosed"? Only the events of what was then future

history can answer these questions. History proves that Isaiah was predicting the capture of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, and the destruction of the city of Babylon by Cyrus, king of Persia. Two hundred years after Isaiah made this prophecy a man named Cyrus, king of Persia, led his armies against Babylon. At this very moment Belshazzar, king of Babylon, was having a great feast (See Daniel, chapter 5). According to reputable historians, while Belshazzar was feasting Cyrus and his armies outside the city wall changed the course of the river which ran under the wall and through the city, so that the river was made *dry*, that is, the water was lowered to the extent that the Persian army could wade the water, thus going under the city wall, into the city, and through the gates of the streets which had been left open the night of the feast, and killed Belshazzar the king and captured the city.

According to Daniel, during the feast and while Cyrus and the Persian army were approaching the city, a mysterious hand wrote on the wall of the room where Belshazzar was feasting. Little wonder that Belshazzar's "countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another" (Dan. 5:6). None of the king's wise men except Daniel could interpret the message written on the wall. He interpreted the message as follows: "God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting" (Dan. 5:26-27). According to secular history, that night, soon after Daniel's interpretation of the dream, the Persian army led by Cyrus reached the palace where the feast was being held, overthrew the Babylonian government, and killed King Belshazzar. This marked the end of the Babylonian kingdom which had held the Jews in captivity for seventy years. The minutest detail of Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled to the very letter. How did Isaiah know two hundred years beforehand just exactly what was to take place? Peter gave the only answer: "Holy men of God

spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:21).

At the close of his discussion of fulfilled prophecy, G. Dallas Smith gives this summary:

And while these are only a few of the many prophecies which have been fulfilled, these will serve to show, as stated in the beginning, that the writers of the Bible are strictly in a class to themselves. Those who have taken the pains to count them say there are some five hundred prophecies in the Old Testament which have been fulfilled in the earthly career of Jesus as recorded in the New Testament. And these prophecies cover a period of fifteen hundred years, from Moses to Malachi. Now, how were these men able to tell in such minute detail the life story of Jesus so long before he came into this world? We answer once more that the secret of it is revealed in the language of the apostle Peter, "No prophecy ever came by the will of man, but holy men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." Five men stand here, each with ten arrows in his quiver. They desire to shoot these arrows at a target, but they do not know just where the target is, nor how far away it is. The first man stands 1500 yards away, as he afterward learns, and shoots his ten arrows out into the darkness of the night. The second man stands 1000 yards away, and sends his ten arrows out into the midnight darkness. The third man stands 800 yards away, and shoots his ten arrows away into the inky blackness. The fourth man stands 600 yards away, and the fifth man stands 400 yards away—all of them shooting into the darkness. They call for a light and find every one of those fifty arrows in the bull's eye—in the center of the target. This would be wonderful, indeed. But no more so than the fulfillment of the many prophecies relating to Christ. For instance, Moses stands 1500 years away from Christ and sends forth his prophetic arrows; David stands 1000 years away from Christ and sends out many striking prophetic arrows; Isaiah stands 800 years away from Christ and sends forth a number of prophetic arrows; Daniel stands 600 years away from Christ and sends forth his prophetic arrows, and Malachi stands 400 years away from Christ and sends out his prophetic arrows. None of these men knew just how far away they were, and just where the target was. But when the light of New Testament revelation is turned on we find all these prophetic arrows centered in the life story of Jesus. But how did these men know so many things

about Jesus, and so long before he came to this earth? Well, these men "spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." Hence I repeat, the writers of the Bible are in a class to themselves, *and this places the Bible in a class to itself.*

Someone says, "We are so accustomed to the sight of the Bible that it ceases to be a miracle to us. It is printed just like other books and so we forget that it is not just like other books; but there is nothing in the world like it or comparable to it. The sun in the firmament is nothing compared to the Bible, if it be in reality what it assumes to be, an actual, direct communication from God to man. Take up your Bible with this idea, and look at it, and wonder at it. It is a treasure of unspeakable value to you, for it contains a special message of love and tender mercy from God to your soul. Read it in the secret of God's presence, and receive it as from his lips, and feed upon it, and it will be to you, as it was to the prophets of old, the joy and the rejoicing of your heart.

(Lectures on the Bible, pp. 34-35).

3. *It answers life's greatest questions.* Life presents many perplexing questions and difficult problems. It is possible that some of these questions will never be answered and some of these problems defy solutions. Perhaps the three oldest and most perplexing questions are: From whence did I come? Why am I here? and Whither am I bound? Scientists, philosophers and theologians have long sought satisfactory answers to these questions. No answers will satisfy everyone.

Whence did I come? What is the origin of life and of the universe? Some scientists think they have found the answer to these questions. Evolutionists would have us believe that all life evolved from a one-celled plant or animal and that the universe was formed through millions of years from a gaseous mass. But their problem is to explain where this one-celled plant or animal came from and what was the source of this gaseous mass. They have no answer; they merely have a theory. It is more difficult to explain their theory than it is to answer the question.

For centuries philosophers have sought the answer to the questions: Why am I here? Just what is the purpose of my existence? What is life all about? Their answers are varied. Some are very good and perhaps sometimes helpful.

Theologians have devised various answers to the third question: Whither am I bound?

The Bible is the only book that gives a reasonable answer to all of these questions. Moses gave the most satisfactory answer to the question, From whence did I come? He said, "And the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7). Scientists have failed to give an answer half as reasonable. Isaiah gave the best known answer to the question, Why am I here? He quoted God: "I have made him" (Isa. 43:7). In commenting on this verse, E. M. Zerr said, "God's purpose to have man as an ornament to His own self accounts for the fact that he was made in the image of God" (*Bible Commentary*, Vol. 3, p. 312). Nature and observation teach us that our bodies go to the grave. But Solomon gives the best answer to the question, Whither am I bound? He said, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Eccl. 12:7). He takes into account not only the destiny of the body but also the destiny of the soul which animates the body. Man cannot answer these questions satisfactorily without the help of inspiration. The Bible, inspired of God, has the only satisfactory answers.

It Is an Inspired Book

Many modernist preachers no longer believe that the Bible was written by divine inspiration. They prefer to think of it only as a good book written by good men. To the contrary Jesus said to the apostles, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he

speak: and he will show you things to come" (Jno. 16:13). Paul, writer of more of the New Testament than any other apostle, said, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

In writing on the *Relevance of Verbal Inspiration*; Cecil Willis said:

I am undertaking to prove that the Scriptures are verbally inspired. By that I mean that *even the words* used in the Scriptures are given by the Holy Spirit. Actually, if one does not believe the *words are* inspired, he has no guarantee that he has the divine revelation. For if God merely inspired the thoughts of the apostles, and left man to convey these divine thoughts in uninspired language, we can never be sure that we have the revelation of God at all. Quite often man will intend to convey certain thoughts either in speech or writing, and after seeing or hearing what he said or wrote, will find that, actually, he did not convey the idea he intended to transmit at all. God did not leave us in the hands of fallible men. He revealed the message, but he also revealed the *words*. If the Bible is inspired at all, its words are inspired. Listen to Paul's declaration of this truth, when he says, in 1 Cor. 2:12, 13: "But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. Which things we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words." The thoughts were God-breathed, and then these divine thoughts were clothed in Spirit-given words. Such is the revelation we have. An inspired book could not declare an untruth, and the Bible unequivocally declares its words are inspired.

There are many who believe the Bible is *inspiring*, but not inspired. They think that it is a book that will build one up, but do not believe it is God-breathed. They compare it to the works of Shakespeare, or some of the great poets. Their works are often inspiring, but none would affirm that they are God-inspired. A sermon preached by man may be inspiring, but the

man is not inspired of God in what he says. Too many teach doctrines contradicted by God's Word for one to affirm all preachers are inspired. But the Bible is not *only* an inspiring book. Yet it is inspiring, because it is *inspired*. No less than 1500 times in the Old Testament we have statements indicating that this is the "word of Jehovah." If it is not a divinely inspired book, the Bible is not even a good book, for it teaches it is inspired, and if it is not, it teaches that which is not true, which is not a quality of a good book." (*Truth Magazine*, March 27, 1975, p. 3)

Those who accept the "thought only" theory of inspiration want to know how we can account for the different styles used by various Biblical writers. As today when every writer has a style peculiar to himself, so it was with each of the writers of the Bible. We are told that if the Lord gave each writer the words with which to express the thought which He wanted conveyed there would be no variation in the style of the various writers. In reply we suggest that the God who created man and "knew what was in man" could adapt the words He wanted used to the style of the writer better than man could adapt his style to the thoughts God wanted expressed.

It Is an Infallible Guide

Some years ago the preacher of a large church attended by the elite of the city announced that he would preach on "The Origin of the Bible." He opened his sermon with this statement, "The Bible was written by fallible men, who could and did make mistakes." If this statement is true, why not just study and follow any good book on philosophy? Why pay any attention to the Bible any more than to any other book written by men if the Bible is filled with mistakes?

It is true that the Bible was written by men. So far as we are able to determine, there were about forty men who had part

in writing the Bible. Many of them were just ordinary men. Some of them were uneducated Galilean fishermen. Few of them would be considered as scholars today. But these men were not the *authors* of the Bible. They were just the persons who did the writing. We might think of them as secretaries and of God as the author. He dictated the message He wanted them to write. God dictated to these penmen through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit. In promising the Holy Spirit to the apostles, Jesus said, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (Jno. 14:26). Christ had taught the apostles many things while with them but He knew that they were just men—men whose memories could be faulty. Christ's message was too important to entrust it to the memories of fallible men. Man's eternal destiny was to be determined by the acceptance or rejection of this message; consequently, Christ made sure that there could be no error in the transmission of that message. The Holy Spirit recalled for the apostles the exact words Christ had used in teaching them during His ministry. There were many things essential to man's salvation which Christ did not teach them during His brief ministry. To avoid any possibility of error in making those things known, Christ refused to rely upon fallible men, hence promised them the unerring guidance of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said to the apostles, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself: but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he will show you things to come" (Jno. 16:13). Notice, the message came from God and was revealed to the apostles through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit. Thus the apostles were made infallible teachers.

The same plan was used in the writing of the Old Testament. Peter said, "For the prophecy came not in old time by

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The same plan was used in the writing of the Old Testament. Peter said, "For the prophecy came not in old time by

the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21). The Bible came from an infallible source, the Creator of all things, and was revealed through an infallible instrumentality, the Holy Spirit; therefore the Bible is an infallible guide. It is our only source of authority in matters religious. Little wonder Isaiah said, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20).

Since God's Word is both infallible and authoritative we must necessarily be on our guard against false guides, Jesus said, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt. 7:15). Paul warned the elders at Ephesus as follows: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:28-30). To the churches in Galatia Paul wrote, "I marvel that you are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ" (Gal. 1:6-7). To Timothy the same apostle wrote, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (1 Tim. 4:1-2). Furthermore he said, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. 4:3-4). Such warnings could be multiplied. All one need do to verify the necessity for and the truthfulness of these warnings is to compare some of the doctrines now taught

and believed with the teaching of this infallible Book.

There are many conflicting doctrines taught in the world. Not only do these doctrines conflict with one another, but they also conflict with the Word of God. When doctrines are diametrically opposed to one another, we must admit that one or the other, or maybe both, are wrong. Truth never conflicts with truth. We could all be wrong and differ but we cannot all be right and differ. The only doctrine that can be right is the doctrine that is in harmony with the infallible guide book that God has given us.

Many good people think that it makes no difference what one believes, just so he believes something and is sincere in that belief. The wise man said, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12). Probably there is no way that has misled more people religiously than the way of sincerity. Please do not misunderstand. We do not mean that sincerity is unimportant. Our religion, however right otherwise, will be of little avail unless we are sincere. It must come from the heart if it is to be pleasing to God; but, as reflected in the verse quoted, Solomon is pointing out that it is possible for a person to be sincere and yet be wrong. That is where the danger lies religiously.

Surely none was more sincere in religious convictions than was the apostle Paul. Before his conversion to Christ he was a devout Jew and followed the Law of Moses with utmost care. Like other Jews of his day, Paul hated Christianity and did everything within his power to destroy it. He said, "I verily thought within myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them" (Acts 26:9-10). After his conversion to Christ he said, "Men, and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day" (Acts 23:1). He never ceased to regret that he

had persecuted the church. Once he said, "I am less than the least of all saints" (Eph. 3:8). Paul's sense of unworthiness is seen in these words: "For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it" (Gal. 1:13). No one can question the sincerity of Paul's religious convictions when he was persecuting Christians. He was sure he was right, that he was doing God service. From Paul's own case is it not dangerous to say that it makes no difference what one believes just so he is sincere?

Another way that may seem right yet be wrong is the way of good intentions. Many people seem to think that if their intentions are good God will accept their service no matter what they do or how they do it. It is evident that Saul, the first king of Israel, thought that good intentions alone would please God. In I Samuel 15 we read of a serious mistake he made because of this conviction. In this chapter we learn that God hated Amalek's opposition to the children of Israel when they journeyed to Canaan. Because of this God had decreed that the Amalekites should be destroyed. Consequently, God sent the prophet Samuel to Saul to instruct him. Samuel said to Saul, "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass" (1 Sam. 15:3).

There is no reason to believe that Saul did not fully understand his mission. But in the execution of his mission he faltered. He spared King Agag and the best of the sheep and oxen. When Samuel asked him why he had not done what he told him, Saul said, "The people spared the best of the sheep and oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed" (1 Sam. 15:15). It would seem that his intentions were good in sparing the sheep and oxen. At least they were spared for a good purpose. But Samuel said, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is

better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king" (1 Sam. 15:22-23). Even though he had the best of intentions he lost his kingdom. God requires good intentions, but He also requires that we do what He says in the way He says to do it.

Many other examples are found in God's Word which impress upon our mind the danger of relying either upon sincerity or good intentions if we expect our life to be pleasing to God. Surely every thinking person can see that it is dangerous to make even small changes in God's law. When God tells us what He wants done and the manner in which He wants it done, He holds us strictly responsible for doing it in that way and He will accept no other. God has told us exactly what He wants us to do to become Christians, how He wants us to worship Him, and how He wants us to do His work. All of this information He has revealed to us in His Word. He has repeatedly warned us against changing His Word either by addition, by subtraction, or by substitution. When we read of how God punished His people for failing to comply exactly with His law in the Old Testament, surely we cannot be too careful about complying with His law as revealed in the New Testament. Let us search the Scriptures diligently for only the holy Scriptures contain spiritual truths and only the truth can make us free.

It Is an All-Sufficient Guide

As we travel over our fair land, we often ride on super, four-or-six-lane, limited-access highways. They are indeed a great improvement over the mud, gravel, narrow, crooked, hilly highways we traveled in years past. I once heard a preacher use our modern highways as an illustration of what has happened in the fields of religion. He said learned men had broadened, straightened, re-surfaced, and smoothed

the religious highway, making it more inviting and easy to travel. Evidently, he had overlooked what Jesus said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:13-14). When our eternal salvation is involved our chief concern should be not the ease, comfort and attractiveness of the road we travel but the destination of that road. Jesus says the broad, easy, attractive road leads to destruction. If that is where we want to go that is the road to travel.

Those who reason like the preacher just referred to overlook one important fact, i. e., God has made all things perfect whereas man can make nothing perfect. Man is constantly improving on his inventions and, hopefully, will continue to do so. There is much room for improvement for they were very imperfect when first made. Imperfect man cannot improve what a perfect God has made either by addition, subtraction or by substitution. When one changes perfection the only alternative is imperfection.

In describing the "highway of holiness," Isaiah said, "And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa. 35:8-10).

In describing God's law David said, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true and

righteous altogether" (Psa. 19:7-9). It would be difficult for any man to improve on what is perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, true and righteous. Yet this is the way the inspired writer describes God's law.

Moses gave this warning, "Ye shall not add unto the words which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you" (Deut. 4:2). Again he said, "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it" (Deut. 12:32). In speaking of Christ Paul said, "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power" (Col. 2:9-10). In speaking of the holy scriptures Paul said, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Peter said, "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2 Pet. 1:3). Before laying down the pen of inspiration John said, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life and out of the holy city, and from the things that are written in this book" (Rev. 22:18-19). While many other scriptures could be given, are not these enough to prove that God's Word is an all-sufficient guide which we dare not change?

The Bible is an all-sufficient guide for man from the cradle to the grave. Let us consider this all-sufficiency.

1. *The Bible is sufficient in the knowledge it communicates.* It reveals: the knowledge of our original state; man's fall, and

his consequent ruin and misery; the way of our recovery through Christ; the character, offices, doctrine and work of our Redeemer; the doctrine of the resurrection; the eternal state of future existence; and the beauties of heaven and the horrors of hell.

2. *The Bible is sufficient in the duties it prescribes.* It prescribes the proper relation between man and man: the duty of citizens to government, of servants to masters and masters to servants, and of parents to children and children to parents. It sets forth our duty to God and gives direction for the regulation of our tongue, our thoughts, our affections, and even our duty to our enemies.

3. *The Bible is sufficient in the cautions and admonitions furnished.* It reveals all the sources of evil and peril to which we are exposed—the deceitfulness of sin, the blandishments of the world and the wiles of Satan.

4. *The Bible admonishes us as to the evils of self-righteousness, self-conceit and self-justification.*

5. *The Bible reveals the danger of presumption, the evils of slothfulness, the perils of procrastination, the brevity of life, the uncertainty of time, the beauty of life, the probable nearness of death, and the realities of the judgment.*

6. *The Bible is sufficient in the promises and threatenings it proclaims.* It promises a life where there is fulness of joy and pleasures forevermore and it threatens everlasting banishment from the presence of God and from the glory of His power.

Since God's Word is all-sufficient and complete, we need look for no more revelation from God. There will be no more because no more is needed. Jude said, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). We might note that the Revised Version of the New Testament says, "which was

ONCE FOR ALL delivered." This is Jude's way of saying that we need look for no more revelation from God. All of the so-called revelations since the Bible's completion are spurious. God had nothing to do with them.

Conclusion

Knowing that the "way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps, " God in His infinite mercy and goodness has not left us to grope our way in darkness. Rather, through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit, He has given us an inspired, infallible, all-sufficient guide book. No guide book will help us find the way unless we know its contents and follow its instruction. Let us therefore heed Paul's instruction to Timothy, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15), and follow the example of the Bereans of whom Luke said, "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). Perhaps no better characterization of God's Word as our guide has ever been given than the following from an unknown author:

This old book contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners and the happiness of believers. Its histories are true, its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the sailor's compass, the soldier's sword and the Christian's charter. Here paradise is restored, heaven is opened and the gates of hell are disclosed. Christ is the grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully. It is a mine of

wealth, a paradise of glory and a river of pleasure. It is given you in life, will be opened at the judgment, and remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, rewards the greatest labor and condemns all who trifle with its holy contents.

5 *God's Church Is Our Refuge*

Introduction

WHILE THERE are many more valid and important reasons why God has a right to make some reasonable requirements of man, we shall take time to consider but one more: God's Church Is Our Refuge. To the church at Philippi Paul said, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19). God has made provision for all our spiritual needs as well as our temporal needs. Man needed a Savior to redeem him and a guide to direct him on his journey through this sinful world. He also needs a refuge for his soul. God has always provided a refuge from danger for those who love and serve him. Moses said, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms . . ." (Deut. 33:27). Few people have felt more keenly the need for a place of refuge than did David when he was being pursued by Saul. David said, "For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock" (Psa. 27:5). Again David said, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psa. 46:1). Under the Law of Moses when one man killed another man either intentionally or by accident, the nearest of kin, known as the

avenger of blood, was obligated to pursue and kill the manslayer. But God's law was just. He provided six cities of refuge to which the manslayer could flee. There he was safe until he was given a just trial. If found innocent he was to remain in the city of refuge until the death of the high priest when he was free to leave without his life being in danger.

At present, it is hardly safe to go out on the streets of some cities of our country either by day or night. But we are exposed to spiritual dangers even more serious because they involve the safety of the soul. Peter gave this warning, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). The devil has ever and will always be the avowed enemy of God's people. For this reason God in His infinite mercy has given us the church as a refuge for the soul. He has truly provided for all our needs.

God knew that man could not be happy without a home and employment. Consequently, He gave Adam a beautiful home in the Garden of Eden and for his employment the dressing and care of the Garden. Yet Adam could not be completely happy without a companion. "And the Lord God said, It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him" (Gen. 2:18). In order to make this "help meet" God caused a deep sleep to come upon Adam. While he was in this deep sleep, God took from Adam's side a rib, and from this rib He created woman to be a "help meet, " that is, someone to assist him in accomplishing the great task of populating and subduing the earth.

With a beautiful home, employment and companionship, man should have been completely happy. But that "old serpent, the devil" could see an opportunity to change this happiness into sorrow. Both Adam and Eve yielded to Satan's seductive influence and got us all into serious trouble by their disobedience. Because of their sin, God drove them both from their home in paradise. Before man could be fitted and prepared again to enjoy the presence of God,

something had to be done about the problem of sin. This is a long story which involves the whole of God's Word.

In order to rectify this great mistake of Adam and Eve, God conceived and prepared the plan of human redemption. This plan made it necessary for Christ to come into the world. Luke described Christ's mission among men in these words, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Lk. 19:10). But just as Adam needed a "help meet" to assist him in his great task, so too Christ needed a help meet to assist Him in perfecting the plan of human redemption. In some respects Adam was a type of Christ. Paul said, in referring to both Adam and Christ, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Rom. 5:19). As was true in the case of Adam, God caused a deep sleep to come upon Christ—the sleep of death on the cross—and while Christ was in that deep sleep, God took from His side the blood with which He purchased the church, which is Christ's "help meet" in effecting the great plan of redeeming man from sin.

Unfortunately, many people do not seem to appreciate the importance and the necessity of the church in the scheme of redemption. Just what is the church which we read so much about in the Bible? It must be vital to our salvation or so much would not have been said about it. One of the best definitions I have heard of the church is, "The church is a called-out body of penitent, baptized believers over which Christ rules as Head, and in which His Spirit dwells." Paul tells us how we are called out: "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 2:13-14). The same apostle said that God "hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom

of his dear Son" (Col. 1:13). The church, then, consists of those who have been called out of the world by hearing, believing and obeying the gospel, and thereby become citizens of the kingdom of Christ. Let us consider a few things about this institution which was purchased with the blood of Christ and over which He rules as Head.

The Church Is a Divine Institution

1. *The church originated in the divine mind.* Paul declared that the church was a part of God's eternal purpose, "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:10-11). Apparently anticipating that man might sin, God had the church in mind as the bride of Christ and an instrument in the salvation of lost souls. According to God's eternal purpose, the church was first to consist of Jews. Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). In sending out the apostles under the first commission, Jesus said to them, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10:5-6). More than two thousand years before Christ came into the world, God had called Abraham to become the father of a great nation, the Jewish nation, through which Christ was to be born. In calling Abraham God said, ". . . in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22:18). The "seed" through which all nations were to be blessed was Christ, who was a descendant of Abraham (Gal. 3:16). In speaking of those who accept Christ through obedience to the gospel Paul said, "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs

according to the promise" (Gal. 3:29). It did not just "so happen" that the gospel of Christ was first preached in fact and in fulness to Jews only as recorded in Acts 2. This was all a part of God's plan from all eternity. The first church that was established upon earth consisted wholly of Jews.

God had no intention of leaving the Gentiles out of His plan. They, too, were a part of His eternal purpose. In his prophecy concerning the establishment of the church, Isaiah said, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it" (Isa. 2:2). The "last days" were the last days of the Jewish dispensation. "All nations" includes Gentiles as well as Jews. Again, Isaiah said, "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name" (Isa. 62:2). Many other passages in the Old Testament show conclusively that the Gentiles were included in God's eternal purpose. Some years after the church had been established God sent Peter to preach the gospel for the first time to the household of Cornelius, a Gentile family. They believed and obeyed the gospel. Since that time there have been many more Gentiles in the church than Jews.

Neither man nor devils could prevent the accomplishment of God's eternal purpose. Satan did everything within his power to derail God's eternal plan, but his efforts were to no avail. Satan succeeded in persuading the Jews to crucify Christ and doubtless rejoiced when Christ died on the cross, thinking he had succeeded in defeating God's plan. Actually, however, he was helping God to make His plan effective. It was a part of God's eternal purpose that Christ should die on the cross and shed His blood to atone for the sins of all men.

2. *The church was planned by a divine architect.* Any building of any consequence must have an experienced architect to plan it. For any architect to plan a building wisely he must know the purpose for which it is to be used, the kind of

material of which it is to be constructed, the length of time the building is expected to stand, and the estimated cost. God was an experienced architect. He drew the plans for the ark built by Noah, the tabernacle built by Moses, and the temple built by Solomon. Each was perfectly adapted to its intended purpose. The ark was planned to survive the flood, therefore was built like a ship; the tabernacle was built for people who were constantly moving from place to place, therefore was planned so it could be easily taken down, carried along and quickly assembled; the temple was to be a permanent place of worship, therefore was built of wood and stone. The church was planned to meet the spiritual needs of all men in all time to come; therefore, it was planned to assist in the salvation of souls that were lost in sin.

God gave Noah the blueprint for the ark with specifications for both size and type of materials to be used (Gen. 6:14-16). Noah followed the plan as given, "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he" (Gen. 6:22). He gave Moses the blueprint for the tabernacle, including exact specifications as to size, shape, and materials to be used, including this warning, "And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount" (Ex. 25:40). God gave David the blueprint, including exact specifications, for the construction of the temple. Then David gave the entire plan to Solomon, "Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, . . . and the pattern of all that he had by the spirit . . . all this, said David, the Lord made me to understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern" (1 Chron. 28:11, 12, 19). The New Testament is God's blueprint for the construction of the church. It contains exact and detailed specifications regarding the type of material to be used, the preparation of the material, the government, the work and the worship. It was planned to meet the spiritual needs of all men of every nation, tribe and tongue, for all time to come. The plan was perfect and we are

warned not to change the plan either by addition, subtraction, or substitution.

3. *The church was built by divine guidance.* Christ was the superintendent in charge of the construction of the church. He selected the apostles as the builders and gave them the contract. In giving them the contract Christ said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:18-20). This contract was let after Christ arose from the dead and a short time before He returned to heaven. During His ministry, Christ had told the apostles He would send them the help they would need in this great undertaking. He said, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (Jno. 14:26).

The building of this divine institution was done by the teaching, preaching and writing of the apostles under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In the following words Christ warned the apostles not to begin the work until the promised guidance came, "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Lk. 24:49). Following Christ's ascension the apostles went to Jerusalem where they tarried until the day of Pentecost. During this interval they selected a successor to Judas who had hanged himself. This selection was made with the Lord's help. Then, we read, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and

began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4).

In the remaining part of this chapter we have an account of one of the greatest sermons that has ever been preached. A large part of the audience consisted of the very Jews who were responsible for the crucifixion of our Lord. Having assured his skeptical audience that the strange phenomenon which they had just witnessed was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, Peter then addressed his audience in these stirring and powerful words: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it" (Acts 2:22-24).

We may be sure that there was no one asleep on the back seat when Peter thundered forth those stirring words. To the contrary, his words cut to the quick. The record declares that they "were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter replied, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:37-38). No sermon ever had greater impact upon an audience as is indicated by what followed: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41). In verse 47 we read: "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." That church which originated in the divine mind and was planned by the divine architect had now been built by divine guidance. It was a living reality.

4. *The church was built upon a divine foundation.* Any structure that is expected to endure for a long period of time must

be built upon a solid, durable foundation. God intended the church to endure as long as time should last. What is the foundation of the church? In his prophecy concerning the foundation, Isaiah said, "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste" (Isa. 28:16). At one time Jesus asked His apostles, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? . . . But whom say ye that I am?" In answer to this question, Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:16-18).

Some have mistakenly interpreted this to mean that the church is built upon Peter. But the word *Peter* comes from the word *petros* which means a rock or a stone. When Jesus said, "upon this rock, " He used the word *petra* which means a ledge or a mass of stone. Peter had just confessed the great truth that Jesus was "the Christ, the Son of the living God." That truth was the foundation of the church. No one can be admitted into God's church without believing and confessing that great truth. Paul put it this way, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11). It is not Peter but the divine Christ who is the foundation of this divine institution.

5. *The church has a divine Head.* God has not left any room for doubt as to what the true nature of His church is. The inspired writers have pictured the church under many different figures. It is spoken of as a kingdom with Christ as King, as a sheepfold with Christ as Shepherd, as a bride with Christ as the Bridegroom, and as a body with Christ as Head.

Some vital parts of one's physical body may be removed, yet he may continue to live. Nobody, however, can live with-

out a head. It is the most vital part of the body. The brain which is the chief organ of the body gives direction and instruction to every other member of the body. Individual members of the body of Christ may become infected with the deadly disease of sin and as a result die spiritually. The same thing sometimes happens to one or many congregations of the Lord's people. Christ the Head, however, will never die; consequently, the church will never die because as long as the Head lives there will be life in the body.

By nature some people are blessed with more powerful brains than are others. They can acquire information more easily, retain it longer and use it more effectively. We sometimes describe such a person as "having a good head on his shoulders." Such persons are fortunate and have great advantage over others. It may not be altogether true that "knowledge is power, " but it does enable some to accomplish more in life than others. Any nation that is blessed with a brilliant, level-headed president, king, or prime minister is indeed fortunate. No institution on earth has a ruler that is comparable with Christ, the Head of the church. Christ is its Head, and He is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. He is all-powerful, all-wise and ever-present.

Of Christ Paul said, "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence" (Col. 1:18). In commenting on this verse, William Barclay said:

He is *the head of the body*, that is, the Church. The Church is the body of Christ; that is, the Church is the organism through which Christ acts, and which shares all the experiences of Christ. But, humanly speaking, the body is the servant of the head and of the mind and of the brain. The body moves at the head's bidding; the body itself is powerless and dead without the head. So Jesus Christ is the guiding, directing, dominating spirit of the Church. Every word and action of the Church must be governed and directed by Him; it is at His bidding that the Church must live and move. Without Him the Church cannot think the truth;

without Him the Church cannot act correctly; without Him cannot decide its direction. The thought and action of the Church must be governed, guided and directed by Jesus Christ. (*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p. 145).

6. *The church is composed of divine material.* Using another figure of speech Paul spoke of the church as follows: "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:14-15). Houses may be built of various kinds of material, but whatever it is it must be prepared before being built into the house. It must be made to conform to the plans and specifications submitted by the architect. God told Noah to build the ark of wood; He told Moses to build the tabernacle of wood, gold, silver, gems, and fine twined linen; He told Solomon to build the temple of stone and of wood from the cedars of Lebanon. Of Christians, the material of which the church is built, Peter said, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2:5).

An account of the building of Solomon's temple declares that "the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither . . ." (1 Kgs. 6:7). This means that the stone was cut to specified size at the quarry before it was brought to the building site. For more than twenty years I have lived in the greatest limestone region in the world with quarries and stone mills all around. Stone from this region is found in many of the most beautiful buildings in the world. Powerful machinery is used in removing the stone from the quarry, transporting it to the mill, and cutting, shaping, and carving each stone to the exact size and shape as specified by the architect of the building of which it is to become a part.

Christians, the "lively stones" of which the Lord's church is built, were once in the world as opposed to the church. The gospel of Christ which is the "power of God unto salvation" is the powerful machinery which is used to extract this stone from the quarry of human nature and transport it to the mill where it must undergo great change before it can become a part of a beautiful temple. These "lively stones must undergo three separate changes in the process of being prepared for the building. First, the individual's mind must be changed from a state of unbelief to belief. This great change is effected by hearing the evidences of the gospel. As a result the believer comes to hate things he once loved and to love things he once hated. Some who experience this great change *think* they are Christians because they *feel* so much better. But this change must not be taken for more than it is. It is just a change in mind or heart. Second, there must be a corresponding change in life which is brought about by repentance. Hearing the gospel of Christ in its purity and simplicity causes the sinner to realize his lost condition, to be sorry for his sinful life, to turn his back upon Satan and his face toward God. He resolves to quit serving the devil and henceforth to serve God and follow Christ. He ceases the practice of sin. Faith has now changed his heart and repentance has changed his life.

There is a third change equally important. It is a change in his relationship to God. This third great change can be effected only by baptism growing out of a believing, penitent heart. Scriptural baptism is a burial in a watery grave from which the penitent believer arises to walk a new life. Now, having his heart changed by faith, his life changed by repentance, and his relationship changed by baptism, he has been "delivered . . . from the power of darkness, and . . . translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son." He is now a "new creature: old things have passed away; behold, all things are become new" and as a result he is now a "partaker of the divine nature." Having experienced those changes, he is now fitted and prepared by the power of the gospel to become a

"lively stone" in the church, the beautiful temple of God. The material of which the church is built is human but it has been changed by a divine process.

7. *The church has a divine mission.* Inasmuch as the church is a part of God's eternal purpose, it is reasonable to believe that He had a valid reason for making the church a reality for God created nothing without a purpose. God made it clear that the work He wants done is to be done through the church. Paul said, "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end, Amen" (Eph. 3:21). Although Christ was God's Son and all power in heaven and in earth was given unto Him, according to God's plan Christ needed help in accomplishing the great task of saving a world lost in sin. The church, which Christ purchased with His own blood, has been assigned the great task of bringing the gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation, to all the world. In addition to evangelizing the world, the church is held responsible for caring for its needy and helpless members. In order to accomplish so great a work, all members of the church must study the Word diligently that they may grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. All glory must be given to God through the church, not through some human organization.

The New Testament church exists on two levels: universal and local. The church universal consists of all penitent, baptized believers in a given community and when scripturally organized consists of saints, elders, and deacons. The elders are charged with the responsibility of overseeing, protecting, and feeding the flock. Their chief concern is the spiritual welfare of the flock. The deacons are helpers of the elders, with the major emphasis having to do with the temporal welfare of the membership. The local church exists on the functional level, whereas the church universal is nonfunctional.

The church universal has no organization other than having Christ as its Head. God made no provision for activating the church universal. During the first few centuries after its

establishment, an unscriptural and unauthorized effort was made to activate the church universal. The result was an apostate church. Each congregation is autonomous in nature, thus independent of all other congregations. Congregations may scripturally cooperate in the Lord's work, but no one congregation can scripturally arrogate to itself any work which the Lord has made solely the responsibility of the local church. We read nowhere in the New Testament of such a thing as a sponsoring church.

Can you conceive of an institution more divine than the church? It originated in the divine mind, was planned by a divine architect, was built by divine guidance, was built on a divine foundation, has a divine Head, is composed of material which was prepared by a divine process, and has been given a divine mission.

The Church in Type

The Old Testament is often and properly spoken of as a system of types and shadows because it has so many types and shadows in it. In the Old Testament we have the type or shadow; in the New Testament we have the anti-type or the substance. A knowledge of the types in the Old helps us to understand better the substance in the New. For example: Israel, the descendants of Abraham, were a type of Christians, God's people today. Moses, the deliverer of Israel from bondage to Pharaoh in Egypt, was a type of Christ who delivered us from bondage to sin and the devil. Aaron, the first high priest under the law, was a type of Christ who is our High Priest today. The animals which the Jews offered in sacrifice to God were a type of Christ who was sacrificed for us. The blood of animals, offered by the patriarchs and the Jews, was a type of the blood of Christ which He shed to atone for our sin (Heb. 10:1-4). Israel's crossing the Red Sea when delivered from Egypt was a type of baptism which is the culmination of the process which delivers us from sin

(1 Cor. 10:1-2). Both the tabernacle and the temple, respectively built by Moses and Solomon as places of worship for Israel, were types of the church.

Let us consider somewhat in detail one of those types. The tabernacle built by Moses was a type of the church built by Christ. In speaking of both Christ and the tabernacle, the author of Hebrews said, "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. 9:11-12). Again, the author spoke of Christ as "a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Heb. 8:2). Notice a few points of likeness between the tabernacle and the church.

First, we may say that both were adapted to the existing needs of God's people. The Israelites had been delivered by Moses from their bondage to Pharaoh in Egypt and were marching to Canaan, which was the beautiful land God had promised to them. Since they were marching, it was necessary for them to have as a place of worship a building that could be easily taken down, carried along, and assembled hurriedly. The tabernacle which God told Moses to build was perfectly adapted to that need. In like manner, the church of our Lord is equally well adapted to the needs of God's people today. It meets the needs of all people, whether rich or poor, learned or illiterate, black or white, king or peasant. It meets our needs today just as well as it met the needs of the people of the first century. It will meet the needs of people ten thousand years from now just as well as it meets our spiritual needs today. This is the most convincing evidence that it is the product of the divine mind. No man could have planned such an institution. It is the very essence of perfection.

The church and the tabernacle are alike in that a definite plan was given for the construction of each. God called

Moses into the mount and gave him the blueprint and the accompanying specifications for the construction of the tabernacle. When the plans were delivered to Moses, God said to him, "And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount" (Ex. 25:40). To deviate from this pattern in the slightest degree would have been fatal to the responsible person. Christ, with the assistance of the apostles, built the church. We are charged with the responsibility of keeping that divine institution upon earth today. Christ gave the apostles the blueprint by which the church was to be built. The apostles have submitted that blueprint to us in the form of the New Testament, accompanied by the warning that if we change that plan by addition or subtraction we do so at our own peril. John says that such a change will keep us out of heaven.

In our study of the tabernacle as a type of the church, we need to get in our mind a picture of the tabernacle arrangement. It will be helpful if you will think of a two-room house, surrounded with a yard which is enclosed with a fence. The yard or court which surrounded the tabernacle was 150 feet long and 75 feet wide. Within this enclosure was the tabernacle, which was a two-room structure. It was a simple rectangle in shape, 45 feet long and 15 feet wide. The first room, which was called the holy place, was 30 feet long and 15 feet wide. The other room was a perfect cube, 15 feet in length, width and height. It was known as the most holy place. The two rooms were separated by a partition, called a veil, which was made of the most beautifully embroidered fine twined linen.

We should know something of the furniture both in the court and in the building. In the court near the entrance there was an altar, covered with brass, on which animal sacrifices were offered. Between the brazen altar and the entrance to the tabernacle was a laver made of brass. Water was kept in this vessel so the priests might wash before entering the tabernacle. In the first room, the holy place of

the tabernacle, there were three pieces of furniture. On the north side was the table of showbread, on which were kept twelve loaves of bread which were renewed each sabbath. On the south side was the golden candlestick, made of pure gold, having seven branches. Next to the veil which divided the holy place from the most holy place was the golden altar of incense, on which incense was offered morning and evening by the priests. There was but one piece of furniture in the most holy place, called the ark of the covenant, over which was the mercy seat and on either end of which were cherubim, or angels made of gold. Their wings were outstretched over the ark. It was between the angels' wings, on the mercy seat, that the presence of God dwelt.

Now let us see what all of this divine arrangement typified. The enclosure known as the court was a type of the world, that is, people who are not members of the church. The first room of the tabernacle, known as the "holy place, " was a type of the church. The second room, "The most holy place, " was a type of heaven. Only the common priests who were a type of Christians could enter the holy place, and only the high priest who was a type of Christ could enter the most holy place and that only once a year on the day of atonement. The only possible way to get from the court into the most holy place was to go through the holy place. This teaches a lesson which many need to have indelibly impressed on their minds, i. e., the church stands between the world and heaven. The only possible way for a sinner to get to heaven is to go by way of or through the church. This shows that membership in the Lord's church is essential to salvation.

On the brazen altar in the outer court typifying the world, the priests offered the animal sacrifices brought by the people. This altar typified Christ who offered Himself on the cross as the supreme sacrifice for sin. Before the priests could enter the holy place of the tabernacle, a type of the church, they must stop at the laver just outside the door to wash and cleanse themselves. So, too, we must be cleansed by

the washing of regeneration to enter the church (Tit. 3:5). God will not tolerate impurity in the church. The washing of regeneration is effected by obedience to the gospel.

Within the holy place there was the table of showbread on which were kept twelve loaves of bread. Each sabbath day the loaves were replaced with fresh bread and the old loaves were eaten by the priests. This is a fitting type of the Lord's Supper which is to be observed by all Christians each first day of the week in memory of Christ's death for us. The golden candlestick was made of one talent of pure gold, having seven branches. Gold is a symbol of purity and seven was considered a perfect number. This was the only provision for light in the holy place. The candlestick was a type of the Word of God, the only source of spiritual light in the church today. On the golden altar of incense the priests offered incense morning and evening. The incense purified the room and the smoke rising to heaven was a type of the prayers of Christians. They did not cease the practice of offering incense; we should not cease the practice of offering daily prayers to God.

The only piece of furniture in the most holy place was the ark of the covenant. Between the outspread wings of the golden cherubim, on either end of the mercy seat on top of the ark, dwelt the presence of God. The most holy place was a type of heaven where God dwells. Only the high priest could enter the most holy place. He was to take with him the blood of an animal to offer first for his own sins and then for the sins of the people. Their high priest was a type of Christ today. Christ, our High Priest, not once each year but once in the end of the world, ascended to heaven and offered His own blood for our sins (Heb. 9:24-26). Having offered His blood to atone for sin, He now sits at God's right hand where He intercedes for us. Our only access to God is through Christ. If we expect our prayers, to be heard, they must be offered in His name.

Not only were the court, the rooms of the tabernacle, and the furniture typical, but the very materials of which the tabernacle and the furnishings were constructed were also typical. Gold is one of the most precious and most valuable of metals. It is a symbol of purity. The boards of the tabernacle were all covered with pure gold. The candlestick and the cherubim were made of pure gold, and all furniture was covered with pure gold. This indicates the value of the church which was purchased with the precious blood of Christ. God will not allow anything unclean to enter either heaven or the church. Before we can be admitted into the church, we must be cleansed from all unrighteousness in the blood of Christ. We are "saved by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior" (Tit. 3:5-6). Having been purified by obedience to the gospel, the Lord adds us to His church. Then, if we expect to gain admittance to heaven to dwell eternally with the pure and the blessed, we must keep ourselves pure and undefiled. John said, "Blessed are they who do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14).

Apparently many people today do not understand the importance and significance of the church as an instrument of our salvation. This is not God's fault, for in the Old Testament He has pre-figured and foreshadowed it in many types. In the New Testament the church is pictured in many symbols. It is symbolized as a kingdom, a body, a house, a sheepfold, and as a family. Knowing that the Jews were looking for an earthly kingdom with an earthly king, Jesus used many parables to explain the true nature of the kingdom of which He was to become and now has become King. He said the kingdom of heaven is like a sower that went forth to sow, a man which sowed good seed in his field, a grain of mustard seed, unto leaven, a treasure hid in a field, a mer-

chant seeking goodly pearls, and a fish net (Matt. 13). Any thoughtful reader should have a clear conception of the nature and importance of the kingdom or church as a part of God's eternal purpose.

The Church in History

The only authentic history of the Lord's church is found in the Bible. Reputable historians have written some excellent histories of the church, but their chief source had to be the Bible and events transpiring since the Bible was written. In the Old Testament the church is a subject of prophecy. In the New Testament we have the actual account of its establishment and the manner in which it has spread into all parts of the world. There are a few things of which we should take brief notice.

1. *The time of its establishment.* Isaiah said, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it" (Isa. 2:2). In this one verse Isaiah tells us two important things: first, it should be established in the *last days*. (The expression, "the last days, " is used in different ways in the Bible but here refers to the last days of the Jewish dispensation. Actually, its establishment marked the transition from the Jewish to the Christian dispensation.) Second, Isaiah reveals the composition of the church to be "all nations"—both Jew and Gentile.

Daniel records a remarkable prophecy concerning the church. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had an unusual dream. He saw a metallic image of a man with a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron, feet part of iron and part of clay. Unable to recall the dream, the king called his wise men and commanded them to tell him both the dream and its interpretation. Since they could not do this, Daniel, the Jewish prophet, was called. Daniel told him both the dream and its meaning. Daniel said

the head of gold referred to Nebuchadnezzar, and that each of the other parts of the body, each of different metals, referred to successive kingdoms which would follow the kingdom of Babylon. Persons familiar with secular history know that the Babylonian kingdom was followed successively by the Medes and Persians, the Greeks and finally the Roman kingdom. Then Daniel made this illuminating statement, "In the days of these kings (that is, the Roman kings, represented by the iron and clay) shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Dan. 2:44). This remarkable prophecy tells us a number of things about the church: *first*, this kingdom was to be established by the God of heaven; *second*, it should never be destroyed but should stand forever; *third*, it was to be established in the days of the Roman kings; *fourth*, it should break in pieces and consume all the other kingdoms. This probably means that there were to be no more world powers. Rome was the last power to rule the whole world. Who was in power when the church was established? Both secular history and the New Testament show that the church was established when the Roman Empire was at the height of its power. Thus we have the definite time of its establishment.

Through the years men have insisted that the church was established at times other than the time which Daniel's prophecy proves. Some say that it was established in the days of Abraham, some in the days of Moses, and others teach it was established in the days of John the Baptist. Who is right? It is obvious that all may be wrong but all cannot be right and differ. What does the Bible teach?

In the New Testament the church is symbolized as a kingdom and as a body. Christ taught that the church was His kingdom. He said to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is

my kingdom not from hence" (Jno. 18:36). Incidentally, this verse teaches that Christ's kingdom was still future when He was tried before Pilate just prior to His death; consequently, it was not established in the days of Abraham, Moses, or John the Baptist.

There are four essentials of a kingdom—king, territory, subjects, and law. Who is the king? During His trial, Pilate said to Jesus, "Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I unto the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth . . ." (Jno. 18:37). Now, when did Christ become King? Certainly not until He was crowned. Listen to Daniel: "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. 7:13-14). Notice the points of Daniel's prophecy: *first*, he is referring to Christ, "the Son of man"; *second*, it was after Christ had completed His work on earth (He "came TO, " not FROM, "the Ancient of days, " He was returning to heaven from earth); *third*, He was given "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, " referring to His coronation; *fourth*, all nations should serve Him; *fifth*, His kingdom was to be an everlasting kingdom which should never be destroyed.

But what about the territory? It had to be the whole world, for Daniel said He would rule over "all nations." When Christ commissioned the apostles, He told them to "go into all the world and preach the gospel" (Mk. 16:15). Who were His subjects? In Acts 2 is the account of the establishment of the church or kingdom. Verse 41 says that "they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added to them about three thousand souls, " and verse 47 declares that "the Lord added to the church daily such as

should be saved." We now have a King, territory, and subjects. But what about the law? Naturally, the gospel of Christ as preached by the inspired apostles constituted the law by which this newly founded kingdom was to be governed. This should make it abundantly clear as to the time of its establishment.

A study of the church, the body of Christ, leaves no doubt as to when it was established. Paul says the body is the church (Col. 1:18). Now, when does a body have life? No body can have life without a head, a spirit, and blood. With any one of these three missing, the body will be dead. In the same verse in which Paul said the body is the church he also said that Christ is the Head of the body. The church is the body of Christ; the church is the kingdom of Christ. Christ is the King of the kingdom, and the Head of the church. When Christ ascended back to heaven, He was crowned King of the kingdom. At the same time He became Head of the church. While Christ was here with the apostles He promised to send the Holy Spirit upon them. Furthermore, He told them to go to Jerusalem and tarry until they "were endued with power from on high." While they tarried at Jerusalem, it is said, "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4). In explaining what this strange phenomenon was, Peter said, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear" (Acts 2:32-33). By the guidance of that Spirit Peter preached the gospel for the first time in fact and fulness. As a result the church was established. Hence, we have a body with both a Head and a Spirit.

No body can have life without blood. Just fifty days before this great day of Pentecost, Christ was nailed to the cross on which He shed His blood. Paul told the elders of the church at Ephesus to "feed the church of God, which he hath pur-

chased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). Now we have a body with a Head, with a Spirit, and with blood; hence it is a body with life. In the days of Abraham, Moses, or even in the days of John the Baptist, the church, or body of Christ, had no Head, no Spirit, and no blood; hence it had no life. The New Testament leaves no doubt that the church was established on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus.

There are many good people who believe in pre-millennialism. They do not believe that the church and the kingdom are one and the same thing. They mistakenly believe that when Christ came the first time He intended to establish His kingdom but that the Jews rejected Him; consequently, He established the church and postponed the establishment of the kingdom until a later date. They teach that when Christ returns the second time He will resurrect the righteous and take them along with the righteous living to Jerusalem, ascend David's literal throne, and reign over the righteous for a thousand years, after which the wicked dead will be resurrected. This is a rank misunderstanding and even a perversion of the Scriptures. One scripture which they misinterpret is the following: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:16-17).

In this letter Paul is correcting a mistaken idea of the church at Thessalonica. Some false teacher had led them to believe that Christ must come in their life time if His coming was to benefit them. In both the Thessalonian letters Paul is showing them that considerable time would pass before Christ would return. To understand any scripture, it must be considered in its context. In this scripture Paul is writing to the righteous living, that is, members of the church, about the righteous dead, or deceased Christians. What will hap-

pen when Christ comes? Paul says the "dead in Christ shall rise first." This does not mean a first resurrection as opposed to a second resurrection. Notice, "the dead in Christ shall rise *first*: then . . ." Then what? "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them . . ." Paul is not considering the wicked dead at all. He says that before the righteous living are caught up the righteous dead will be resurrected. Does this mean that there will be a second resurrection of the wicked? The answer is, No. For Jesus says, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which ALL that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (Jno. 5:28-29). Here Jesus says that ALL, both righteous and wicked, will hear His voice, and ALL shall come forth at the same time. There is to be just one general resurrection. Paul does not contradict Jesus; they were just talking about different things. Nothing is said about a thousand years between two resurrections.

The pre-millennialists go to Revelation 20:4 for their thousand years. We must remember that Revelation is a book of symbols and must not be taken literally. John says, "And I saw the *souls* of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and the word of God." They were the "first resurrection" who lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. In his commentary on this verse, E. M. Zerr says, "The souls John saw were those who were beheaded by Papal Rome because they refused to submit to her false demands . . . Those whom John saw in our present verse resisted the beast (Babylon), his *image* (those who imitated the beast) and the *mark* (those who brought upon themselves the guilt of doing the things originally cited by Nero)." Notice it was *souls* which John saw, not bodies. After the great apostasy came the Reformation. During the period of the Reformation, the righteous and faithful spirit manifested by the Christians killed by Papal Rome was resurrected and again prevailed

among the faithful of the Reformation period. The thousand years is a long, indefinite period of time. With the Lord a thousand years is as one day, and one day is as a thousand years (2 Pet. 3:8).

Furthermore, the Bible makes it plain that Christ is now reigning over His kingdom. In discussing the resurrection Paul said, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15:24-26). What does this verse teach? *First*, the resurrection of the dead marks the end; *second*, at the end Christ will deliver up the kingdom to the Father; *third*, before He delivers up the kingdom He will have put down all rule, authority and power; *fourth*, He must reign until all enemies are destroyed; *fifth*, the last enemy to be destroyed is death; *sixth*, death will be destroyed only by the resurrection. The kingdom over which Christ reigns is the church; He was reigning when Paul wrote this letter; He will reign until the end of time; He will then "deliver up" the kingdom to God. How could He deliver up something He did not have? From these verses it is obvious that the kingdom and church are the same thing, established at the same time. There will be no future reign of Christ upon earth, for He began His reign on Pentecost and will continue to reign until the end of time when He will deliver up the kingdom to God.

2. *The place of its establishment.* Concerning the establishment of the church Isaiah prophesied, "And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:3). According to Isaiah, the Word would first be preached in Jerusalem. When Christ promised to send the Holy Spirit upon the apostles to guide them in their

teaching, He said, " . . . but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Lk. 24:49). Before His ascension Christ commanded His apostles not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father about which He had told them (Acts 1:4). Luke says, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place" (Acts 2:1). The persons assembled were the apostles. The place was Jerusalem. The following verses tell of the coming of the promised power, of the preaching of the gospel, and of the establishment of the church. Just as Isaiah had predicted, the church was established at Jerusalem.

Since that memorable event, many denominations have been established: some in Scotland, France, Switzerland, England, America, and other places. But they were established at the wrong place and the wrong time to be the church we read about in the New Testament.

3. *By whom the church was established.* After Peter had confessed that he believed that Christ was the Son of God, Jesus said, "I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 16:18-19). Later, Jesus made a similar promise to all of the apostles. Incidentally, Peter preached the sermon on Pentecost which resulted in the establishment of the church. In Acts chapter 10 we find that Peter was the apostle who first preached the gospel to the Gentiles. In writing to the church at Ephesus Paul said, "Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Eph. 2:20). Paul is not saying that the apostles and prophets were the foundation of the church, but rather that by their teaching they laid the foundation. Christ was both the foundation and the builder. The apostles did the actual construe-

tion work. Many denominations have been built by men, but the New Testament church was built by Christ with the assistance of the apostles. After the establishment of the church on Pentecost, the fervid zeal of the apostles caused it to spread rapidly, according to God's plan, " . . . in Jerusalem, Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Since that time the church has been in existence upon earth. Sometimes it has been strong, sometimes weak; nevertheless, it has been the most influential institution that has existed among men. This is true because it is a part of God's eternal purpose, and that purpose had to do with the salvation of souls lost in sin.

No institution has had a greater struggle for survival; nor has any institution been the object of such severe and relentless persecution. Perhaps the darkest period the church has yet experienced began in the first century. In assuring the church at Thessalonica that many years would pass before the second coming of Christ, Paul gives a vivid description of a great apostasy that was to come and which he could see was beginning to manifest itself at the time he wrote. He said, "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come A FALLING AWAY first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way" (2 Thess. 2:1-7). Any reputable church historian will verify the facts set forth in the following pages. Secular history is filled with the development of the great apostasy, here for the first time

predicted by Paul, and the subsequent movements known in history as the REFORMATION and the RESTORATION. This history involves both Pagan and Papal Rome. Space forbids more than a very brief discussion of the Apostasy, Reformation, and the Restoration.

1. *"Take heed lest ye fall.* No one knew better than Paul the difficulties involved in living the Christian life. Not only did he say, "Take heed lest ye fall, " but he told the church at Thessalonica that there would be a great falling away from the faith. Not only was there to be a falling away "FROM" the church, but also a falling away "OF" the church, "FROM" the church has to do with individuals who, because of discouragement, fall away from the faith; whereas, "OF" the church has to do with the organization, doctrine, and practice of practically the entire church in its falling away from the faith. The causes of this falling away were both external and internal. Persecution, both Jewish and pagan, was the chief cause of apostasy "FROM" the church.

The apostasy "OF" the church resulted largely from causes arising within the church. One of the main internal causes was the rise of a wealthy church. Strange as it may seem prosperity has never been good for the Lord's people. Of Israel God said, "Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked." He became prosperous and rebelled. So it has been, so it is, and no doubt will always be. None of the seven churches of Asia was more severely reprimanded than the church at Laodicea. They had become "lukewarm" and the Lord said He would "spue them out of his mouth." Notice the cause: "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing . . ." (Rev. 3:17). It ought not so to be, but it is too often true today.

Another heresy, more far-reaching in its consequences in the early church, was Judaism. The Judaizing teachers were the greatest enemies Paul had during his ministry. At every turn they sought to disparage him and to destroy his influence. Much of Paul's time and writing was devoted to combating the teaching of these Judaizing teachers. They

were not opposed to Gentiles becoming Christians so long as they held on to the Old Testament, kept the Law of Moses, and observed all the ceremonies pertaining to the law. Furthermore, they demanded that all be circumcised. They were attempting to adapt the new faith to the Law of Moses. According to them, if one would become a Christian, he must be circumcised and keep the law, then he could become a Christian if he desired. It was this heresy that caused the first cleavage in the church. In Acts 15 we read of the historic meeting of Paul and Barnabas with the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. The purpose of this meeting was to deal with this heresy. One great reason which Paul had in mind for insisting that the Gentile congregations take up a collection for the "poor saints" at Jerusalem was to heal the breach between the Jewish and Gentile wing of the church.

Perhaps the greatest cause of the apostasy "OF" the church was referred to by Paul as "the mystery of iniquity" (2 Thess. 2:7). This tendency to depart from the faith resulted in division over false teachers and in the tendency to mix Christianity and paganism as well as to mix Christianity and Judaism. Furthermore, the "mystery of iniquity" manifested itself in the desire for progress. The desire for progress is wholesome so long as it is kept within the bounds of the apostles' doctrine. But, like many today, some in the early church were not satisfied with "that which is written." They adopted methods of pagan religions, capitalized on worldly influences, and sought to get a Christian emperor on the throne. These were some of the causes of the great "falling away" "FROM" and "OF" the church. History has a way of repeating itself. Let us beware.

2. *The way back.* It is easy to get lost; it is more difficult to find the way back to the right road. By neglecting to read the divine road map carefully, the early church gradually left the "highway of holiness" and wandered into the wilderness of error. When we let the light of God's Word go out, the only alternative is spiritual darkness. Within five hundred years

after the Lord's church was established, it made an almost complete departure from the truth in organization, doctrine and worship. It wandered in the wilderness some twelve hundred years before some of the more serious-minded and discerning members awakened to the fact that they had lost the way. This period is known in history as the "Dark Ages."

One reason that the apostate church remained lost so long was that the road map, the Bible, had become a lost Book. It had been kept locked up in the Latin language, which had become a dead language which none of the common people could read. Only the priests could read the Bible and they were not interested in its sacred contents. They did not want the common people to learn its teaching. It is easier to rule an ignorant people than it is to lead those who are enlightened. Consequently, they found it to their advantage to keep the Bible chained to the pulpit. There were numerous reasons which caused the people to become concerned about and interested in a search for the truth.

In history we read of a period of transition from the Middle Ages to the modern world known as the Renaissance, or the "Great Awakening." This was a period of great exploration. People from all over the world began to push out in all directions. New worlds as well as new truths were discovered. It was a period of invention. The invention of the printing press made possible a much greater dissemination of knowledge. As people learned more, they began to think more. Independence of thought served as a basis of that independence which enabled men to break away from the ecclesiasticism to which they had been in bondage during the Dark Ages. Enlightenment always works for freedom and against bondage.

Another factor which opened some blind eyes was the schism that developed between the Greek and Roman church. They disagreed over when to celebrate Easter, divided over celibacy, and differed over bowing down before relics and pictures. The Greek church removed crosses from

their buildings. The final split came in 1054 A. D. The Greek church still boasts of its orthodoxy; the church of Rome, of its catholicity.

Perhaps one of the greatest reasons which led to a search for the way back to truth and righteousness was an increasing awareness of the almost unbelievable corruption which had crept into the apostate church. Simony, or the sale of church offices, had become a common practice. Those who had the power of appointment sold the office and thereby enriched themselves. Another diabolical practice, political rather than religious, was known as Nepotism. Those who had worked their way up to a high position in the hierarchy, like some politicians today, granted favor to and found positions for their kinsmen. In addition to these evil practices, the church had become permeated with the most glaring immorality. There was literal highway robbery under the cry, "God wills it." Adultery became a very common way of life; illegitimate children abounded. There was rivalry for the office of pope, even selling the "holy see, " and sometimes murder for the throne. Lotteries, gambling and even distilleries were tolerated in the churches. As knowledge of this corruption became more and more known to the people, those who were now able to think for themselves began to challenge the existing powers and to search for a way out of the wilderness and prevailing darkness.

3. *Dawn.* We are accustomed to think of dawn as the break of day—the period when it is neither light nor dark, but rather a mixture of light and darkness. It also means to begin to show intellectual light or knowledge. Religiously speaking, the world had been in the "Dark Ages" for about twelve hundred years. Men had refused to walk in the light of God's Word, hence darkness prevailed. The church had become corrupted in organization, in doctrine, and in worship. Men had lost their way.

Truth had been crushed to earth, but it is encouraging to know that "truth crushed to earth will rise again." Many great men were responsible for the dawn of the new day.

One of the first was John Wycliffe, known as "the morning star of the reformation." He lived from 1320 to 1384. He sought internal reform by attacking the authority of the pope. He insisted that Christ, not the pope, was Head of the church; that the Bible, not the church, was the sole authority of the believer. One of his greatest contributions was his English translation of the Bible. A little later John Huss took up the torch and sought to reform the doctrinal aspects of the church, exalting the Scriptures above the ordinances and dogmas of the church. He was burned at the stake for rejecting the authority of Catholicism in 1415.

The light on the eastern horizon was greatly intensified by the work of Martin Luther. As he read the Bible he was greatly appalled at the discrepancies between the teaching of the Word and the practices of the church. He was aroused by the sale of indulgences by John Tetzel, the proceeds of which were used to build St. Peter's Cathedral. Consequently, he wrote out 95 theses which he nailed to the church door in Wittenburg, Germany, publicly condemning the sale of indulgences and challenging anyone to debate the issue. As a result of this unprecedented act the pope excommunicated Luther. His followers became known as Lutherans. Incidentally, this was the first denomination. Among the many errors of Luther was that he taught justification by faith only, defended infant baptism, and taught that no doctrine should be rejected unless specifically forbidden by the Scriptures. His chief contribution was that he gave the world an open Bible and taught that the authority of the Scripture is supreme.

As the day dawns, light increases but darkness lingers; there is a mixture of light and darkness. As the 16th century dawned, a new star appeared on the horizon which was destined to add a little light but also add to the existing confusion. John Calvin challenged the existing order. Whereas Luther had said, "We are allowed to practice anything unless the Bible specifically forbids it," Calvin said, "Let us practice nothing unless the Bible specifically au-

thorizes it." This was a great stride toward finding the truth. Unfortunately, Calvin added to the confusion by introducing the doctrines of election and foreordination, limited atonement, total hereditary depravity, effectual calling, and preservation of saints, or "once in grace always in grace." Calvin thus added a new denomination to the religious world.

Henry VIII, King of England, was excommunicated by the pope because he divorced his wife and married a young girl many years younger than his divorced wife. Henry then made himself head of the church of England. This church was called the Episcopal church and marked the beginning of another denomination. As the years passed the Episcopal church became so cold and formal that during the 18th century Charles and John Wesley introduced some methods of injecting some warmth and spirituality into the Church of England. This led to a break with the Episcopal church. A new church was thus born and was called the Methodist Episcopal church. As well-intentioned men continued to grope in the partial light of dawn, more religious organizations were added until there are now several hundred denominations. Light was filtering through, but darkness lingered; it was only dawn, not yet day.

4. *Twilight.* Dusk and dawn are periods of the day when it is neither light nor dark. This mixture of light and darkness we often speak of as twilight. Webster defines twilight as "the faint light which is reflected upon the earth after sunset and before sunrise." More wrecks occur during twilight than at any other period of the day because it is so difficult to see.

When the "Sun of Righteousness" arose and His illuminating rays began to penetrate into the dark recesses of men's hearts through the medium of the gospel which was first preached in its power on Pentecost, the sin-darkened world began to be flooded with spiritual light. Truly a new day dawned when the church, cleansed by the blood of Christ,

began to reflect the glory of God into a world which had been so long darkened by sin. The glorious light of the gospel soon penetrated into all parts of the world. Truly a glorious day had dawned. But there was much evil in the world, for Satan does not give up easily. Through his influence men had departed from the faith in ever increasing numbers until darkness prevailed over the light, resulting in the "Dark Ages." The Reformation movement which followed the Apostasy may be characterized as a period of twilight. Light increased, but darkness lingered.

The reformers, with the best of intentions, sought to rid the church of corruption, but instead they piled more debris upon the Jerusalem foundation. The fruits of the Reformation were partly good and partly bad. Luther gave the world an open Bible. For centuries it had been a closed Book. It had been translated into Latin while the Latin language dominated the world. When the Latin language became a dead language, the common people could no longer read the Bible. Wycliffe, Tyndale, Coverdale and Luther all made translations of either the whole Bible or of the New Testament. Without the illumination which these translations made possible, the Reformation movement would never have been able to accomplish as much as it did.

Unfortunately, all the fruits of the Reformation were not good. Good fruit cannot grow in partial light. In order to produce good spiritual fruit it is necessary that the light of God's truth expel the darkness of human error so that the fruit can mature. The partial light which shown during this period resulted in many conflicting faiths, all working at cross purposes. The divers denominations which resulted from the Reformation left the world in a state of confusion. Such division is contrary to Christ's prayer, " . . . that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (Jno. 17:21). This period also produced an

arrogant clergy—men of the cloth—who prefixed the title "Reverend" to their name and felt that the "laity" should look up to them.

Another evidence of the partial light was the beclouded theology of that period. Some thought that religion was something better felt than told. They thought that conversion resulted from some mysterious work of the Holy Spirit. Physical sounds and noises, signs and experiences, dreams and visions were taken as evidence of pardon. Calvin taught that children were born in total hereditary depravity. He advanced the doctrine of predestination and foreordination, insisting that some are foreordained to be lost, others to be saved. This unscriptural position led to the equally false doctrine of effectual calling, limited atonement, and preservation of saints, or "once in grace always in grace." Calvin was the founder of what was first known in Scotland as the Presbyterian church. There is little wonder that, with all this darkness mixed with the struggling rays of light, spiritual twilight prevailed.

5. *Lengthening rays.* The period of history known as the Reformation was a noble effort on the part of well-meaning men to get rid of the corruption, both moral and doctrinal, which had through the years crept into the church, resulting in the "Dark Ages." But as has been said, "Truth is eternal; it was not born, and it cannot die." "Truth may be crushed to earth, but it will rise again."

As discerning men studied their Bibles, they could see a striking contrast between what the Bible said and what was being practiced in the religious world. It was obvious that the Reformation had not accomplished its intended purpose. They could see that what was needed was not a reformation but rather a restoration of the ancient order. When Israel had wandered far away from God, Jeremiah said to them, "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls . . ." They were evidently also much impressed with the exhortation of Peter, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11).

The faint rays of light which had begun to penetrate the darkness during the Reformation now began to lengthen. Continued study and better understanding of the Bible gave promise of a new day. It is interesting to note that the movement which began as the faint tremors of a distant earthquake and gradually grew into a ground swell was not peculiar to any one denomination. It was not confined to any one religious group nor to any one part of the world. Isaiah had truly said concerning God's Word, "It shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it" (Isa. 55:11).

One of the forerunners of the Restoration movement was James O'Kelly, a Methodist preacher of Manakin Town, North Carolina. He advocated the independence of the local church, that Christ be recognized as the only Head of the church, that we should wear the name *Christian* and no other, that we take the Bible as our only creed, and the right of private judgment and liberty of conscience. About the same time Abner Jones, a Baptist preacher from Vermont, discarded the name *Baptist*, assumed the name *Christian*, repudiated the Philadelphia Confession of Faith, and declared that the Bible was our only rule of faith and practice. He had never heard of James O'Kelly but he had been reading the same Book. During the same period Barton W. Stone, a Presbyterian preacher in Kentucky, discovered from his study that the Holy Spirit does not act miraculously in the process of salvation but through the inspired Word. He began to preach unity among God's people and that the Bible is our only safe guide.

This movement was given great impetus when Thomas Campbell, a Presbyterian preacher in Scotland, came to America in 1807. He preached and practiced open communion. His motto was: "Where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent." He insisted that we must have divine authority for all that we practice. In 1809 his son, Alexander Campbell, came to America. He was a man of superior intellectual ability and a natural leader. From this time on the Restoration movement centered

around him. He left the Presbyterian church and affiliated himself with the various Associations of the Baptist church. He was baptized for the remission of his sins, as the Bible teaches, in 1812. He emphasized the importance of rightly dividing the Word and pointed out that there are three separate dispensations of religion in the Bible. He said that "in faith, there should be unity; in opinion, liberty; and in all things, charity." He fearlessly taught that all denominations should renounce their human Creeds, Prayer Books, Confessions of Faith, take the Bible as their only guide, go back to Jerusalem scripturally, and begin to build anew on the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets; for only in this way could the ancient order, as taught by the apostles and recorded in the Word of God, be restored and the church become acceptable in the sight of God.

Is the New Testament Church Now on Earth?

Catastrophic changes have taken place upon earth since that distant day when the church of our Lord was established on the first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection. Nations have risen, flourished, and ceased to be. Systems of government have come and gone. Science has wrought a mighty revolution, and the foundations of religion have been shaken. Christendom is fragmented into many warring factions as a result of the Apostasy and the Reformation. Is it possible that the New Testament church still exists?

After Peter had confessed that he believed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God, Jesus said to him, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). In other words, neither man nor the demons of the unseen could prevent the establishment of Christ's church; neither can they banish it from the earth. We read, "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God accept-

ably with reverence and godly fear" (Heb. 12:28). In discussing the resurrection Paul said, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and authority and power" (1 Cor. 15:24). The church shall be here as long as time shall last.

The Lord's church is the product of good seed. In expounding the parable of the Sower, Jesus said, "The seed is the word of God" (Lk. 8:11). That pure seed, the Word of God, was sown in good soil, the hearts of honest men, on the day of Pentecost; the fruit produced was plain, simple Christians who, when banded together, constituted the New Testament church. True, since that day many tares of false doctrine have been sown in the field, but we still have the good seed, the pure gospel. If we will sow that same seed in the same soil, it will produce the same crop today; that is, the church just like the one produced on Pentecost. This is why Paul exhorted Timothy to "preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. 4:2-4). For the same reason Jesus warned, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt. 7:15). Furthermore Jesus said, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matt. 15:13).

How May We Identify the New Testament Church Today?

It may be difficult, but it is not impossible to identify a person who has become lost in a large crowd, providing we have sufficient marks of identification. By the same token it is

possible to identify the New Testament church even though it is surrounded by a multitude of religious organizations which are teaching the "commandments and doctrines of men." To do so we must study carefully, with an open heart and an unbiased mind, the abundant marks of identification found in the New Testament. It was composed of penitent, baptized believers, who upon the confession of their faith were "buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4).

These baptized believers were organized into local congregations consisting of saints, bishops and deacons (Phil. 1:1). They had no organization either larger or less than the local congregation. Each congregation was independent of every other congregation. They had no headquarters other than heaven where the Head "quarters." Christ rules the church universal. Qualified elders are responsible for the work of the local congregation. Early Christians had no Creed but Christ, no guide but the New Testament. They spake as the oracles of God (1 Pet. 4:11). There was no such thing as clergy and laity; their preachers were not called "Reverend." They met upon the first day of the week to break bread (Acts 20:7). They "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). They gave as the Lord had prospered them, upon the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:2). They sang "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in their hearts to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19). Their singing was unaccompanied by any mechanical instrument, for all church history shows that such was introduced by the apostate church. The New Testament church was established in Jerusalem on the first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection by the apostles of Christ. There was no hierarchy, no ecclesiasticism. Their government was congregational. There are other marks of identification, but any sincere seeker for the truth can find the

church which our Lord established and of which He is the only Head. The sacred Scriptures hold the answer. Are you willing to make that search? Remember, it is your soul that is involved.

PART TWO

What the Lord Requires

IN PART ONE we have presented five reasons why the God who created this great universe has a right to require what He does of man, the most important part of that creation. Certainly, there are many more reasons why the God who created and who "upholds all things by the Word of His power" has every right to His expectations. If we disappoint Him we will be responsible and suffer the consequences.

Before we consider any of the things which God specifically requires of man, there is one thing we should not overlook that God does *not* require.

6 *What God Does Not Require*

GOD DOES not require that man today observe Old Testament law. We well realize that this statement is diametrically opposed to what many people sincerely believe. However, we are not concerned with what many mistakenly believe but rather with what the Bible teaches. Certainly the Old Testament is just as much inspired of God as is the New Testament. In speaking of the Old Testament Peter said, ". . . but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:21). Paul said, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4). Again, he said, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. 10:11). We should study the Old Testament carefully and prayerfully, for the better we understand the Old the better we will be able to understand the New. Someone has well said, "The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed and the New Testament is the Old revealed." They are both a part of God's great plan.

There is much unnecessary confusion in the religious world today because many are sincerely trying to observe the laws and covenants of the Old as well as those of the New. This no man can do. The Jews who so severely persecuted Paul made this same mistake. They sought Paul's life and

finally put him to death because he taught that Christians are not living under, nor are they obligated to keep, the covenant that God gave through Moses. These Jews taught that our first obligation is to the Law of Moses. They said that one should be circumcised and then, if he desired, he might obey the gospel without objection from them. In order to counteract the teaching of these Judaizing teachers, Paul wrote the Roman letter, Galatians, and parts of Second Corinthians. Moreover the Hebrew letter was devoted to the same subject. All these letters point out the distinction between the law and the gospel, showing the superiority of the gospel over the law. Timothy was a convert of Paul and became an able preacher of the gospel. Like us, he was not inspired; consequently, he had to study the Word. To him Paul gave this good advice, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). One may study the Bible a lifetime, but unless he learns how to "rightly divide" it and recognize its various divisions he cannot understand it.

In order to understand and appreciate the Bible, we must realize that it is the unfolding of God's eternal purpose. Paul said, "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the *eternal purpose* which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:10-11). The central theme of the Bible is the redemption of man. Man could not be redeemed without a Redeemer. While redemption is the central theme of the Bible, Christ is the central person, and the Jewish nation through which God planned to bring Christ into the world is the central nation.

God created man in His own image, endowed him with intelligence, and made him a creature of his own free will. What God said to Israel is true of all men. God said, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live" (Deut.

30:19). It was God's desire that man should live eternally with Him. However, man made an unwise choice. When Satan entered the Garden of Eden he used every phase of his diabolical strategy to persuade Eve to sin. He appealed to her through the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. She yielded to the temptation and led Adam into the same trap. Because of their sin God drove them from His presence in the Garden, and the gates of the Garden closed behind both Adam and Eve, leaving them in a fallen state. What follows in the Bible is the unfolding of God's plan to fit man morally and spiritually that he might be worthy of being restored to His presence so he could spend eternity with God who had created him. However, due to Satan's persistent efforts, man became increasingly worse instead of better. Paul described the deplorable state of man in these inimitable words: "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes.. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:10-18 23). It was because of this hopeless condition that Jesus said "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Lk. 19:10). The Old Testament deals with preparing and bringing this Savior into the world.

Periods of Old Testament History

The history of the Old Testament naturally falls into eight rather distinct periods. It is helpful to take note of the main contents of each of these periods.

1. *Anti-diluvian period.* This has to do with the period of man's history before the flood. It centers around three great events: the creation, Gen. 1-2; the fall of man, Gen. 3; and the flood, Gen. 6-9.

2. *Post-diluvian period, Gen. 10-36.* This period deals with the reproduction of the race, Gen. 10; the dispersion at Babel, Gen. 11; the call of Abraham who became the father of both the Jewish and the Arab peoples; and the life of Isaac and Jacob and their families.

3. *Period of national preparation, Gen. 37-Ex. 12.* This period has to do with the preparation of the Jewish nation through which Christ was to come. Joseph, the most beloved son of Jacob, was by the providence of God sent to Egypt where he became head man next to Pharaoh. He prepared a refuge in the best part of Egypt to which his family came because of a great famine. Here they remained in bondage for 430 years, during which time they grew to a nation of some three million souls. We also learn of Moses, the great leader which God raised up and sent to deliver His people from bondage.

4. *Period of national formation, Ex. 13-40 through Joshua.* God's people have now become a nation with Moses as their leader and lawgiver. During this period the Law of Moses was given at Mt. Sinai. Moses led the Israelites during their forty years' wandering in the wilderness. Upon the death of Moses, Joshua became his successor and led Israel in the conquest of Canaan, the land which God had promised to Abraham and his seed.

5. *Period of Judges, Book of Judges.* This period lasted 450 years. It is a history of Israel's rebellion against God, their repression by some foreign nation as a punishment, their repentance and deliverance by a strong leader known as a judge. During this period they had fifteen judges. The beautiful story of Ruth was a part of this eventful period.

6. *Period of Kings, 1 Samuel through 2 Chronicles.* At the beginning of this period the Israelites asked for a king that

they might be like the nations about them. God told them He would give them a king in His anger and take him away in His wrath. During this period there was first the united kingdom ruled over by Saul, David, and Solomon, each of whom reigned 40 years. During the reign of Rehoboam the kingdom was divided. The Northern Kingdom consisted of ten tribes, the Southern Kingdom of two tribes. The ten tribes became so rebellious that God permitted the Assyrians to carry them away into captivity, from which most of them never returned. More than one hundred years later the two tribes were carried into Babylonian captivity where they remained for 70 years as a punishment for their rebellion.

7. *Period of Exile.* This period describes the suffering of the two tribes or the Southern Kingdom while they spent 70 years in Babylon for punishment.

8. *Period of Restoration, Ezra and Nehemiah.* This period covers about one hundred years. The Persians captured the Babylonians; consequently, the two tribes spent the latter part of their captivity in Persia. During this period of restoration, Zerubbabel returned to Jerusalem and rebuilt the temple; Ezra returned and restored the worship; and Nehemiah returned and rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem.

Where do the books between Esther and Malachi fit into Old Testament history? The history contained in the beautiful story in the Book of Esther took place in the 60 years between the work of Zerubbabel who rebuilt the temple and the work of Ezra who restored the worship. The Book of Esther is followed by five books of poetry, of which Job is the first. In speaking of the Book of Job, G. Campbell Morgan said:

It is not a book of solutions; it is rather a revelation of human experience. The central figure is Job. The central fact of the history is that of his being deprived of everything. The central value is the revelation of his experiences resulting from that process.

Job is not an ideal man. He is real. The circumstances in the midst of which we find him are not perfect circumstances. They are the ordinary circumstances of human life, those of sin, of sorrow, and of silence. The experiences, then, are those of a real man, in such circumstances as we all are familiar with in greater or less degree.

(Living Messages of the Books of the Bible, p. 9).

No one knows for sure just when Job lived. The other four books of poetry give the same evidence of inspiration.

The prophets, including all between Isaiah and Malachi, lived and labored during the period when the kings reigned whose history is recorded in the books between First Samuel and Second Chronicles. As we have found, during the closing days of the period of Judges the people asked for a king to rule over them. Up to this time the government of Israel had been a theocracy. They were a God-ruled people. Their civil and religious law were the same. God reluctantly gave them a king who subsequently had civil power but God did not abdicate His power. Rather, He made His power, rule and authority known through the prophets. The prophets served as counsellors to the kings. They made known God's will while preaching to and warning the people of their iniquities and the resulting dangers.

The history contained in the whole Bible, both Old Testament and New, covers three separate and distinct periods of time. It is vitally important that we distinguish properly between these three periods or dispensations if we hope to understand God's revelation to man. Otherwise we cannot "rightly divide the word." To fail to make this distinction will lead to confusion rather than to understanding. These three periods or dispensations are the patriarchal, the Jewish, and the Christian. Let us briefly consider them in that order.

The Patriarchal Dispensation

We sometimes use the word *age* instead of *dispensation*. We often speak of the "patriarchal age, " the "Jewish age, " and

the "Christian age." The word *age* has to do with a period of time, whereas the word *dispensation* places the emphasis on a mode of dealing, an arrangement of administration of affairs. God's "mode of dealing" with man was somewhat different in each of these periods of time. A patriarch is one who founds and rules a family. During this dispensation or period of time, the worship centered around the founder and ruler, or patriarch, of the family. The worship was very simple. The founder of the family gathered the family around an altar on which an animal was offered in sacrifice to God. The founder remained the patriarch as long as he lived.

From the beginning it is evident that God required their sacrifice to be some kind of an animal. In Genesis, chapter four, we learn that Cain and Abel, the first two men born upon earth, each brought a sacrifice to God. "And in the process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of the flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and his offering he had not respect" (Gen. 4:3-5). Why did God accept the offering of Abel and reject that of Cain? The answer is found in Hebrews 11:4, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." But why was Abel's offering "more excellent" than that of Cain? Paul helps answer this question. He said, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Since faith comes by hearing the Word of God, it is evident that God had told both Cain and Abel the nature of their respective offerings. Abel obeyed God, hence his offering was accepted, whereas Cain brought an offering of his own choosing and thereby displeased God; as a result his offering was rejected. Cain became jealous because God accepted Abel's offering and rejected his; consequently, he killed Abel and became the first murderer.

Incidentally, there is an important lesson we should learn from this experience of Cain and Abel. When God tells man what to do and how He wants it done, it must be done in that way for God will accept no other. This principle is in evidence throughout the Bible. Thus it has been, thus it is, and thus it shall be. God had a reason for requiring a bloody sacrifice. The blood of that first sacrifice, as well as that of all sacrifices offered during this first dispensation, was typical of the blood of God's only Son, which alone could atone for sin. Truly Jesus was "the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world." Apparently, since the days of Cain and Abel, more people have been inclined to follow the example of Cain in departing from God's plan than there have been people like Abel who followed God's plan. Men became worshippers of most everything under the sun except God. Consequently, they drifted so far away from God and became so wicked that God destroyed all men in a great flood, except Noah and his family whom He found to be righteous.

The principal characters during the patriarchal dispensation were Adam, Noah, Abraham and Jacob. Adam was the father of the race; Noah preserved the race from extinction; Abraham was the father of the family or nation through which Christ was to come; and Jacob, with his twelve sons, was the founder of that nation. During the latter part of this dispensation the family of Jacob, now consisting of 75 souls, by the providence of God were led into Egypt. Here they were kept in bondage for 430 years by Pharaoh. During this time they grew to be a nation of between two and three million people. God sent Moses to deliver His people from bondage. Their deliverance by Moses and their crossing of the Red Sea marked the end of the patriarchal dispensation which had lasted about 2, 500 years. This brings us up to—

The Jewish Dispensation

After the crossing of the Red Sea the Israelites, now under Moses' direction, soon came to Mt. Sinai in Arabia. From this

mountain God gave to Moses, and Moses gave to Israel, the law which was to govern this chosen people throughout this dispensation. This law is variously referred to as the Ten Commandments, the Law of Moses, and the law of the Lord. The Ten Commandments consisted of instructions concerning the morals to be observed by His people; whereas the other parts of the law dealt with the priesthood, worship, sacrifices, offerings and feasts to be observed. One important fact overlooked by many but which should be emphasized at this point has to do with the people to whom this Law of Moses was given. Moses left no doubt to whom the law was given and to whom it applies when he said, "And Moses called ALL ISRAEL, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them. The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made NOT this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day" (Emphasis mine, L. N. R.) (Deut. 5:1-3). The Law of Moses was never given to, intended for, nor imposed upon any people but the descendants of Abraham, or the Jewish nation, and the few people of whom they made proselytes during their history.

The descendants of Abraham were a chosen people, chosen of God, through which the Savior of the world was to come. When God chose Abraham as the father of this people, He said to him, " . . . Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:1-3). Here God promised Abraham a land (Canaan), posterity (a great nation, the Jews), and *seed* (Christ), through whom all nations of the earth were to be blessed. This was the spiritual part of the promise. All nations of the earth have never been blessed

through any one person except through Christ who shed His blood to atone for the sins of all men.

All people except the descendants of Abraham—the Jews, to whom and for whom this law was given—continued to live under the patriarchal law until both the patriarchal law and the Jewish law were nailed to the cross when Christ died (Col. 2:14). It is evident that Cornelius (Acts 10) was a Gentile who kept the patriarchal law faithfully until the Lord sent Peter to preach the gospel to him and his household. They heard, believed, and obeyed the gospel. Subsequently, the patriarchal law was binding upon no one, either Jew or Gentile. All were henceforth subject to the gospel of Christ.

The temporary and preparatory nature of both the patriarchal and the Jewish dispensations is evidenced by the abundance of promises and prophecies made under both of these temporary laws concerning the Savior who was to come and the kingdom of which He was to be the King. In addition to the promises and prophecies there were also many types and shadows which typified, prefigured, and foreshadowed both the persons and institutions of the Christian dispensation which was designed to last until time shall merge with eternity. The patriarchal dispensation lasted for 2500 years for all people, then after the Law of Moses was given to Israel, the patriarchal law continued in force for all except the Jews until Christ nailed all pre-existing law to the cross (Col. 2:14). The Law of Moses was given to Jews only, was never intended for anyone else, and lasted for 1500 years, ending at the cross.

The history recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the first four books of the New Testament, is the history of events that happened during the closing months of the Jewish dispensation. Both John the Baptist and Jesus lived and died under the Jewish dispensation. Isaiah foretold the work of John the Baptist in these words, "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord,

make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isa. 40:3-5). Matthew proves that this language referred to John the Baptist, for he said, "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight" (Matt. 3:1-3). John the Baptist did not establish the kingdom or church and was never in the church because he died some months before Christ did, and the church was not established until after the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Those who claim that the church was established in the days of John the Baptist either misunderstand or misinterpret the Scriptures.

Thinking in terms of round numbers we generally speak of the patriarchal dispensation as lasting 2500 years, or from the beginning of time until the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, and that the Jewish dispensation lasted for 1500 years, or from the crossing of the Red Sea until the death of Christ. We must keep in mind that the Gentiles continued to live under patriarchal law for the entire 4000 years; for the Jewish law was not given to Gentiles and they never did live under the Jewish law. Both patriarchal and Jewish laws were done away when Jesus died on the cross. This brings us up to—

The Christian Dispensation

In speaking of the death of Christ Paul said, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his

cross" (Col. 2:14). In commenting on this verse in his *Bible Commentary*, E. M. Zerr said:

Blotting out is from a word which denotes something has been erased or canceled. However, since this refers to the Old Testament, we know it means that the enforcement of it as a religious law only was canceled, for the document is still in print and its national customs were still permitted to the Jewish Christians in Paul's day (Acts 21:21-24). It is called *handwriting* from the fact that God wrote it with his own fingers on the stone, then authorized Moses to write it all in a book with his own hand. *Against* and *contrary* literally means to be an enemy, but it is not used in that sense here, for the law of Moses should not be thought of in that light. The idea is that no one could form his religious life by that law and be under the law of Christ at the same time. (See Gal. 5:1-4). *Nailing it to his cross*. As long as a note or bond is in force or unsatisfied, it stands as an obligation "against" those who are under it. But when its demands have been met, it is canceled and its debtors are no longer held. Then such a document is rendered void by having a punch make a perforation through it, as a ticket is punched. This was done to the law when Jesus suffered himself to be punctured or nailed to the cross.

(*Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, p. 137).

Some people insist that we are still living under the Law of Moses. Paul's argument, made by inspiration, should forever lay that position to rest.

This raises an important question: Just when did the law of Christ, given through the apostles, become effective? It is true that when Christ died on the cross He abrogated or canceled out all pre-existing religious law, both patriarchal and Jewish. During His life He had promised the apostles another Comforter, of which He said, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth . . ." (Jno. 16:13). After His resurrection Jesus remained on earth 40 days, during which time He frequently appeared to the apostles. On one of His final appearances, He said to the apostles, "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be

endued with power from on high" (Lk. 24:49). The new law could not be given until the power came. They went to Jerusalem where they tarried for ten days, until the day of Pentecost.

In Acts, chapter two, we read of the coming of the power, the preaching of the gospel by that promised power, and the establishment of the church. That was when the new law, or the Christian dispensation, became effective so far as the Jews were concerned. However, it did not become effective for the Gentiles until sometime later. It was part of God's eternal purpose that the Jews, God's long-chosen people, should first hear and obey the gospel. Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; *to the Jew first*, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). The Jews, including the apostles, thought that God never intended to save the Gentiles. It was not until after God miraculously convinced Peter that he should go preach the gospel to Gentiles at the household of Cornelius (Acts 10) that this new law became effective among the Gentiles. The old laws, both patriarchal and Jewish, though nailed to the cross, remained in effect until the new law could be put in operation. By way of example, Congress could annul a pre-existing law and make a new law to take its place. The law might be passed and duly signed on December 1 with the stipulation that it was to become effective as of January 1 of the next year. Until that time the old law would remain in effect. So it was with the law now in effect under the Christian dispensation.

One other fact overlooked or misunderstood by many is that the Christian dispensation under which we now live consists of two separate and distinct periods: the miraculous age and the non-miraculous age. The miraculous age lasted from the establishment of the church until the New Testament was completely written. Miracles were necessary to prove that the law was God-given. Jesus performed miracles to prove that He was the Son of God. John said,

"And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (Jno. 20:30-31). For the same reason Jesus endowed the apostles with power to perform all kinds of miracles to prove to the people that they were men chosen of God to bring the message of Christ and salvation to a lost world. When the people saw these unlearned Galilean fishermen heal the sick and even raise the dead and heard their wonderful sermons, they were convinced that they were men of God and thus led to believe. When the apostles had established a congregation of disciples in one place, they had to go elsewhere to establish other congregations. In those first years of the existence of the church, the New Testament was not yet written. In the absence of the inspired apostles and without the guidance of the inspired Book, the early disciples would not have been able to carry on the Lord's work without some kind of help from the Lord. This help was provided in the form of spiritual gifts which were bestowed upon the leaders of the various congregations by the laying on of the apostles' hands.

One example of this is found in Acts 8:14-17, where the apostles laid their hands on the disciples at Samaria. Paul names the various spiritual gifts and gives a lengthy discussion of their regulation in 1 Corinthians, chapters 12-14. In the midst of his discussion Paul shows that such gifts were temporary in nature and that the time would come when such miraculous powers would not be needed. In showing that these gifts were to cease, he mentions three, by way of example, when he said, "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away" (1 Cor. 13:8-10).

"That which is in part" refers to the regime of spiritual gifts which was "to be done away." "That which is perfect" refers to the New Testament which was God's final revelation to man. Since we now have the New Testament we no longer need spiritual gifts. We need nothing more to tell us what to do to be saved or how to live a life pleasing to God. James refers to the New Testament as "the perfect law of liberty" (Jas. 1:25). Paul said it will make "the man of God . . . perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:17). Peter said, "His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness . . ." (2 Pet. 1:3). Now that we have the complete revealed will of God, there is no need for miraculous power.

Apparently some people have a misconception of what a miracle is as well as a misunderstanding as to the purpose of miracles. A miracle is God's extraordinary way of doing things. It took a miracle to create the first oak tree, but it does not require a miracle to produce another oak tree. When God created the first of every species, He endowed it with the power of procreation. Oak trees produce acorns which in turn produce other oak trees. It required miracles to produce the Word of God. Jesus said, "The seed is the word of God." When that seed is planted in honest human hearts, it will produce Christians. That is just God's ordinary way of doing things; it is not miraculous. Miracles are no longer needed today. We live in the non-miraculous age.

God has two kinds of law: natural and spiritual. Among God's natural laws there is the law of gravity, the law of inertia, the law of atmospheric pressure, the law of relativity, and many others. These laws are inexorable; man dare not violate them. But God left it up to man to discover natural law by experimentation. From close and repeated observation, man formulates a hypothesis, which is an educated guess. Further observation makes it possible for him to formulate a theory. It seems that under the same circumstances the same things happen. By exhaustive use of the laboratory

and the test tube, he discovers that under the same circumstances he gets the same results without variation. He has then discovered a law; a law that has always existed and that will never change. Knowledge of natural law is valuable, but this knowledge has been gained at great expense in effort, time and money. God's spiritual laws are infinitely more valuable because they involve the eternal welfare of the souls of man. Hence, God did not leave it up to man to discover spiritual law by the slow, expensive method of experimentation, which man could never have done—God has *revealed* spiritual law. In speaking of spiritual law Paul said, "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:10).

In the beginning of this chapter we made the statement that God does not now require anyone to live under either the patriarchal or the Jewish law as revealed in the Old Testament. Neither of those laws was given to nor intended for any man living today. As we pointed out, in Deuteronomy 5:1-3 it is made clear that the Law of Moses was given to the Jews who were the descendants of Abraham. The major part of that law is contained in Exodus, beginning with chapter 20 to the close of the book, then in Leviticus, and was repeated by Moses in the Book of Deuteronomy just before his death. Sometimes people speak of the Ten Commandments as the moral law, and they call the other part of the law the ceremonial law. It is true that one part deals with morals and the other with ceremony, but it was all the Law of Moses. God made no distinction; it was all one law. Jesus lived and died under the Law of Moses. He was the only person who ever kept that law perfectly.

Regarding what the parents of Jesus did, Luke wrote: "And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb. And when the days of her purification *according to the law of*

Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; (As it is written in *the law of the Lord*, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in *the law of the Lord*, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons" (Lk. 2:21-24). Then in verse 27 we read, 'And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the *custom of the law* . . ." We have emphasized the references here made to the law to show that no distinction is made between "the law, " "the law of the Lord, " and "the law of Moses."

Those who make a distinction between the Ten Commandments and what they call the ceremonial law do so because they teach that when Christ died on the cross He took the ceremonial law out of the way, but that the Ten Commandments are still binding. This position is contrary to all that the New Testament teaches on that subject. The whole Law of Moses, including the Ten Commandments, was annulled when Jesus died on the cross. It is true that nine of the Ten Commandments are found in the new law. They are just expressed in different words. They are binding on us today because they have been incorporated in the new law, not because they were a part of the old Law of Moses. The fourth commandment, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy, " is nowhere found in the New Testament. It was never made a part of the new law. In the New Testament we are required to observe the first day of the week, or the Lord's day, not the seventh day or the sabbath (see Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-3).

The Thirteen Original Colonies once lived under the law of Great Britain. After they gained their independence, they were no longer subject to that law. However, when the Articles of Confederation and later the Constitution were written, some of the English laws were incorporated in them. These laws are binding upon and observed by the United States not because they were part of the British law, but

rather because they have been incorporated in the laws of the United States. So, too, we are required to keep nine of the Ten Commandments, not because they are part of the Law of Moses, but because they have been incorporated in the New Testament. There are a few questions regarding our relation to the Law of Moses that should be considered.

1. *Why was the Law of Moses given?* Paul gives a clear and concise answer to this question: "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator" (Gal. 3:19). In the verses just preceding verse 19, Paul has been discussing the "blessing of Abraham" (v. 14) which he refers to as the "promise" (v. 17). Then in verse 19 he says the law was added. Added to what? It was added to the promise which God had made to Abraham. What was that promise? When God called Abraham to become the father of the Jewish nation, among other things He said, "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). In renewing the same promise to Jacob God said, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 28:14). The "seed" here refers to Christ. It was only through Christ that all families of the earth have been blessed. But why was the law added to the promise? Paul says, "It was added because of transgressions." The patriarchs of that day had become so wicked that a law was necessary to restrain their iniquities. The "mediator" here referred to was Moses, through whom the law was given.

When this law was given at Mt. Sinai, it set the Jews apart as a separate people and marked the beginning of the Jewish dispensation. But how long was this law to last? Note Paul's answer, "till the seed should come to whom the promise was made." Paul further explains both the duration and the purpose of the law in these words, "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be

justified by faith" (Gal. 3:24). Thayer says that the word *schoolmaster* as here used means a pedagogue, or "A guide and guardian of boys. Among the Greeks and Romans the name was applied to trustworthy slaves who were charged with the duty of supervising the life and morals of boys belonging to the better class." Hence, the law was given to the descendants of Abraham to prevent them from becoming so morally degenerate that they would be unworthy of the Christ He had promised.

2. *How long was the Law of Moses to last?* Paul has just said that it would continue "until the seed should come." He identifies the seed in these words: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Gal. 3:16). There is no doubt that the "Seed" was Christ. After speaking of the law as a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith, Paul removes all doubt as to how long the law should last by saying, "For after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (Gal. 3:25). Paul here uses the "faith" as referring to the gospel of Christ, as opposed to the Law of Moses. The gospel was first preached in fact and fulness on the day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts 2. Christ had already nailed the law to the cross (Col. 2:14); consequently, when the gospel began to be preached on Pentecost and the church was thus established, the Law of Moses ceased to be in force and the Christian dispensation began. If there is any lingering doubt in your mind as to when the Law of Moses ended, read this: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Col. 2:14). Again, in speaking of what Christ did in His death, Paul said, "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace" (Eph. 2:15). "Twain" as here used refers to Jew and Gentile. They had long been enemies. Christ's death ended

the "enmity" which was caused by the law, thereby making peace between Jew and Gentile. Henceforth they can become united as one in Christ.

3. *When was the priesthood changed?* Under the Law of Moses the Jews lived under the Levitical priesthood. This consisted of the high priest who spoke to God for the people and the common priests who officiated at the altar when sacrifices were made by the people. The Law of Moses and the Levitical priesthood were part and parcel of the same system. They must stand or fall together. The Book of Hebrews was written to show the superiority of the gospel of Christ over the Law of Moses and the superiority of the priesthood of Christ over the Levitical priesthood. In discussing the priesthood the author said, "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law" (Heb. 7:12). Today we are living under neither the Law of Moses nor the priesthood of Levi. Both have been changed. In further contrasting the two priesthoods, the author of Hebrews said, "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is past into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:14-15). The Bible leaves no doubt as to the time when the Law of Moses ended.

4. *What is our relation to the Law of Moses?* (a) *We are dead to it.* "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God" (Rom. 7:4). (b) *We are delivered from it.* "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in the newness of the spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter" (Rom. 7:6). (c) *We cannot be justified by it.* "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:4). (d) *We are living under a*

better covenant. "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah" (Heb. 8:6-8). Finally, "In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away" (Heb. 8:13).

Conclusion

The patriarchal and Jewish laws have served their purpose and are no longer in force. Both ended at the cross. The Christian dispensation began with the preaching of the gospel following the resurrection and ascension of Christ.

We are not to observe the sabbath, or seventh day of the week, because that was part of the Law of Moses which Christ nailed to the cross. Neither can we go to the Law of Moses to justify the use of instruments of music in our worship of God today. True, David used instruments of music in the temple with God's approval. But the burning of incense and the offering of animal sacrifices were also a part of their worship under the Law of Moses. It would be just as logical and scriptural to burn incense and offer animal sacrifices in our worship today as it would be to use mechanical instruments of music in our worship. If we keep part of the law, we are obligated to keep all the law. Remember, Paul said, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:4). The new law under which we live does not authorize the use of mechanical instruments in the worship either by specific command, by approved apostolic example, or by necessary inference; and there is no other way to establish authority. We cannot go to

the Old Testament to justify our religious practice today. God does not require that we worship according to Old Testament law but rather forbids it. Let us be sure that we "rightly divide" the Word of God.

7 All Must Respect God's Authority

If any system of government is to function effectively, someone must be in authority. In a monarchy the king has supreme authority; in a dictatorship all authority is vested in the dictator. In our system of government the Constitution is the supreme law of the land. It makes Congress responsible for making laws; the President is responsible for seeing that the laws are enforced; and the Supreme Court is responsible for judging the constitutionality of the laws made by Congress.

In God's system of government there is: first, primary or inherent authority; second, delegated authority; and we might speak of usurped authority. All primary authority belongs to God; delegated authority belongs to Christ; the devil usurped whatever authority he may possess. God did not delegate any authority to Satan. God's authority is inherent by virtue of His position as Creator. Having all authority, He had the right to delegate authority to whomever He chose. God chose to delegate authority to Christ. Concerning Christ Moses said, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him shall ye hearken" (Deut. 18:15). Then in verse 18 God continued, "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I command him. And it shall come to pass, that

whosoever will not hearken to my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." When Jesus commissioned the apostles He said of Himself, "All power (or authority) is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). By that power Jesus did His teaching.

His Sermon on the Mount is recognized by scholars the world over as the greatest masterpiece in literature. It is unequalled in simplicity, depth, and beauty. In concluding his account of this great sermon Matthew said, "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matt. 7:28-29). The clarity with which Jesus spoke, the depth of understanding manifested, and the grasp of the issues discussed greatly impressed His comparatively unlearned audience. Never before nor since have any subjects of such momentous import been dealt with in such a masterful manner. The audience who heard His sermon delivered, and all who have since that day studied it with care, could not and cannot help but recognize the speaker as one having authority.

In contrast with the respect shown by this audience for the teaching of Jesus, we note the reaction of the chief priests and elders on another occasion. After beholding the miracles of Jesus and hearing His teaching in the temple, they said, "By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?" (Matt. 21:23). Certainly these priests could not be justified in asking such questions under such circumstances. However, we may be justified in asking the same questions of preachers and religious teachers to-day. Any time we hear any man preach a sermon today, we have a perfect right to ask, By what authority teachest thou these things, and who gave thee this authority? God is the ultimate source of all authority.

By right of His creative power God has the authority to govern and control all He has created. Anyone who has such authority has the right to delegate such authority as he sees

fit to such persons as he may choose. He also has the right to hold that person responsible for the right use of the authority he has received. In the exercise of this right, God saw fit to delegate authority to Christ. In referring to His authority, Christ said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). Christ did not claim that His authority was inherent, even though He was the Son of God, but rather admitted that all of His authority was delegated to Him by the Father. In order to demonstrate to the world that God had given authority to Christ, a very unusual thing happened at His baptism. Matthew said, "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:16-17).

In describing the transcendent scene known as the Transfiguration, Matthew said: "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matt. 17:1-5). It is obvious that one purpose of this unusual occurrence was that we might get this question of authority straight. This was indeed an unusual gathering. In addition to Jesus, Peter, James and John, there was Moses who had been dead for 1500 years. Then there was Elijah who had never died, but God had taken him directly into the eternal state. Moses had exercised great authority as mediator of the law that bore his name. Elijah

had wielded great authority as a prophet of God and was the representative of the prophets on this sublime occasion. But the voice of God that spoke out of the heavens did not say, "Hear Moses." Neither did it say, "Hear Elijah and the prophets." Rather it said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." Neither Moses nor the prophets are now in authority. We must go to Christ to whom all power and authority in heaven and in earth has been given. In Hebrews we read this warning: "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh" (Heb. 12:25).

Since Christ has all authority in heaven and in earth delegated to Him, He, in turn, had the power and the right to delegate authority to others and to hold them responsible for the execution of that authority. Christ delegated authority to the apostles when He gave them the great commission. After telling them that all power was given unto Him, He said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19). They were authorized to GO, to TEACH, and to BAPTIZE. After Peter had confessed that he believed that Christ was the Son of God, Jesus said to him, "I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 16:18-19). Later the same power was given to all of the apostles (Jno. 20:21 -23). Subsequently all that the apostles taught was taught by the authority which they received from Christ.

While here upon earth, Christ many times told the apostles that He would send the Holy Spirit upon them. On one occasion He said, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (Jno. 14:26). On another

occasion He said, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" (Jno. 16:13). Christ knew that the apostles, being just ordinary, unlearned men, could not do the great work He had called them to do without divine guidance. For this reason He promised them the Holy Spirit that they might become infallible teachers. He not only promised them the Holy Spirit, but He warned them not to begin their work until the Spirit came. He said, "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Lk. 24:49). The salvation of souls was too important to entrust even to men who had been with Christ for three and one-half years and had beheld His miracles and heard His teaching in person. They must wait for the Spirit to come, that they might teach by its direct guidance. The Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, and it was not until then that they began to teach (Acts 2).

It was by the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit that they preached the gospel. It was by its guidance that they established the church. After the various congregations of the church were established, it was by the direction of the Holy Spirit that they wrote the New Testament. To the church at Corinth Paul said, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God HATH REVEALED THEM UNTO us BY HIS SPIRIT: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:9-10). Not only is the New Testament a product of inspiration, but it is an all-sufficient Book. Paul said, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). To the Colossians he said, "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power" (Col. 2:9-10). Peter said, "According as his

divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2 Pet. 1:3). Jude speaks of the "faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

Furthermore, we are repeatedly warned against making any changes in God's revealed will. David said, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether" (Psa. 19:7-9). Laws which men make need either to be annulled, amended, or otherwise changed from time to time because they were not perfect when made. God's law was perfect when given; no man, however wise or well educated, can improve on perfection. In speaking of Paul's writings, Peter said, "As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable *wrest*, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (2 Pet. 3:16). The word *wrest* means to twist or torture. Some people read the Bible to find their doctrine, not to find the truth. If they fail to find their doctrine, they "wrest" or change the scripture to suit their doctrine. Peter would have us know that all who do so do it "to their own destruction." All who thus twist the scripture to suit their doctrine fail to show respect for God's authority.

There are various ways of wresting the scriptures: (1) *Addition*. We are amply warned against such action. Moses said, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you" (Deut. 4:2). Again he said, "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it" (Deut. 12:32). Solomon said, "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a

liar" (Prov. 30:6). (2) *Subtraction*. "And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Rev. 22:19). (3) *Perversion*. In his letter to the churches in Galatia, Paul said, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would *pervert* the gospel of Christ" (Gal. 1:6-7). Paul then goes on to pronounce a curse upon all who thus deal with God's inspired word. (4) *Substitution*. We find numerous examples in the Bible where men have substituted their own methods for what God had specifically commanded. Some lost their lives for so doing. (See Lev. 10:1-2). Let us beware.

It is also necessary that we respect the silence of the Scriptures. During the Reformation period Martin Luther acted on the principle that "Whatsoever is not specifically forbidden is allowed." John Calvin, who lived about the same time, said, "Whatsoever is not specifically authorized is forbidden." One of them had to be wrong, for one's view was just the opposite of the other's position. Luther had to be wrong for what he advocated was diametrically opposed to Bible teaching. His position would open the floodgate for anything man might desire to do. For example, when Jesus instituted the Lord's supper, He told His disciples to eat of the bread which represented His body which was broken for them; and to drink of the fruit of the vine, which was emblematic of His blood which was shed for them (1 Cor. 11:23-26). It was not necessary for Him to say, Don't use beef steak, angel food cake, Kool Aid, water, or a thousand other things that might be mentioned. If it had been necessary for God to specify everything that man should not do, the Bible would have been composed of so many volumes that no man would ever have read it all. God's Word contains principles which must be observed and commands which must be obeyed. We must give Calvin credit for being right

on this point. He agreed with Peter who said, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God . . ." (1 Pet. 4:11). God's commandments are both conclusive and exclusive. They are conclusive in that they contain all that man needs to know to do His will; they are exclusive in that they exclude every other method of doing what He has specified. When God tells man what to do and how He wants it done, it must be done in that way, and God will accept no other. If He tells us what to do but does not specify how it is to be done, man is at liberty to do what God has specified in the best way he can.

Some of God's commandments are specific, others are generic. When God instructed Noah to build the ark, He said, "Make thee an ark of gopher wood . . ." (Gen. 6:14). The word *ark* is specific. If Noah had built a tabernacle, a temple, or a gymnasium, he would not have obeyed God's command. An "ark" excluded all other types of buildings. It was a specific command. Notice, He told Noah to build it of wood. Wood is a generic term, for there are hundreds of kinds of wood. Had God not specified the particular kind of wood to be used, Noah would have been at liberty to have used any kind of wood he chose. But God specified the kind of wood to be used when He said to build it of "gopher" wood. The word *gopher* is specific. Noah would have been disobedient to God's command had he used any other kind of wood. After telling Noah to build the ark of gopher wood, God told him to make rooms in it and to pitch it within and without with pitch. Then He added: "And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it" (Gen. 6:15-16). Noah could have changed the size, the number of windows and doors, or the kind of wood, but not with God's approval. These commands were specific. Apparently Noah knew

more about God than some today. He knew that God said what He meant and meant what He said. He took God at His word. God said, "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he" (Gen. 6:22). When God gives a specific command, He holds man responsible for doing exactly what is commanded, and He will tolerate no change.

A generic command or generic authority is quite different. In this case we are granted liberty to do what is expedient to carry out the command. In giving the great commission to the apostles, Jesus said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:19-20). Part of this command is generic and part specific. "Go" and "teach" are both generic; "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" is specific. Christ said, "Go." But there are many ways to go: one may walk, run, ride, fly. The important thing is not "how" you go. One may choose any method he finds most expedient. "Teach" is also generic. There are many methods of teaching. You may use either the inductive or the deductive method. It would be expedient to have a class room and a class suited to the material to be taught. It would be helpful to have a chalk board, seats, lights, and a good supply of Bibles. The word *baptize* is specific in that it specifies how the command is to be obeyed. There is just one way to baptize anyone. The Greek word from which the word *baptize* is translated means "to dip, to submerge, to bury, to immerse." This eliminates either sprinkling or pouring, for neither of these methods will carry out the thought Jesus had in mind when He commanded the apostles to "baptize." However, the apostles were not told where to baptize. Hence they were at liberty to baptize in the Jordan River, the Sea of Galilee, a creek, pond, or any place where there was enough water to immerse a person.

Sometimes people who want to justify some unscriptural position they have taken will insist that we have no authority for meeting houses, seats, lights, songbooks, and various other expedients. They conveniently overlook the command to assemble, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is . . ." (Heb. 10:25). When the disciples assembled, as is recorded in Acts 20, we know they met in some kind of a building, for one man who was sitting in the window went to sleep and fell out the window. We are also told that "there were many lights in the upper chamber." The command to "assemble" is generic. We can assemble under the shade of a tree, in a dwelling, a rented hall, or in a building erected as a permanent place for the church to assemble. Generic authority grants us the privilege of using whatever is expedient or necessary to carry out the command. But we must exercise great care in distinguishing between what is generic and what is specific.

In order to make this distinction, it is necessary that we know exactly what an expedient is. The word *expedient* is used several times in the Bible. Because it is not understood it is many times misapplied. In order to be safe we must know exactly what an expedient is and when a practice is or is not expedient. W. E. Vine, in his *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* defines an expedient as "to be an advantage, profitable, expedient (not merely convenient)." Webster defines it as "Tending to promote the object proposed; proper under the circumstances; that which serves to promote or advance; plan, device." One might mistakenly infer from Webster's definition that we are at liberty to do most anything we desire, as long as it tends to promote our cause. But notice, a part of Vine's definition says, "not merely convenient." We must not overlook what Paul said about *when* a thing is expedient. In First Corinthians 6:12, Paul says, "ALL things are lawful unto me; but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." It is the eating of meats which he says is

lawful for him, but under the circumstances which prevailed at Corinth, he says it would not be expedient because there were some brethren at Corinth who were as yet lacking in understanding, and to eat meat which had been offered to an idol would offend their weak conscience. In order for anything to be expedient, it must first be lawful. It cannot be lawful unless it is authorized. Religiously speaking, a thing may be lawful but not be expedient; but it cannot be expedient unless it is lawful. The way a thing is done must not violate any principle or law that is found in the Bible.

There are many examples in the Bible which emphasize the danger of violating any principle or law which God has given. The same principle applies whether the law is found in the New Testament or in the Old. One example should suffice, for God always acts on the same principle. While the children of Israel were journeying in the wilderness enroute to the promised land, there came a time when they were greatly in need of water. Notice carefully what God instructed Moses to do: "Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. And Moses took the rod from before the Lord, as he commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them" (Num. 20:8-12).

What went wrong? Wherein did Moses err? God told Moses to do three specific things: (1) "Take the rod, " (2)

"gather thou the assembly together, " (3) "speak unto the rock before their eyes." There was nothing difficult to understand about that. What did Moses do? He did the first two things, just as he was told. He erred at three points: (1) He spoke to the people, but God has said speak to the rock, (2) He smote the rock twice, but God had said nothing about smiting the rock, (3) He left God's name out, but took all the honor unto himself when he said, "Must we fetch you water out of this rock?" What was the result? "Water came forth abundantly." Many people read this, and apparently, they say, So what? Water was what they needed, and water was what they got—the *end* is what counts, and the *means* makes no difference. In other words, the end justifies the means. Many people act on this principle in most all their religious work. They are concerned with the end result, not with the means by which it is attained. But, really, they fail to consider the end result. Moses got the water, but that was not all he got. God did not punish the people; they needed water, and they got what they needed. But Moses got more than water; he got severe punishment. God told him that because he did not sanctify Him in the eyes of the people he would be excluded from the promised land. Did God keep His word? Was Moses permitted to enter Canaan? Let us notice what happened.

Years later, when Israel reached the Jordan River and were just ready to cross over into the long-sought and beautiful promised land, we read this, "And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And God showed him all the land . . ." (Deut. 34:1). In verse 4 he continues, "And the Lord said unto him, This is the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither. So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord" (Deut. 34:4-5).

This is one of the saddest pictures in the Bible. Think of all Moses had done. He had delivered Israel from bondage in

Egypt; he had led them across the Red Sea; he had given unto them the law which God gave him on Mt. Sinai; he had been their mediator and leader for forty years; he had put up with all their murmurings and complaints; but now after all those years he is only permitted to take one look into, but is forbidden to enter, that beautiful land which God had described as a land "flowing with milk and honey." What was the great mistake of Moses? Wherein had he failed? He had failed to respect the authority of God. This is just one of many examples in the Bible which show the danger and dire consequences of failing to recognize and respect the authority of God. God does not have to say a thing but once to make it true. He says what He means, and He means what He says. James put it this way, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (Jas. 2:10).

Conclusion

Let us not forget the source and evolution of our authority in religion. All primary or inherent authority belonged to God. God delegated authority to Christ, for Christ said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). In Hebrews we read, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son . . ." (Heb. 1:1-2). At the Mount of Transfiguration, we read, " . . . and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matt. 17:5). Christ said to the apostles, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth . . ." (Jno. 16:13). Paul said, "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:9-10). "All scripture is given by inspiration of God,

and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). David said, "Through thy precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every false way" (Psa. 119:104). We are required to know His will, "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17). God reproved some early Christians for lack of knowledge, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat" (Heb. 5:12).

There will be no more revelation. God "hath spoken"; He is not now speaking; He will speak no more until the judgment. "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). The Revised Version says, "once for all delivered." Peter said, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God . . ." (1 Pet. 4:11). Finally, Isaiah said, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20). Our only source of authority today is the New Testament. The Holy Spirit operates today only through the New Testament which is the Word of God. The Spirit operates directly upon no man today.

Both the church and the individual Christian must go to the New Testament for authority regarding what we must do to be saved from past sins; how we get into the church; what constitutes baptism; the work of the church; the work that is to be done by the individual Christian; and the manner in which the worship of the church is to be conducted. Let us make sure that all we believe and practice is authorized by the New Testament, for it is our only source of authority in religion. All who desire to please God must respect God's authority.

8 *What Does the Lord Require of Sinners?*

After discussing the subject of sin at great length, Paul sums it up by saying, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). All who have reached the age of accountability are sinners; consequently, we should know what sin is. However, it is possible to become so familiar with a thing that we do not recognize it or cease to pay any attention to it. People who live in nations which have been at war for years seem to think but little about the danger to which they are constantly exposed. Sin is really worse than many people think. W. E. Vine, in his *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, defines sin as: "(1) A missing of the mark, (2) A principle or source of action, or an inward element producing acts, (3) A governing principle or power." Jesus said a tree is known by its fruits (Lk. 6:44).

Sin is not a tree but it may be known by its fruits. The fruits of sin are never good but always bad. Sin is always destructive, never constructive. It always destroys but never saves; hinders but never helps. One look at the fruits of sin should cause any thoughtful person to abhor sin. Behold the ruined lives, broken homes, broken hearts, ruined characters, suffering, sorrow, disappointment, envy, hate, jealousy, murder, adultery, fornication. Paul describes the fruits of sin in these words: "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all

unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Rom. 1:28-32).

Then why is there so much sin? It is evident that Satan has the power to make it look attractive. He made Eve believe that the forbidden fruit was good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and to be desired to make one wise. It appeals to the flesh but its gratification is momentary; it is but "for a season." Moses recognized sin for what it is for he chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for *a season*" (Heb. 11:25). Hence, the first thing God requires sinners to do is to—

Recognize the Fact that They are Sinners

It is difficult to save someone who does not know or refuses to admit that he is lost. It is quite possible for a person to be lost and not know it. Jesus said, "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" (Matt. 7:21). No one can *do* the will of the Father unless he first *knows* the will of the Father. This being true, God felt obligated to make His will known. For this reason He sent the Holy Spirit upon the apostles to make them infallible teachers. In speaking of the things which they (the apostles) have made known, Paul said, "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit" (1 Cor. 2:10). God is an intelligent God; He endowed man with intelligence; He has revealed His will and preserved it in a book which is the very essence of intelligence, therefore He holds man responsible

for *knowing* and *doing* His will as revealed. Jesus said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (Jno. 12:48).

Some people mistakenly think that they are safe because they are good morally. Since they are morally good, they do not think they are lost, therefore, do not need to be saved. All such people should read carefully Acts 10:1-6. In these verses we read of a man named Cornelius. He is described as, "A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway." Can you find a man better morally than Cornelius? He was devout, God-fearing, alms-giving, and prayerful. Yet God appeared to him in a vision and said, "Now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: he lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do." He was good morally but not good enough to please God. There was still something he "oughtest to do." He called for Peter; Peter came and preached the gospel to him. Having heard the gospel, Cornelius was "baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:48).

No matter how good we may be morally, we are still required to *know* and *do* the will of the Father. Paul leaves no doubt as to who will be saved. He said, "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body" (Eph. 5:23). But what is the *body*? Hear Paul's answer, "And he (Christ) is the head of the *body*, the *church*: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence" (Col. 1:18). According to the Scriptures, the body and the church are one and the same thing. To be among the saved we will have to be in that which Christ is going to save. Paul said Christ is the savior of the body. Then according to Paul all who are saved will have to be in the church of which Christ is Head, which He purchased with His blood, and which is built

according to God's revealed will. In His Word God has revealed to us some things all should know about sin:

1. *The origin of sin.* Where did this dreadful, destructive thing called sin originate? Hear Paul: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12). All know that the "one man" here referred to was Adam. In Genesis 3 we read the account of Satan, through his subtilty, persuading Eve to commit the first sin, and how Adam followed her in the transgression. Satan has a threefold strategy which he uses, too often successfully, to persuade man to sin. John describes that strategy in these words: "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 Jno. 2:16). Satan used all three phases of his strategy upon Adam and succeeded in persuading him to sin. He tried the same thing on Christ but failed. His success with men cannot be called in question. It is easy to follow the trail of the serpent all through the Old Testament. In the New Testament Paul said, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).

Does Paul teach that children inherit the guilt of Adam, that we are sinners when we are born? Many good people think so and, as a result, have their children sprinkled when they are eight days old. Such people are wrong in two respects: *first*, they are wrong in thinking that sprinkling is baptism. Sprinkling originated with man; baptism originated with God. They cannot be scripturally equated. *Second*, they are wrong in thinking that children inherit the guilt of Adam. They inherit his weakness but not his guilt. Jesus said, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:14). We are born innocent; we do not become sinners until we reach the age of accountability. We must sin to be sinners.

2. *The nature of sin.* The better we know the nature of sin, the better we will be able to deal with it. In pointing out the

Christian's responsibility to those who are lost in sin, Jude said, "And of some have compassion, making a difference; and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 22-23). There may be some question about the "fire" here referred to, but the context indicates that it refers to sin, or the danger into which sin brings us.

In a sermon outline on this verse, Thomas Kelly mentions five interesting points about sin. Notice them:

(a) *Sin, like fire, is mysterious.* Just what is fire? Of what is it composed? Does it have weight, or is it the object that burns that has weight? It is a mystery, yet we know it exists. Sin, too, is somewhat of a mystery. How does it exist in a universe governed by an all-powerful God? But we know it exists, for we see its destructive work and have felt its power in our own lives.

(b) *Sin, like fire, exists in a twofold state.* Fire is both active and latent. In its active state it illuminates our streets and warms our homes. In its latent state it exists in every material object. Strike two pieces of flint or two pieces of iron together and you will get a spark. A spark is fire or will cause fire. Sin is both active and latent. In its active state it flames out in profanity, crime, drinking, gambling, cursing and many other recognizable ways. In its latent state it exists in the heart of every human being. Paul recognized this when he said, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (Rom. 6:12). It is not likely to do us harm as long as we keep it latent; but we must exercise self-control or it will become active and maybe reign in our hearts.

(c) *Sin, like fire, has power to attract.* Children, adults, animals and insects are attracted by fire. Sin is even more attractive to some people. "Flowers decorate the path that leads to hell: there is wit to amuse; beauty to attract; music to please; drink for the thirsty; and revelry for the reckless. Thousands are attracted and before they are aware, are in

flames." Satan puts forth tireless effort to make sin look harmless.

(d) *Sin, like fire, is destructive.* Both destroy without regard to worth. Fire destroys mansions, libraries, temples. Sin does not spare a man because he is eloquent, learned, or useful. The blackened ruins of a grand mansion are a sad sight, but, alas! a ruined soul is a much sadder one. They will destroy all if left unchecked. Fire, when started, will not stop at a command. Sin will not consume so far and no farther. It is dangerous to tamper with fire; it is more dangerous to tamper with sin. Fire may destroy our body, but sin will destroy our soul. They both destroy quickly.

(e) *Both fire and sin can be resisted and put out.* Water is an effective fire extinguisher. Christ is the "living water." He alone can extinguish the power of sin in the human heart. We might think of the church as the fire department which is charged with the responsibility of bringing the gospel of Christ which is the "power of God unto salvation" to those who are engulfed in the destructive flames of sin.

We sometimes speak of sin as the leprosy of the soul. There is a striking resemblance between them, (a) *Both are loathsome.* Leprosy begins with a small spot, but as it runs its course it causes the flesh to fall from the bones. As sin spreads, the sinner becomes more and more reprehensible. Behold the man on skid row. (b) *Both are small in the beginning.* (c) *Both are contagious and spread rapidly.* In the absence of a cure, leprosy ultimately means death. We sometimes sing, "Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin." Paul said, "The wages of sin is death." He meant that it leads to eternal death. (d) *Both exclude from society.* In Old Testament times lepers were separated from society. When someone approached they had to cry, "Unclean, unclean!" to warn others. Sin excludes from the society of the godly. Paul said, "Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly." In Old Testament times, only God could cure leprosy; only Christ can cure sin.

In 2 Kings 5 there is much food for thought. Every sinner should read the entire chapter. In verse one we read, "Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honorable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper." What a difference that little word *but* often makes. Naaman was "a great man, " an "honorable" man, a "mighty man, " "*but*" he was a leper! Today we often see highly intelligent men, well-educated men, useful men, courageous men, *but* they are sinners. The difference has to do with both time and eternity.

Naaman heard about a prophet named Elisha who lived down in Samaria who, he was told, had power to cleanse lepers. With the blessing of his master, king of Syria, he went to Samaria to see Elisha, hoping to be healed. When he reached Elisha's house, Elisha did not take the trouble to come out to see him, but rather sent this message to Naaman, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean. But Naaman was wroth, and went away and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage" (2 Kgs. 5:10-12). Naaman's servants persuaded him to go back and try Elisha's remedy. "Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean" (vs. 14).

Of this incident Alexander Maclaren said:

Naaman wished to be treated like a great man that happened to be a leper; Elisha treated him like a leper that happened to be a great man. "I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God." The whole question about his treatment turns on this, Whether is the important

thing his disease or his dignity? He thought it was his dignity, the prophet thought it was his disease, And so he served him as he would have served any one else that in similar circumstances, and for like necessity, had come to him.

And now, if you will generalize that, it just comes to this—that Christianity brushes aside all surface differences of men, and goes in its treatment of them straight to the central likeness, the things which, in all mankind, are identical. There are the same wants, the same sorrows, the same necessity for the same cleansing beneath the queen's robes and the peer's ermine, the workman's jacket and the beggar's rags. Whatever difference of culture, of station, of idiosyncrasy there may be, these are but surface and accidental. We are all alike in this, we "have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"; and our Great Physician, in His great remedy, insists in treating all as patients, and not as this, that, or the other, kind of patients. The cholera, when it lays hold on ladies and gentlemen, deals with them in precisely the same fashion it does when it lays hold of the waifs on the dunghill; and a wise doctor will treat the Prince of Wales just as he will treat the Prince of Wales' stableboy. Christianity has nothing to say, in the first place, to the accidents that separate us one from the other, but insists on looking at us all as standing on the one level and partaking of the one characteristic. We may be wise or foolish, we may be learned or ignorant, we may be rich or poor, we may be high or low, we may be barbarian or civilised, but we are all sinners. The leprosy runs through us all, according to the diagnosis of Christianity, and our Elisha deals with Naaman as he deals with the poorest footboy in Naaman's cavalcade who is afflicted with the same disease.

(Expositions of Holy Scripture, Vol. 2, pp. 361-362).

Consider some lessons all should learn from Naaman's experience:

(a) *Pride is the first barrier to salvation.* Pride kept many people from accepting Jesus while He was here upon earth, just as it has stood in the way of millions since. John said, "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (Jno.

12:42-43). Apparently, many people would rather be popular than right. Solomon said, "These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him, " (notice which one heads the list), "A proud look . . ." (Prov. 6:16-17). Again, he said, "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18). Peter said, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" (1 Pet. 5:6).

(b) *Our thoughts cannot be compared with God's thoughts.* Isaiah said, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8-9). This lesson Naaman had to learn the hard way. Most proud people feel the same way. Perhaps some people, rejected at the judgment, like Naaman will say: "I THOUGHT one way was just as good as another; my way was as good as the Lord's way; a person of my accomplishments and standing could go to heaven first-class; I could be cleansed my way; I deserved something special." But, like Naaman, they will learn to their sorrow that their thoughts are not God's thoughts.

(c) *We cannot dictate the terms of our salvation.* Christ is the Savior, we are the sinners, and He said, "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" (Matt. 7:21). No man can impose either his will or his way upon God. Both His will and His way are found in His Word.

(d) *The healing power was not in the water.* People often say, in speaking of baptism, "There is no power in the water." This is very true. The power is in the obedience. Naaman could not obey without dipping himself seven times in Jordan; neither can any person obey Christ today without being buried in water. (See Mk. 16:15-16; Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12).

(e) *God will not alter His plan to suit any man.* It matters not how distinguished we may be nor how important we may

feel. We must humble ourselves, acknowledge our sins, and comply with the exact terms of His will.

3. *What sin is.* The New Testament describes at least three different ways we may commit sin. Let us consider them.

(a) *By transgression.* John said, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 Jno. 3:4). To transgress means to go beyond, to step over the boundary line. Unthinking people often go beyond the limits God has prescribed in His law. "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son" (2 Jno. 9). The doctrine or teaching of Christ as revealed by the inspired apostles is the boundary line over which we dare not step without being guilty of the sin of transgression.

(b) *By omission.* "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (Jas. 4:17). God holds us responsible according to our knowledge and our ability to do.

(c) *By presumption.* David said, "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins . . ." (Psa. 19:13). Naaman was acting presumptuously when he thought he could substitute the rivers of Damascus for the River Jordan. We cannot substitute our ways for God's ways either in the worship or work of the church; neither can we substitute our plan for God's plan of salvation.

4. *The condition of the sinner.* It would be a sad sight to see anyone die of leprosy, with his flesh rotting and falling from his bones. In Naaman's day there was no known cure for leprosy. Only God could cure it. He would cure it only on His own terms. Christ is the Great Physician. He alone has power to diagnose and prescribe a remedy for curing the leprosy of sin. In describing the sinner's condition Paul said, "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth

of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:11-12). It would be difficult to describe a more deplorable condition spiritually: foreigners, strangers, Godless, Christless, hopeless and helpless. Millions are in that condition today, even while the Great Physician pleads for them to come for diagnosis. Isaiah put it this way, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness" (Isa. 55: 1-2).

5. *The consequences of sin.* Of Israel Moses said, "For they are a nation void of counsel, neither is there any understanding in them. O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end" (Deut. 32:28-29). So many people never look before they leap. They plunge over the precipice with no thought of whither they are bound. They live wholly for today, having no thought of "their latter end." No one who has access to a New Testament can say he has not been warned. Paul said, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). The devil pays wages, but who wants that kind of pay? His wages is death. We will all have to die whether we work for Christ or for Satan. The wages Paul is talking about is eternal death. What Christ offers is not wages but a *gift*! No man can *earn* eternal life. It is a gift which only God can bestow, and He has promised to bestow it only on condition that we accept and serve Christ. Paul described the "latter end" of sinners in these words, " . . . When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 1:7-8).

In Hebrews we read, "He that despised Moses' law died

without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" (Heb. 10:28-29). True, this is not a popular doctrine. Many people say, "We just don't believe that a just God would impose such punishment upon anyone." Too many people see only one side of God's nature. He is a merciful God or He would not have given His only Son to die that ignominious death on the cross. Paul knew and did not overlook both sides of God's nature. He said, "Behold therefore the *goodness* and *severity* of God . . ." (Rom. 11:22). The Old Testament emphasizes the severity of God.

6. *Sinners cannot be saved without a Savior.* Jesus said, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Lk. 19:10). Please notice some things our Savior came to do.

(a) *Jesus came to redeem sinners from their lost condition.* "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. i: i8-ig).

(b) *Jesus came to reconcile.* "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Rom. 5:10). When two or more people become estranged they need a mediator or daysman to get them back together. A good mediator must know both sides of the case in order to effect a reconciliation. Only Christ could serve effectively as mediator between God and man. Man became estranged from God as a result of his own sin. It was man, not God, that needed to be reconciled. Christ had lived with God in heaven and came to earth to live among men. He was thoroughly familiar with God's position and became acquainted with

man's condition. He worked out the plan of reconciliation and revealed that plan in the New Testament. Only those can become reconciled who accept that plan as there revealed.

(c) *Jesus came to justify.* In speaking of Christ, Paul said, "Whom God sent forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:25-26). In commenting on this verse Robertson L. Whiteside said:

God's law had been violated again and again; and yet in this present dispensation he was justifying sinners; and he had passed over the sins done aforetime—that is, sins committed under the former dispensation. How could he show that he was just in so doing? To ignore sins, or to treat them with indifference, would wreck his whole moral government. He must be just and the majesty of his law must be upheld. Justice demands that the guilty be punished, and the majesty of the law requires that the penalties of the law be inflicted on the guilty. How, then, could God be just in passing over the sins of the former dispensation and in justifying sinners in the present time? Only because Jesus died for us. He suffered the penalties of the violated law. Even though he paid the penalty for our redemption from sin and death, he forces no one to accept the freedom he purchased. The plan arranges only for those who now believe in Jesus may be justified. . . . The death of Christ made it possible for God to be righteous in passing over the sins committed before the coming of Christ, for the sacrifices they offered pointed to Christ; the death of Christ made it possible also for God to be just while justifying sinners now, who believe in Christ."

(A New Commentary On Paul's Letter To The Saints At Rome,
pp. 81, 82).

(d) *Jesus came to make atonement for sin.* "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received atonement" (Rom. 5:11). Atonement means "at-one-ment." Only Christ's death could

make sinners at one with God. This is possible only for those who accept Him.

(e) *Jesus came to die in our stead.* In speaking of Christ Isaiah said, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:4-6). Only His blood could make remission of our sins possible. "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22).

In His Word, God has specified five steps sinners must take to be saved. Let us consider each somewhat in detail.

Sinners Must Hear

When Jesus was on the Mount of Transfiguration—in the presence of Peter, James, John, all of whom were in the flesh; and Moses whom God had brought back from the intermediate state to be present in spiritual form for this sublime occasion; and Elijah, who returned from the eternal state—a voice spake out of the cloud, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matt. 17:5). Thus God recognized Christ as His Son, indicating that henceforth we were no longer to hear Moses, the giver of the law, nor Elijah, the representative of the prophets, but we must hear Him.

Let us view these words, "Hear ye him, " and what they suggest.

1. *The authority of the speaker.* When people speak on important subjects, we have a right to question the authority of the speaker. There is so much propaganda broadcast

today that we must exercise great care in sifting out the truth. This is especially true in regard to religious subjects because our souls are at stake. There are many conflicting views regarding such subjects as what we must do to be saved, the church to which we should belong, and the method by which we are to make our calling and election sure. It is obvious that all of these views cannot be right and at the same time be diametrically opposed in their teaching. Christ said, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt. 7:15). When Jesus completed His Sermon on the Mount, we read, "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matt. 7:28-29).

On another occasion when the enemies of Jesus sent their officers to arrest Him, they asked the empty-handed officers, "Why have ye not brought Him?" The officers answered, "Never man spake like this man" (Jno. 7:45-46). His very speech gave evidence of His authority. However, we are not left to rely wholly upon His manner of speech. As He went about doing good, He performed many mighty miracles. What was the purpose of these miracles? John gives the answer: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name" (Jno. 20:30-31). In view of the abundance of evidence, who would be so presumptuous as to question His authority?

2. *The importance of the subject.* Christ never spoke on a trivial subject as men often do. When the radio and television networks cooperate in relinquishing their time so the President can speak, most of us feel that the message is of such importance that we will make every effort to listen. The subjects on which he may speak, however important they

may be, deal only with time; whereas, the subject with which Christ is dealing has to do with eternity.

3. *His words appeal to impartial considerations.* The things that we *hear* influence our thinking; the things that we *think* influence our actions; and the things we *do* influence our eternal destiny. Sometimes speakers on religious subjects speak falsehoods, not because they are insincere but because they are misinformed. However, the sincerity of the speaker does not prevent the false doctrine from doing untold harm. It is possible for speakers knowingly to teach false doctrine. They may do it either for popularity or for money. Concerning such teachers Paul said, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Rom. 16:17-18).

Recognizing the danger of being deceived, Jesus said, "Take heed what ye hear" (Mk. 4:24). We must make every effort to ascertain that what we hear is the truth. To the church at Thessalonica Paul said, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. 5:21). Paul had just exhorted these brethren not to despise prophesyings. We must keep our minds open and receptive to the truth. But Paul would not have us to be overcredulous. There is much more now than was then in the world that is false, counterfeit, and deceptive. It is necessary that we consider candidly and weigh carefully all that we hear in the field of religion in order that we may be able to separate the wheat from the chaff. In speaking of Himself as the good Shepherd, Jesus said, "And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers" (Jno. 10:4-5). Men may disguise their appearance and their voice so they

look and sound like the shepherd, but it is impossible for them to deceive the sheep. Why? Because the sheep know their shepherd's voice so well that they cannot be deceived. Let us make sure that we are so familiar with the good Shepherd's voice that we cannot be deceived or misled by false shepherds.

Again Jesus said, "Take heed how ye hear" (Lk. 8:18). We should hear with open mind, without prejudice or bias. There is nothing that will close the eyes more effectively to the truth than prejudice. What Jesus said about the Jews is true of many today. He said, "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Matt. 13:15). There is no person so blind as the person who will not see; there is no person so deaf as the person who will not hear.

4. *His words demand practical improvement.* Let us notice a few things that we must do if we are to receive any benefit either here or hereafter from what Jesus said. *First*, it is necessary that we remember what He has taught. To the Colossians Paul said, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom" (Col. 3:16). *Second*, we should heed His admonitions. To the Hebrews the apostle said, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip" (Heb. 2:1). *Third*, David said, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night" (Psa. 1:1-2). *Fourth*, in speaking of the Word of God Paul said, ". . . which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32). Before food can do us any good and build us

up, it must be digested and assimilated. *Fifth*, James said, "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (Jas. 1:22).

Sinners Must Believe

We sometimes say, "All things are possible with God." We can also say that there are some things God will not do. He will save no man without faith. In Hebrews we read, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6). Apparently some people are willing to believe most anything except that there is a God and that He has said what He meant and meant what He said. There are many shades and grades of unbelievers. The atheist says, "There is no God." David said, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God . . ." (Psa. 14:1). The agnostic says, "There may be a God, but I just do not know." The infidel may believe there is a God, but he does not believe the Bible is the Word of God. The skeptic believes some parts of the Bible and doubts other parts. The polytheist believes in many gods. The pantheist believes that God is everywhere and in all things.

The Bible teaches that there is one God who created all things and who upholds all things by the word of His power (Heb. 1:3). The theme of the Old Testament is, "I, the Lord thy God am one God, and there is none else beside me." Paul said, "There is . . . One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:4, 6).

God does not expect anything unreasonable of any man (Rom. 12:1). Therefore, He would not expect anyone to believe on Him as the one and only true God without evidence on which to base his faith. Evidence that there is a God abounds everywhere. It is found in the existence of the universe. David said, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork" (Psa. 19:1). The

known immensity of space, the estimated number of stars and the calculated size of the heavenly bodies silently bespeak the existence of God. Added evidence abounds in the precision with which the universe operates, the beauty of the flowers, the diversity in nature, the rainbow in the clouds, and the regularity of the change of seasons. Neither organic nor theistic evolution can satisfactorily explain the origin and continued existence of the universe. Certainly, there is no lack of evidence on which to base our faith.

The Bible itself is its own best proof that it is the Word of God revealed to man by inspiration. Its harmony, purity, impartiality, miracles, preservation, style, content, fulfilled prophecy exceeding great and precious promises, and perennial freshness all declare that the hand that wrote it is divine.

Paul said, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Really, we need nothing more than the Word of God as the basis of our faith. Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation: but is passed from death unto life" (Jno. 5:24). He also said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (Jno. 12:48). All who refuse to believe in God as the creator of all things, and all who fail to acknowledge Christ as God's Son and their Savior, will stand condemned in the judgment. Truly, the sinner must believe.

When Paul and Silas were put in prison at Philippi, the Lord miraculously caused the prison doors to open and the prisoners were set free. When the earthquake awakened the keeper of the prison and he saw the prison doors open, he, supposing that the prisoners had fled, was about to take his own life. "But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul

and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:28-31). Faith is the first act required of a sinner in the process of his salvation from sin.

Some mistakenly teach that we are saved by faith only. They go so far as to say that all the sinner need do is to bow his head, tell the Lord Jesus to come into his heart, that his life will be changed, that he will never be the same again. The Lord's plan of salvation is not difficult but it is not *that* easy! There is a popular creed, written by man, which says, "That we are saved by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort." Martin Luther, one of the great reformers, thus believed and taught. In trying to get away from the doctrine of salvation by works, he went to the other extreme of salvation by faith only. The Bible nowhere teaches any such thing. Some use Romans 5:1 as a basis of this false concept. Paul said, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Please note, it does *not* say, "Justified by faith *only*." Paul did say, "For by grace are ye saved *through* faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). The grace of God is the motivating cause on the divine side; the faith of man is the means on the human side. The grace of God includes numerous things on the divine side; so, too, faith includes numerous things on the human side. Neither will save by itself; both are necessary. If you will read Acts 16:33 you will find that the Philippian jailor and his household were baptized.

Let us suppose three fishermen, all religious men, are fishing from a row boat on a lake, and they get into a religious discussion. One of them contends that we are saved by faith only; another contends we are saved by works only; the third insists that salvation requires both faith and works. To settle the dispute, the third man labels one oar "faith" and the other "works." He persuades the man who insists on salva-

tion by faith only to take the oar so labeled and row the boat. When he does so, he goes around in a circle. The man who contends for salvation by works tries the other oar. He goes in a circle, except in the opposite direction. Then the third man who contends for salvation by both faith and works takes his turn, using both oars, and the boat follows a straight course across the lake. That should settle any such dispute.

Some insist that James contradicts Paul. Paul said, "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Rom. 4:3). But James says, "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (Jas. 2:17). In his *Commentary of Romans*, R. L. Whiteside puts this apparent contradiction in proper perspective. He said:

Paul was talking about works of law; James was talking about works of faith. Paul was showing the Judaizing Christian that no one could be righteous, or justified by works of law, for no one kept the law perfectly, and that to be justified, or made righteous, a person must believe in Christ. To the one who does not fulfill the works of the law, but believes in God, faith is reckoned for righteousness. Paul was arguing that works without faith would not justify, and James was arguing that faith without works would not justify. To exclude either is to fail of justification. Both referred to Abraham to illustrate their points. Abraham was justified without works of law, but he was justified by works of faith. James laid down the principle that faith without works is dead and will not justify. He used Abraham as an illustration, and then drew the broad conclusion that a man—any man—is justified by works, and not by faith only.

In the Roman letter Paul is showing the superiority of the gospel of Christ over the Law of Moses. Abraham lived under neither the Law of Moses nor the gospel of Christ. He died before either was given. He was a faithful patriarch who lived under the patriarchal law. He believed in God and showed his faith by his works. James is showing that we who live under the gospel must also show our faith by our works—works commanded by Christ. There is no contradic-

tion between Paul and James. They were simply talking about different things.

Sinners Must Repent

Before any person can truly repent he must have a clear conception of what God means by repentance. W. E. Vine, in his *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, says repentance "signifies to change one's mind or purpose, always, in the New Testament, involving a change for the better, an amendment, and always, except in Luke 17:3-4, of repentance from sin." It has also been defined as a change in mind or heart brought about by godly sorrow, and resulting in a change of life. According to the Scriptures it involves several things.

1. *Turning from sin.* God said, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and *turn from their wicked ways*; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (2 Chr. 7:14). "But if the wicked will *turn from all his sins* that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die" (Ezek. 18:21). "Therefore also now, saith the Lord, *turn ye even to me* with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning" (Joel 2:12). (Emphasis mine, LNR)

2. *The heart or mind.* David said, "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit" (Psa. 34:18). "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Psa. 51:17). "And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil" (Joel 2:13). This instruction was to Israel, God's chosen people; consequently, nothing is said about their believing, for they already believed. Nothing

is said about confession or baptism, for neither was required prior to the New Testament which contains the new covenant under which Christians live.

3. *Obedying a command.* The following commands are found in the New Testament, hence apply to all who desire to become God's children today. When Peter preached the gospel for the first time in fact and fulness on the day of Pentecost, he proved to the Jews, who thought they were doing God service when they had Christ crucified, that they had crucified God's Son. They cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:37-38). In his next sermon in similar words he said, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19). Then, in his sermon to the people of Athens, Paul said, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30). It would be difficult to find a more plain and positive command than the command to repent, as found in these three verses. How many men are commanded to repent? The New Testament not only says, "all men, " but it says, "all men every where." Why? Because "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Finally, Peter said, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). Peter, writing by inspiration, explicitly contradicts the Calvinistic doctrine which says that "God predestinated and foreordained that some people would be saved and that others were foreordained to be lost, and that the number is so definite that it cannot be altered." God wants every man every where to repent. Why? Because repentance is prerequisite to salvation.

4. *A cause which produces a definite effect.* For every effect there is a cause. Repentance is an effect. What is the cause? Paul has the answer, "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (2 Cor. 7:10). The words, *not to be repented of*, as here used, mean *not to be regretted*. The opposite of "godly sorrow" would be the "sorrow of the world" which he says worketh death. After Judas had betrayed Christ, he repented. That was not godly sorrow but the sorrow of the world. Judas was sorry because he got caught, hence he hanged himself. To the Romans Paul wrote, "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" (Rom. 2:4). If sinners would stop their quest for pleasure and money long enough honestly and sincerely to think how good God has been to them, they would be sorry for their sins. Both godly sorrow and appreciation are involved in repentance. The goodness of God *leads* man to repentance; godly sorrow *drives* man to repentance.

Just where does repentance belong in God's plan for saving sinners? It is not the first but rather the second step to be taken. The Philippian jailor who witnessed the earthquake that released Paul and Silas from prison apparently knew nothing and cared less about the true God. This unusual experience caused him to say, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Paul answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:31). He was an unbeliever and consequently had to begin at the beginning. Faith comes first in God's plan. Some good people teach that repentance comes first, then faith. They always quote Mark 1:15. At that time Jesus was speaking to the Jews in Galilee. Jesus said to them, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." Here Jesus was preaching to persons who already believed in God but did not as yet know much about Christ.

His purpose at this time was to bring them to repentance as a preparation for faith in Himself and His kingdom. Jesus and Paul were not contradicting one another.

Sinners Must Confess Christ

The third thing God requires sinners to do in order to be saved from their past sins and to enjoy the hope of eternal life is to confess their faith in Jesus Christ as God's Son. The nature and importance of the required confession is emphasized in these words, "When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 16:13-19). Some mistakenly teach that Jesus is here saying that He is going to build His church upon Peter who would serve as the foundation. They overlook the use that Jesus made of the words *petra* and *petros*, which are different forms of the same Greek word. When Jesus said, "Thou art Peter, " He used the word *petros* which means a stone. When He said, "Upon this rock I will build my church, " He used the word *petra* which means a mass or ledge of rock. In his comment on these verses, J. W. McGarvey has well said, "The rock . . . must represent some other object of thought in the context, and this can be no other than the truth which Peter had just

confessed concerning Jesus. This truth, that he is the Christ, the Son of the living God, is the most fundamental truth in the Christian system—it is that on which the whole superstructure depends; and it is therefore most appropriately represented by the rock in the Savior's picture." Paul agreed with Christ. Paul said, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11). No one can become a member of the Lord's church without confessing this great truth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

In emphasizing the importance of this confession, Paul said, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:9-10). Notice, faith involves the heart; confession involves the mouth. There is a great difference between "unto" and "into." One comes "unto" a house, steps "into" it, and walks around "in" the house. One confesses "unto" righteousness and salvation. *Unto* is not *into*. It requires baptism to bring a sinner *into* salvation, or *into* Christ, where salvation is found. (See Gal. 3:27; Eph. 5:23).

The following scriptures stress the necessity of making this confession: "And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:11). "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that confesseth the Son hath the Father also" (1 Jno. 2:23, A. S. V.). "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God" (1 Jno. 4:15). "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of anti-Christ, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world" (1 Jno. 4:2-3).

Unfortunately, some good people place too much stress on the confession. They insist that all one need do is to "say yes

to Jesus, " and he is a child of God, with all sins forgiven. Nothing could be farther from the truth. This ignores the major part of the teaching as set forth in the New Testament. Let us read with care.

Sinners Must Be Baptized

There are few subjects in the realm of religion that have caused more controversy than has the subject of baptism. We need not doubt the sincerity of those who take differing positions on the subject, but we would all do well to remember that Solomon said, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14: i2). When the salvation of the soul is involved, sincerity is not enough. It is possible to be sincerely wrong. Paul was sure he was right when he was putting Christians to death, but after he learned how wrong he was he said, "For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God" (1 Cor. 15:9). We are not concerned with perpetuating the controversy but in ascertaining the truth on this subject. In order to arrive at the truth we must lay aside all prejudice and preconceived ideas, and with an open and unbiased mind search the Scriptures, for there alone is the truth to be found. What divides the religious world on the subject of baptism is not a question of interpretation but rather a question of authority.

It is not the Word of God, but the commandments of men, that cause the controversy. In speaking to the Pharisees, Jesus said, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:9). Peter said, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11). Isaiah said, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20). When people differ on the subject of baptism, it could be because they are confused, do not know, make no effort to find out, are prejudiced, or do not

want to find out what the Bible teaches on the subject. Paul commended the Bereans as follows: "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). In that spirit, let us search the Scriptures.

The Purpose of Baptism

There are good people who think that it is unnecessary to be baptized, that it is wholly a matter of choice. We should not be concerned with what some think but with what the Lord has said. Just why should we be baptized? Is it because man requires it or because the Lord requires it? Is it to please man or God? Paul said, "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10). If we want to go to heaven, we had better strive to please God, for Christ will be our Judge, and He said, "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" (Matt. 7:21). Let us consider why one should be baptized.

1. It is a specific command.

(a) *Christ commanded it.* We cannot possibly find a higher authority on this subject than Jesus. In giving the great commission to the apostles He said, " . . . All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28:18-19). In Mark we read, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mk. 16:15-16). Some contend that though Jesus said, "He that believeth not shall be damned, " He did not say, "He that is *not* baptized shall be damned." They reason that it is the faith that counts, that baptism is *not* required. But

suppose someone says, "He that eateth and digesteth his food shall live, but he that eateth not shall die." Would it be necessary for him to say, "He that digesteth not his food shall die"? You see, regardless of how much he ate, if he did not digest his food he would die anyway. Digestion is just as vital as the eating so far as life is concerned. The same is true with believing and being baptized. Both are essential to salvation. Anyone who is not trying to make an excuse or dodge an issue can see that.

(b) *Peter commanded it.* After the Jews had heard Peter's great sermon on Pentecost, "They were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:37-38). Peter was speaking by inspiration. If there was ever a specific command given, this is it. It is one of many.

(c) *Ananias commanded it.* The Lord sent Ananias to preach to Saul, later known as the apostle Paul. Among other things Ananias said to Saul, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Then, too, at the household of Cornelius Peter said, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:47-48). Can anyone doubt or deny that sinners are *commanded* to be baptized.

2. *Christ set the example.* When Jesus came to John and requested John to baptize Him, "John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness" (Matt. 3:14-15). Since baptism is for remission of sins, yet Jesus had committed no sin, why was He baptized? He said, "To fulfil all righteousness." Baptism had two aspects: it was an act in

connection with which remission of sins took place and it was also an act of obedience to a positive command of God. In the latter aspect it was incumbent on Jesus as a Jew though He needed not the remission of sins. If He had neglected it, He would have fallen short of perfect righteousness. By submitting to baptism He also set an example that we are required to follow.

3. *It is required in order to receive remission of sins.* Many misinformed men say that baptism has nothing to do with remission of sins. Let us see what God said about it. To the Jews on Pentecost Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ *for the remission of sins*, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). Some insist that the word *for* here means "because of." Peter gave a twofold command: "repent" *and* "be baptized." Both words are verbs. Both require action. "Repent" is active voice, indicating that the subject is to do the acting. "Be baptized" is passive voice, indicating that the subject is to be acted upon. The word *and* between the two verbs is a coordinate conjunction which always connects words, phrases, or clauses *of equal* rank. Are we commanded to repent "because of" remission of sins? All will admit that repentance is "in order to" remission of sins. This being the case, baptism must be for the same purpose. If not, Peter did not know how to speak. It is true that the English word *for* sometimes means "because of." The Greeks had two separate words, each with different meaning, for the word *for*. Their word *gar* meant "because of," whereas their word *eis* meant "with a view to" or "in order to." Any Greek scholar or Greek lexicon will verify these definitions. They will also tell you that Peter said, "Repent and be baptized *eis* (with a view to, in order to) remission of sins." Hence, the English grammar and the Greek words both prove that repentance and baptism are *for* or *with a view to*, or *in order to obtain* the desired end—the remission of sins.

4. *Baptism is in order to salvation from past sins.* Some insist that baptism is just an outward sign of inward grace, and has

nothing to do with salvation. No one with any Bible knowledge will say that one can be saved without the remission of sins, and we have just proved that baptism is in order to remission. Remember that Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mk. 16:16). In speaking of the salvation of Noah and his family from the flood, Peter said, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now *save* us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 3:21). Ananias told Saul to "arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins" (Acts 22:16). Whose word do you prefer, man's or God's? Remember, it is your soul.

5. *It is required to get into Christ.* Paul said, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). Again he said, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body . . ." (1 Cor. 12:13). Paul also said, " . . . and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body . . ." (Eph. 1:22-23). The body is the church and the church is the body. What is Christ going to save? Paul said, "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body" (Eph. 5:23). If we are saved, we will have to be in that which Christ is going to save. Salvation is in Christ and to be in Christ is to be in the church. We must be baptized to get into Christ. Not only must we be in Christ; but we must remain in Christ. Jesus said, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me" (Jno. 15:4).

The Action of Baptism

Many teach that there are three "modes" of baptism: sprinkling, pouring, and immersion. We are told that you may have your choice, for it is alleged that one is as good as another. In commenting on this subject, C. C. Crawford has well said, '.. The word 'baptize' is a verb. A verb always stands for a

specific action. It cannot stand for three altogether unsynonymous actions. When I say I am going to *walk* down the street, I mean that I am going to *walk*, not *run* or *crawl*. So we see that it is useless to talk about the '*modes*' of baptism. Baptism stands for one specific action." (*Sermon Outlines On Acts*, p. 125).

The word *baptize* comes from the Greek word *baptizo* which Greek scholars define as follows: to dip, to plunge, to overwhelm, to submerge, to immerse. Paul knew this, for he said, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead" (Col. 2:12). It would indeed require expert help not to understand language so plain. You can't bury a person in a cupful of water. In physical life we do not bury people until they die. The same is true spiritually. A person must be dead to sin before he can be scripturally baptized. When faith has changed the mind and repentance has changed the life, one is ready to be buried in water, then rise to walk in the newness of life.

1. *Baptism requires much water.* "And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized" (Jno. 3:23).

2. *Baptism requires a coming to water.* In describing the conversion of the eunuch, Luke said, "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" (Acts 8:36).

3. *Baptism requires a going down into water.* "And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him" (Acts 8:38).

4. *Baptism requires a coming up out of water.* "And when they

were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip . . ." (Acts 8:39). When Jesus was baptized, He "went up straightway out of the water" (Matt. 3:16). If either Jesus or the eunuch were sprinkled or poured, why does anyone suppose they *went down into* and *came up out of* the water?

If people treated the law of our land as some treat the law of the Lord, they would spend most of their time in prison. It is obvious to all who read with care that the only scriptural baptism is immersion. Whence came the idea of sprinkling or pouring and calling it baptism? According to history in the year 251 A. D. there was a man at the point of death who had never been baptized. He did not want to die in that condition, hence asked to be immersed. The doctors said that in his condition immersion would be fatal. Someone suggested that they just sprinkle some water on him and call it baptism. For years after that the apostate church continued to substitute sprinkling for immersion when people were ill. Sometime later they began to sprinkle anyone who preferred sprinkling to immersion. This became the most popular choice. In the year 1311 at the Council of Ravenna, the Western branch of the Catholic Church adopted the practice of sprinkling for baptism. It was now official so far as the apostate church was concerned, except that the Greek branch of that church has never practiced sprinkling. During the period of the Reformation the reformers, in their efforts to purify the church, renounced the things they did not like and kept the practices they liked. Sprinkling and pouring were among the things they liked; therefore they have continued that practice down to the present. But this did not make it scriptural. It is just as unscriptural as holy water, Latin mass, purgatory, and many other beliefs and practices of the apostate church. If there has ever been a transgression of God's law this is it. John said, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath

not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son" (2 Jno. 9). You can draw your own conclusions.

Subjects of Baptism

Not only is there much division in the world as to what constitutes baptism; there is also much dissension over *who* can be baptized *scripturally*. Some baptize babies as young as eight days old; others will baptize children at any age. Those who baptize at the age of eight days insist that baptism took the place of circumcision. Circumcision had to do with the flesh; baptism has to do with the spirit. If one equates baptism with circumcision, he will have to leave girls out for only boys can be circumcised. The Lord has established the prerequisites for baptism. Before anyone can be scripturally baptized he must be a taught, penitent believer. Notice these three points.

1. *Teaching*. Christ said to the apostles, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28:19). One cannot possibly teach an eight-day-old child that baptism is in obedience to Christ's command, that it is for the remission of sins, or that it is in order to get into the church.

2. *Belief*. When the Philippian jailor said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved," Paul said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ . . ." (Acts 16:30-31). In Hebrews we read, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6). One can't have faith until he is old enough to weigh and evaluate evidence for "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1).

3. *Repentance*. Peter told the Jews to "Repent, and be baptized." Repentance is brought about by a knowledge of the goodness of God and by godly sorrow. Repentance is a change of mind brought about by godly sorrow and resulting

in a change of life. A child under the age of accountability has no sin of which to repent. Jesus said, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:14). Since children under the age of accountability cannot be taught the things they must know, cannot weigh evidence on which to base faith, and have no sins of which to repent, they cannot be scripturally baptized.

The Result of Baptism

There should be some good results from one's believing with all his heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, repenting of all past sins, confessing that Christ is God's Son, and being buried with the Lord in the waters of baptism. Had Jesus not known that it would produce beneficial effects, He would not have made these requirements. Paul said, "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:17-18). Ananias said to Saul, "Arise, and be baptized, and *wash away* thy sins." In speaking of God Paul said, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1:13). To the Corinthians Paul wrote, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). It would be difficult to come by results more desirable. This raises the question:

What is Genuine New Testament Conversion?

The following excerpts from a sermon by the great pioneer preacher, Benjamin Franklin, gives a Bible answer to this question which should be satisfactory to all. He said:

Converted to God, means turned to God, nothing else . . . No person turns to God properly, or in the sense of the Gospel,

without undergoing three distinct divine changes. 1. A distinct divine change in heart. 2. A distinct divine change in life, or character. 3. A distinct divine change in state or relation. When a man is divinely changed in heart, life and relation, he is a new creature, a child of God.

In order to these three distinct divine changes, there are three distinct appointments in the Gospel. The Lord has appointed faith to change the heart. He has appointed repentance to change the life. He has appointed immersion to change the relation. The heart is never changed by repentance. The character is never changed by immersion. The state is never changed by faith. Faith and repentance together, never changed the state or relation. Immersion never changed the heart, or life.

These three grand items, in turning to God, cannot be reversed in order. The state or relation cannot be changed first, then the life, then the heart. The life is not changed first and then the heart. The heart is the beginning place. The change in heart must be produced first. There can be no repentance, or change in the life, produced by repentance, till the heart is changed. The change in the heart leads to repentance, and produces it. Repentance results in a change of life, or it is worthless. The order of heaven is, that faith must come first, producing a change in the heart. Repentance must follow next, producing, as its legitimate fruit, a change of life. When the heart and life are both changed, the person is ready for a new state or relation . . .

Repentance does not change the past life. Pardon separates the sinner from the past life, all its guilt, and the consequences that would follow in the world to come without pardon. The penitent regrets the past life, sorrows for the sins with which it is filled, and grieves over them, but this in no way changes his relation to the past life. Nothing but an act of mercy from the Sovereign, in graciously granting pardon, can change the sinner's relation to his past sins. This is not repentance. Repentance looks to the future life. When it is genuine, such as it must be in order to be acceptable to God, it is a change of mind or purpose so great as to result in a change in life for the time to come. It looks forward and promises to cover the whole future life, while pardon looks back and covers the whole of the past life, saving him from the past as repentance does from the future. This repentance pre-

pare the sinner in life or character for pardon, but is not pardon itself. When the sinner is changed in heart, so that the love of sin is destroyed in his soul and the love of God is established in him, and so changed the mind as to destroy the practice of sin, as to induce him to cease to do evil and learn to do well—to desire from his heart to do the will of God—to hunger and thirst after righteousness—he is a proper subject of pardon . . .

A man can be changed in heart, be good in heart, and not be in the kingdom of God. He can be good in life and not be in the kingdom of God; but no matter how good he is in heart and life, he is not in the kingdom or body of Christ unless immersed into the body. Immersion in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, on the part of the believing penitent, is the visible act, in which he is transferred from one kingdom to another. Before this act, though he may be prepared in heart and life to enter, he is out of the body or kingdom; after this act, he is in the body or kingdom . . .

The part that believing performs, in preparing a man for the enjoyment of God, is in changing his heart, thus destroying the love of sin and establishing the love of God in him.

The part that repentance performs, is in changing the life; destroying the practice of sin for the future.

The part that immersion performs, is in changing the state or relation of the man previously prepared in heart by faith, and in his life by repentance, for the kingdom of God. He is immersed into the name, the body or kingdom.

Pardon is not done in the sinner, in the water, nor on earth, but in *heaven*, for the sinner, separating him forever from all past sins, and receiving him as innocent, as if he had not sinned.

(*The Gospel Preacher*, pp. 136-137, 144-145, 148-149.)

9 *What Does the Lord Require of Erring Christians?*

No one knew better than the God that created us that we are human, that it is human to err. He knew that we are fallible and could make mistakes. Even after we have been born again and have become new creatures, Satan will not leave us alone. Rather he will intensify his efforts to lead us astray. There are some very sincere people who believe that once a person has been saved from past sins it is impossible to fall from grace. They believe and teach that if you are once in grace you are always in grace. This false doctrine has resulted from unsound and unscriptural reasoning. Their conclusion is based on a false premise. If one reasons from a false premise, his conclusion will always be false.

Occasionally we hear of a mother giving birth to quintuplets. This places a heavy burden of responsibility upon the parents, yet they are willing to accept the responsibility and do everything within their power to assure their survival. Unfortunately, in most cases one or more, maybe all, pass away before they reach maturity.

Some years ago a set of theological quintuplets was born in the realm of religion. Unfortunately they have not only survived for all these years but seem to be enjoying the best of health in some religious circles. They were born during the period of the Protestant Reformation. There is no doubt that the persons responsible for their begetting, birth and

survival were sincere. We say that their survival is unfortunate because they were born of and have been nourished by error. God will not tolerate error because it either keeps people from entering or causes them to depart from the way of truth and righteousness as set forth in the Word of God. We refer to a five-point system of religious doctrine subscribed to by many morally good and sincere people. To them it seems right but we must not forget that Solomon said, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12). The fifth theological quintuplet to be born was: "Once in grace, always in grace." Let us notice briefly the first four before giving consideration to the fifth.

1. *Total hereditary depravity*. By this is meant that all children are born into this world *as sinners*. According to Webster *depravity* means the state of being immoral or corrupt; wickedness; degenerate conduct; viciousness. *Hereditary* means descending from an ancestor to an heir. *Total* means completely. The doctrine, then, teaches that children are born into this world completely wicked and that their sin was inherited from their parents. They believe in the "Adamic sin." One scripture used erroneously to promote this doctrine is Romans 5:12. Paul said, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." In his comments on this verse, however, R. L. Whiteside wisely says:

Death resulted from sin. But what death is meant? It is true that physical death came as a result of sin, but so also does spiritual death. The context and the nature of Paul's argument must determine which death is here meant. In this Roman letter Paul frequently uses the word *death*, without saying which death he means. The context favors the idea that *death* in verse 12 is spiritual death. The moral and spiritual condition of man and the gospel plan of justification had been the matter under discussion. Besides, the death here mentioned passed upon all men on account of their own sins. Physical death came upon all on account of Adam's sin, but the death here mentioned came only upon those who sinned. Facts are against the idea that all men

suffer physical death on account of their own sins; but spiritual death does come that way, and in no other way. The condition of infants is not taken into consideration in the discussion of sin and spiritual death. They die a physical death, even though they have not sinned.

(*Paul's Letter To The Saints At Rome*, pp. 120-121).

When God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden we read, "And the Lord commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:16-17). Notice, the penalty for eating was death. But what death? It was spiritual death. When did Adam die? He died when he ate. "*In the day* that thou eatest thereof . . ." How did Adam die the day he ate? He died spiritually. He was *separated* from God. Why? Because he sinned. Like Adam, when we sin, we die. How? Like Adam we die *spiritually*! Because of this sin Adam was driven from God's presence in Eden. Later, in pronouncing the curse upon Adam, God said, " . . . For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:19). It was not until 930 years after this that Adam died *physically*. We do not die physically when we sin, but like Adam we do die spiritually. And, like Adam, we will all die physically. We inherit the weakness of Adam but we do not inherit the guilt of Adam. We will die physically because Adam sinned, but we do not die spiritually until we sin. We do not *inherit* Adam's sin.

The concept of total hereditary depravity, or inherited sin, is contrary to the teaching of both Old Testament and New. Those who believe we are born sinners often go to Psalms 58:3 which says, "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies." In his comments on this verse E. M. Zerr has well said:

Advocates of "inherited sin" try to find their doctrine in this verse. When a statement is made that cannot be interpreted literally, some figurative or accommodative sense must be given to

it. We know that a newborn infant cannot speak at all, therefore it could not *speak lies*. The word *estranged* also proves that the writer was not using his language literally. This word means to turn aside or forsake the way. We know that an infant cannot perform anything of that nature. The verse, therefore, means that the tendency of human beings is to follow the fleshly desires, and that they manifest that tendency early in life. We all believe that doctrine, but it has no resemblance to that of the "inherited-sin" variety.

(*Bible Commentary*, Vol. 3, p. 52).

Furthermore, "inherited sin" is the opposite of what Jesus taught. He said, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:14). The concept of inherited sin is found in the commandments and doctrines of men but not in the Bible—Jesus said, "In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:9).

2. *Predestination and foreordination*. Those who subscribe to this doctrine teach that before the foundation of the world God predestinated, or foreordained, that some people would be saved, others lost, and that the number is so certain and definite that it cannot be altered. They also teach that there will be infants in hell. Why? Because they were among those foreordained to be lost. This also is contrary to the teaching of Jesus as just noted. The Bible does teach predestination but *not* that certain persons are to be lost and others saved. Paul said, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will" (Eph. 1:4-5).

There are some things that God predestinated or foreordained before the world began. The whole plan of salvation was a part of His eternal purpose. For example, it was a part of God's foreordained plan that the Jews, descendants of Abraham, should be His chosen people through whom Christ was to come into the world. It was His plan that the

Jews should be the first to accept the gospel. In speaking of the gospel Paul said, ". . . to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). That was the order in which the apostles preached. The first church consisted wholly of Jews. Gentiles did not have the gospel preached to them until Peter was sent to the household of Cornelius (Acts 10).

God knew when He formulated His plan that He would need qualified men to proclaim that plan to the world, hence His plan included twelve men whom He knew that Christ would choose for that purpose. He foreordained that the church should be established and that it should make known "the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:10-11). God knew that some would accept, others would reject the gospel (2 Thess. 2:13-14). But He did not predestinate some to be lost, others to be saved. Rather, He said, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jno. 3:16). "*Whosoever*" is all-inclusive; it leaves no one out. Peter said, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). These scriptures should forever lay to rest the idea that some are born to be lost, others saved.

3. *Limited atonement.* This is the third member of this theological quintet. Evidently, this member was conceived in order to explain why some would be born to be lost. "Limited atonement" infers that the blood of Christ was not sufficiently powerful to atone for the sins of all men. Those who conceived this idea overlooked this statement in the Hebrew letter: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9). This inspired author taught the opposite of "limited atonement." He knew that the blood of Christ was shed for "*every man.*" Truly, there is "power in the blood."

4. *Effectual calling*. This tenet had to be included, otherwise no one would have believed either of the first three tenets. Some people, either by nature or as a result of their up-bringing, are stubborn, self-willed, and rebellious. They are not interested in religion and could not care less about the salvation of their soul. If such rebellious persons were to be saved, some provisions must be made for it. There must be some power which they could not resist. Those who believe in "effectual calling" teach that God, in some mysterious, inexplicable way, will in due time appeal to them and they cannot resist the call. Because of this false concept, some morally upright and intellectually honest people never become Christians because they have never had any such mysterious experience. The truth is that if God actually thus calls some and passes others by, this makes God a *respector of persons*! But Peter said, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respector of persons" (Acts 10:34). Paul said the same thing.

Do you prefer the Word of God, or the word of man? Paul leaves no doubt about how sinners are called to become Christians. He said, "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he *called you* by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 2:13-14). In the Bible we read of no other method by which God has ever called anyone to become a Christian. That is why Christ commissioned the apostles to "go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). No one has ever been "called" to be a Christian other than by hearing, believing and obeying the gospel. It is the responsibility of the church to see that all have the opportunity to hear the gospel and thus receive the "call."

5. *Once in grace always in grace.* Anyone who reasons from a false premise inevitably comes to a false conclusion. If one accepts the premises of total hereditary depravity (inherited sin), predestination and foreordination (some are foreordained to be saved, others lost), limited atonement, and effectual calling, he is forced to accept the conclusion that if a person is once in grace he is always in grace.

Let us contrast these commandments and doctrines of men with what God has said on this subject. In Hebrews we read, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and put him to an open shame" (Heb. 6:4-6). Can any rational person deny that the persons here described were "once in grace"? Yet this inspired writer said they *can* "fall away." They *can* "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh." These verses do not teach that a Christian who has sinned and fallen from grace cannot repent and be restored to the grace of God. Rather it means that if one rejects Christ who is God's sacrifice for sin there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. Until the erring Christian acknowledges his wrong, confesses his sin and thus complies with God's plan of restoration, he remains a sinner. God will make no other sacrifice for sin. Christ will not die again. But He is willing to receive all who will return.

After the church was first established, some of the Jews who had obeyed the gospel insisted that all Christians must be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses. They had not yet learned to distinguish between the law and the gospel. Paul wrote the Galatian letter to counteract this doctrine of the Judaizing teachers. To them Paul said, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:4). Does this sound as if

those who were once in grace were always in grace? Paul said, "*ye are fallen from grace.*" In the Hebrew letter we read, "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Heb. 10:38-39). Notice that the author uses the words *draw back* twice. God says it is possible to *fall from grace*. It would have been much better if those theological quintuplets had never been born. According to the Bible they are illegitimate children. Please read 2 Peter 2:20-22.

When Philip the evangelist went to Samaria and preached the gospel, he found a man named Simon who practiced sorcery. But he heard, believed, and obeyed the gospel and thus became a Christian. Later Simon saw Peter and John lay their hands on certain Christians and impart to them spiritual gifts. He offered them money that he might gain the same power. Peter rebuked Simon, saying, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee" (Acts 8:21-22). In these verses we have set forth the second law of pardon. God's first law of pardon is: believe, repent of your sins, confess your faith in Christ, and be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins. This makes one a child of God. We are all human and, like Simon, sometimes sin and thus fall from grace. The second law of pardon is: "Repent and pray." The first law of pardon is for alien sinners; the second is for erring Christians. When we sin we fall from grace, but we can be restored to God's grace by following God's plan.

Evidence that Christians may sin abounds in the New Testament. In writing to Christians John said, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is

not in us" (1 Jno. 1:8-10). John continues, "My little children, these things I write unto you, that you sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 Jno. 2:1). Paul knew he could sin for he said, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Cor. 9:27). John rebuked some of the churches of Asia for their sin. To the church at Ephesus he wrote, "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent" (Rev. 2:5). Need more be said?

Ways Christians May Err

Christians may err either in behavior or in doctrine. Let us consider both.

1. Christians may err in their manner of life.

(a) *Love of the world.* To many people pleasure has become a god. Their heart is set on pleasure. They allow pleasure to come between them and God, hence it has become their idol. God condemned Israel for idolatrous worship. He will be no less severe on Christians. There are few things that hurt the church for which Christ died more than the love of pleasure on the part of many professed Christians. Solomon, the wisest monarch that ever sat upon the throne of Israel, became so obsessed with pleasure that he said, "I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity. I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it? I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life. I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me

vineyards: I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruits" (Eccl. 2:1-5). He mentions all the things he did in his quest for pleasure. He left nothing untried. He tried wine, women and song, but what was his conclusion? Hear him: "And, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun" (Eccl. 2:11).

If they are honest with themselves, this will be the conclusion of all who make pleasure their god and the major goal of their lives. They will feel within their hearts an emptiness, an inner longing that cries out for something which all the riches and pleasures of life cannot provide. That is why Jesus said to Satan when he tempted Him to turn stones into bread, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). Isaiah had the same great truth in mind when he said, "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea" (Isa. 48:18). John gave this advice: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 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. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (1 Jno. 2:15-17).

Israel of old lusted after the flesh pots of Egypt. They said, "We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: but now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes" (Num. 11:5-6). Some professed Christians get tired of the heavenly manna, the Word of God, and long for and return to the dance, the bar, and the card table. They would do well to note what happened to Israel. Concerning Israel we read: "But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with

them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it" (Heb. 3:17-4:1). Jesus warned, "Remember Lot's wife" (Lk. 17:32). You may recall that after the angel delivered her from the wicked city of Sodom she violated the angel's instructions, looked back, and was turned into a pillar of salt.

(b) *Love of popularity*. In order to succeed in our undertakings in life we need a reasonable amount of ego. We must have enough self-confidence to think we can succeed or we are likely to fail. However, we must exercise care and moderation or our ego may work against us. Not too many people care much about an ego-centric person. Some feel that popularity is the major goal to be attained in life. They will do most anything or associate with anybody if it will contribute to their popularity. This is contrary to God's concept of success. The Bible says nothing about being successful but it says much about being faithful. So far as God is concerned, those who make popularity their goal are treading on dangerous ground. The following statement is made about some Jews who heard Jesus teach: "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (Jno. 12:42-43). The trouble with these rulers was that they would rather be popular with men than to be right with God. Many today have the same problem. A high school principal who had signed a contract to become principal of a high school in a medium-sized city asked his professor in college for some suggestions that might contribute to his success. The professor suggested that the first thing to do was to become acquainted with the most influential people of the city; next, to seek out the church attended

by the most influential people, and then to "join" that church. The principal was a Christian and knew that one can't "join" the Lord's church, but that when one obeys the gospel the Lord adds him to His church. The professor's advice reflects the thinking of many today.

Truth has never been popular. Jesus was not popular but for a very short time. As long as He was feeding the people and healing the sick, He had a great following. But when He began to teach them the truth about their souls and what they must do to serve God acceptably, they began to fall away. He rightly accused them of following Him for the loaves and fishes rather than for the "living bread" so essential to their soul's eternal interest. The church for which Christ died has never been very popular and it never will be. Most people prefer the "commandments and doctrines of men" more than the eternal truths as revealed in God's Word. God warned Israel of this danger, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment" (Ex. 23:2). For our soul's sake it is better to be in the minority and be right than to be in the majority and be wrong. Beware, lest you err at this point.

(c) *Love of money.* The first of the Ten Commandments says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Ex. 20:3). For some, pleasure and popularity are god; for others, money. Millions are willing to sacrifice their honor, honesty, sense of fair play, dignity, virtue, or even the hope of their soul in order to get the god of money to smile upon them. We are not living under the Ten Commandments today but all of the ten, except the fourth which says, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy, " have been incorporated in the New Covenant under which we live. Aware of this danger to Christians Paul said, "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves

through with many sorrows" (1 Tim. 6:9-10). Notice, it is not money but the *love* of money which is the root of all evil. We need a reasonable amount of money but we endanger our soul when we make money our god.

A young man once asked Jesus what good thing he might do that he might have eternal life. Jesus answered, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (Matt. 19:21-24). This raises the question: when is a man rich in the sight of God? Paul gives us some help. He instructed Timothy to "charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (1 Tim. 6:17). It is not the amount of money we have but our attitude toward money that makes us rich in God's sight. We must not "trust in uncertain riches but in the living God." Money may be used to the glory of God and to the good of mankind. Our attitude toward it determines the use we make of it.

A young man once asked Jesus to request his brother to divide the inheritance with him. There is no reason to believe that this young man was not honest and perhaps had been cheated by his brother. But Jesus could see the weakness of this young man. He put His finger on the weak spot when He said, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth" (Lk. 12:15). Jesus then gave the well-known parable of the rich man. In this parable Jesus pictures a successful young farmer whose ground had brought forth so abundantly that he had a problem. His old barns were full and he

did not know what to do with the year's harvest. He decided to tear down his old barns, build bigger, and there to bestow ALL his goods. Then he said, "I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" (Lk. 12:19-20).

This man made five big mistakes. He left God out of his life; he left man out of his life; he made himself the center of everything; he thought he could feed his soul on material things; and he counted on time that was not his. Many are making these same mistakes today. Let us "take heed and beware of covetousness." Paul said, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness which is idolatry" (Col. 3:5). Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

(d) *Lack of knowledge.* It is sometimes said that "knowledge is power." Though this is not necessarily true, knowledge does contribute to success in any profession. Today more people are enrolled in schools of higher education than ever before. In these difficult days we have learned the more workable knowledge we have in our chosen field the greater are our chances of success. Too often professed Christians think that knowledge of God and His Word are not necessary in living an acceptable life. They are willing to burn midnight oil in order to assure success in their vocation, but are willing to remain in comparative ignorance of their Christian profession. They fail to distinguish the difference between time and eternity. They are more concerned with the here and now than they are with hereafter.

Zeal and knowledge should work as a team. We must have both in order to serve God acceptably. Either zeal without knowledge or knowledge without zeal is dangerous. Paul had this danger in mind when he said, "Brethren, my heart's

desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:1-3). One may have a new car, in perfect condition, and filled with gas; but if a small child starts the motor, puts the car in gear, and steps on the accelerator, trouble is at hand. Without a driver in the seat a car can become a weapon. When a professed Christian has zeal without a knowledge of God's Word, he is liable to wreck his own soul and the souls of others. On the other hand, it matters not how much knowledge one may have, if he has no zeal he will go nowhere. Regardless of quantity or quality of gas, if the transmission fails to function the car will not move. Knowledge and zeal are a team. Unless they pull together our efforts will be futile. We err if we lack either knowledge or zeal.

In Hebrews we read, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat" (Heb. 5:12). We are all babes when we first obey the gospel, but we must not remain babes all our lives. Paul said, "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17). Peter said, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18). The less knowledge we have the more likely we are to err.

2. *We may err in doctrine.* The word *doctrine* means teaching. The doctrine or teaching to which we refer is the teaching of Christ, as revealed in the Word. To Timothy Paul said, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. 4:16). Perhaps there are as many people who err in the doctrine as there are who err in their manner of life. Either way Satan accomplishes his purpose.

Soundness in the doctrine and manner of life are equally important. If we err in either, we can neither save ourselves nor others. Many good people think of the doctrine as that which is set forth in their creed, confession of faith, prayer book, or catechism. The doctrine to which Paul refers is the teaching which is revealed by the Holy Spirit and contained in the Bible. Creeds, prayer books and confessions of faith did not come into existence until some hundreds of years after the Bible was written; consequently, all of them are unknown to the Bible, displeasing to God, and condemned by His Word. They belong in the category of "commandments and doctrines of men" and Jesus said of the Pharisees, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:9).

These false doctrines were born of the apostasy from the original church and have been nourished by the Protestant Reformation. They are deceiving many and causing them unknowingly to live in error. In the Bible we read of *Christ's doctrine* (Matt. 7:28), "*sound doctrine*" (Tit. 1:9; 2:1), "*doctrines of men*" (Matt. 15:9), and "*doctrines of devils*" (1 Tim. 4:1). You will notice, if you read with care, that Christ's doctrine, good doctrine, sound doctrine is always singular in number. God only has one doctrine and it is both good and sound.

The doctrines of men and doctrines of devils are many and diverse. None of them is authorized by or pleasing to God. They can only lead man to destruction. We know this to be true because John said, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God: He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son" (2 Jno. 9). The word *transgress* means to step over a prescribed limit. One may put a sheep in a pasture circumscribed by a fence. If the sheep goes under, over or through the fence there is nothing to stop him. He can wander so far away that he is either killed or forever lost. Christians are circumscribed by the doctrine of Christ. Once they transgress there is nothing to stop them unless the Good

Shepherd or one of His true followers goes after them and brings them back to the fold.

God knew the proneness of man to err, the persistence of Satan, and the danger of false teachers and false prophets; therefore He has given much warning to His disciples. Jesus said, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt. 7:15). To the elders of the church at Ephesus Paul said, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:28-30). Peter gave this warning: "But there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of" (2 Pet. 2:1-2). If we should err in doctrine we cannot say that we have not been warned, neither can we say that God's doctrine has not been made plain.

(a) *Prejudice may cause us to err.* The Jews rejected Christ because of prejudice. Prejudice means to prejudge, or to make up one's mind before hearing all the evidence. Of the Jews Jesus said, "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Matt. 13:15). The Jews misinterpreted the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the Messiah that was to come. They had always been accustomed to an earthly king, hence they thought that the promised Messiah was to establish an earthly kingdom, sit on the earthly

throne of David, hold an earthly scepter, and wear an earthly crown. His lowly birth and the humble circumstances under which He was reared did not comport with their conception of what the Messiah was to be like. When they beheld His spotless life, heard His masterful teaching, and became aware of His meek and humble spirit, they did not think that He looked, talked, or acted like the Messiah for which they had so long been looking. They thought He would be a great general, riding a white horse, leading armies into battle, and bringing other nations under subjection to the Jews.

They had failed to read the prophets carefully. God had not promised that kind of a Messiah. Seven hundred years before Christ was born, Isaiah described Him in these words: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6). God also knew that the Jews would reject the promised Messiah. Isaiah said, "And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel . . ." (Isa. 8:14). In speaking of Jesus John said, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (Jno.

Having misread and misunderstood the prophets, the Jews relied on their own distorted conceptions. Blinded to the truth by prejudice and looking upon Christ as an impostor, they arrested, tried, condemned, and crucified Him. Unfortunately, the Jews were not the only people whose vision has been impaired by lack of knowledge, preconceived ideas, or prejudice. Millions today are suffering from *spiritual* nearsightedness, farsightedness, glaucoma, or cataracts! They have been taught wrong. One cannot be taught wrong and believe right.

When our vision becomes impaired, we select the best eye specialist we can find, accept his diagnosis, and if necessary submit to drastic surgery in order to preserve our cherished

eyesight. Impaired spiritual vision is much more serious because it involves our eternal destiny. If wise, we will consult the Great Physician, for He alone can diagnose our disease and prescribe an effective remedy. Quack doctors often make a faulty diagnosis, prescribe the wrong remedy, and our vision is made worse rather than better. We may need surgery but more often corrective glasses are sufficient. No doubt you have observed that the color of the lens in sunglasses affects the appearance of the landscape. Religious concepts are colored by the doctrine one has been taught. Only clear lens in our glasses will make the landscape look normal. Only the truth which is prescribed by the Great Physician can correct our spiritual vision. He said, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jno. 8:31-32). If we are too unconcerned to consult the Great Physician or too proud or too prejudiced to follow His prescription, we are ultimately doomed to spiritual blindness. We should be more concerned with our soul than we are with our body. The body will live but a few years; the soul will live somewhere forever. Let us lay aside all prejudice and with an open and unbiased mind search for the truth.

(b) *Lack of love for truth may come us to err.* In describing the great apostasy which resulted in the apostate church and brought on the sinful division that now exists in the realm of religion, Paul said, "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2:8-12). Both secular and church history prove

that Paul's prediction was one hundred per cent accurate. Why did people leave the truth? Because they did not have the proper love and respect for the truth revealed in God's Word. As a result they corrupted the doctrine, the organization, and the practice of the New Testament church. Tragically, millions today prefer the commandments and doctrines of men to God's revealed truth. Jesus said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (Jno. 12:48). We should know the truth, believe the truth, obey the truth, and love and respect the truth.

3. *We may neglect our duty.* This is a very common error along with misbehavior and accepting false doctrine. Our service to God should not be prompted wholly from a sense of duty but from a deep-felt love for God, an appreciation for what He has done and is doing for us. We should constantly strive to bring a little more than is required in token of our love. Those who serve God wholly from a sense of duty are liable to try to get by with just as little service as possible. Those who serve God from a motive of love will never feel they have done enough. Love rules out neglect. Jesus said, "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do" (Lk. 17:10). No person will live long enough or do enough to earn salvation. Eternal life is a gift which we cannot earn. Paul said, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

However, we must not fail to read the fine print in the contract. Eternal life is a *gift*, but the gift is *conditional*! God will bestow the gift if we comply with the conditions. Many professed Christians err due to neglect of plainly specified duties. In Hebrews we read, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that

heard him" (Heb. 2:3). James said, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (Jas. 4:17). The sin of omission is one of the most often committed sins. In picturing the Judgment Jesus said, "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not" (Matt. 25:41-43).

It may not be the things we do but the things we neglect that will cause the Judge to say, "Depart!" One of the most oft-neglected duties of many otherwise good people is that of assembling with the saints regularly on the first day of the week to worship God. Listen to God's admonition: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries" (Heb. 10:25-27). Fervent love impels the fully committed Christian to do all and, if possible, more than God has commanded. The pressure of duty sounds a woe in the ears of him who falters. Paul said, "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" (1 Cor. 9:16). Let us not err through neglect.

Conclusion

Every Christian's goal should be to magnify Christ whether it be by life or by death and to adorn the doctrine of God in all things. If a Christian errs in his manner of life due to love of the world, love of popularity, love of money, or lack of knowledge; or if he errs in doctrine due to prejudice, from

lack of love for or knowledge of the truth, or from neglect of known duty, he has failed or is failing to do what God has required of one of His children. Paul said, "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Rom. 8:17). Parents can and sometimes do disinherit their children. God is a good, kind, and loving Father, but He will disinherit the unfaithful and disobedient children. If we have faithfully done His will, at the Judgment He will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." If we have been unfaithful, having erred in manner of life, or in doctrine, and have refused or neglected to repent and pray God for forgiveness, at the Judgment He will say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

10 *What Does the Lord Require of Christians?*

Perhaps there are few words in the English language that are more improperly used than the word *Christian*. Frequently it is used to describe a person who is of unimpeachable moral character. In Acts 10:2, Cornelius is described as, "A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway." It would be difficult to find a man more unimpeachable morally. Yet the Lord told Cornelius to send for Peter, saying, "He shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do." One can be as good morally as any Christian yet not be a Christian! There are certain other well-defined steps to be taken before anyone can scripturally qualify as a Christian. The word *Christian* is used but three times in the New Testament, always as a noun, never as an adjective.

A Christian may be thought of as one who in faith is a believer, in knowledge is a disciple, in character is a saint, in influence is a light, in conflict is a soldier, in progress is a pilgrim, in relationship is a child, in work is a steward, and in expectation is an heir. He has believed in God, Christ, and His Word, has genuinely repented of his sins, has confessed his faith, and has been buried with Christ in baptism. He has been regenerated, having been begotten by the Spirit through the Word and born of water, thus becoming a new

creature, a partaker of the divine nature. He has become a child of God, hence an heir. This does not mean that he is perfect and will never again sin, for he is still human and it is human to err. But John said, in writing to Christians, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 Jno. 2:1). If he sincerely repents and prays, he can be forgiven and thus not be cast off from the grace of God. No life is more rewarding.

Notice, please, some qualities of this regenerated life.

(a) *It is a more abundant life.* Jesus said, ". . . I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (Jno. 10:10). All normal people love life and want to live as long as they can. The true Christian enjoys an abundant life here and will enjoy a more abundant life hereafter. The sinner who lives wholly for pleasure may find pleasure but he will never find satiety. The day will come when pleasures no longer suffice. The growing Christian will find fulness of life from day to day and pleasures forevermore. John said, "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 Jno. 5:11-12).

(b) *The regenerated life is one of happiness.* Few people like to be sad. God wants all people to be happy; consequently, He has given us an infallible formula for happiness. Men have devised various theories of happiness but Christ has given us the law of happiness. In His great sermon on the mount, He sets forth this law in what we call the "Beatitudes." Eight times He uses the word *blessed* which means happy. He said that the poor in spirit, they that mourn, the meek, they which hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and they which are persecuted for righteousness sake are "happy" (Matt. 5:3-10). Paul said, "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice" (Phil. 4:4). Only Christians have the true ground of rejoicing. When the apostles returned from their

first commission they were overjoyed with their great success. Jesus said to them, " . . . Rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." Only Christians have the honor of having their names written in heaven.

(c) *The Christian's life is challenging.* Man is so constituted psychologically that a challenge brings forth his greatest effort. There are few things which arouse enthusiasm more than a spirited contest. The stronger the opposition, the greater will be the enthusiasm, the appeal to effort, and the desire for victory. There is a tendency on the part of man to respect the conqueror, either physically, mentally, morally, or spiritually. The Christian's life poses the greatest challenge that was ever placed before man. Paul often referred to it as a contest. Satan offers the strongest possible opposition. He is a great competitor yet Paul says, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37). Christianity offers us a purpose to live for, a cause to fight for, and a goal to strive for. No one can be truly happy without something worth living for. Most of us have enough to live "on" but too few have enough to live "for." Christianity fulfils that need.

(d) *The faithful life is completely surrendered.* Most people dislike the word *surrender* for it makes us think of defeat. No one enjoys defeat if he is fighting in a worthy cause. No worthy cause can be won by serving the devil. The only way to conquer the devil is to surrender to Christ. Paul's greatest victory was when he whole-heartedly surrendered to Christ. He said, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matt. 16:24). This is the real condition of discipleship. Denial of self means the emptying of self, the crucifixion of self—not the surrender of self to a system of cold, hard commandments alone but to a living divine per-

sonality who energizes the commands by His presence. Obedience will spring from the surrender of self to Him. The surrender is unconditional with nothing held back. Whether or not we make the surrender is a matter of choice, but once this choice has been made the will of Christ becomes supreme.

(e) *The new life in Christ is a serving life.* In giving an account of his call to become a prophet (The Lord does not call preachers in that manner today), Isaiah said, "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me" (Isa. 6:8). Christians sometimes sing the song, "Here Am I, Send Me, " and then when there is something they are asked to do they say, "I am busy, let George do it." Jesus set the example, for He "went about doing good." He said, "I came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." In speaking of Christ, Paul said, "Whose I am and whom I serve." We serve God by serving others. (See Matt. 25:34-40). When Mary who loved Jesus dearly broke a box of precious ointment and poured it on Jesus' head, she was criticized, but Jesus said, "Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me . . . She hath done what she could . . ." (Mk. 14:6-8). This is the way to happiness in God's service. Paul said, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10). Someone has said, "If you want to take a short cut to misery, sit down, fold your hands and say, 'Here am I, serve me. '"

(f) *The regenerated life is serene.* The word *serene* means calmness, composure, peace, tranquility. These desirable qualities are characteristic of the Christian's life. This world which is torn by dissension, plagued with ever-increasing crime, chaotic with moral degradation, and blinded by greed and selfishness seems to be approaching anarchy where "every man does that which is right in his own eyes." We are desperately in need of a generous injection of those qualities

expressed by the word *serenity*. What the world needs is more genuine, totally committed Christians. Only the Great Physician can bring the tranquility the world so desperately needs. In the proportion that peace permeates the hearts of men it will prevail in nations and in the world. Paul said, "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:7).

In their quest for peace of mind, millions today are turning to highly questionable methods in order to achieve that which hitherto has been so elusive to them. In ever increasing numbers people are turning to Transcendental Meditation. There is little doubt that this may be psychologically helpful. The same technique applied to the Word of God would produce the same but better effect. In speaking of the truly happy man David said, "But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night" (Psa. 1:2). Webster says that the word *transcendental* means vague, unknown, imaginary, fantastic, speculative. None of these terminologies can be applied to the Word of God. While this practice may be helpful mentally and physically, it can be disastrous spiritually because it takes the place of God in the soul by ruling out all need of religion. It deals wholly with time and takes no thought of eternity. In this case it may help the body and mind but destroy the soul.

Due to an innate desire to know more about self and the future, millions are wasting their time and energy in the study of astrology. Webster defines *astrology* as "the practice and system of predicting events by the position and occult influence on human affairs of the sun, moon, and planets." The whole system smacks of demonology, is unsubstantiated by the Scriptures, is contrary to the knowledge of the most learned psychologists, and is a waste of time. The most revealing pictures of one's self and the most dependable revelation of the future are found in God's Word.

No one was more persecuted yet no one had greater peace of mind than did the apostle Paul. While enroute to

Jerusalem though repeatedly warned not to go, he said, "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24). While in prison at Rome awaiting execution for having preached the truth and knowing full well that the time was at hand, he said, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:6-8). Under the same circumstances could you face death with the same peace and composure?

(g) *Finally, we may say that the Christian's life is a fruitful life.* Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that heareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit" (Jno. 15:1-2). Isaiah put this same thought beautifully when he said to Israel, "Now I will sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes" (Isa. 5:1-2). We must not forget that temporal Israel was a type of spiritual Israel. God has every right to expect fruit from both. Consider some timely points in this connection.

1. *The grounds of God's expectation of fruit from temporal Israel.* (a) *He had planted His vineyard with the choicest vine.* They were descendants of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David. Truly, they were thoroughbreds. (b) *They were planted in a fruitful hill.* God gave to the Jews a fruitful land as their home.

In describing it Moses said, "For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey" (Deut. 8:7-8). (c) *God fenced His vineyard*. The Law of Moses served as a fence of moral protection. Paul said, ". . . Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Rom. 7:7). Again he said, "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:24). Moses said, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them" (Deut. 33:27). (d) *There was special care and attention bestowed upon Israel*. He "gathered out the stones . . . built a tower . . . and made a winepress therein." God sent Joshua and his armies into Canaan to drive out the enemies but He also went with them and assured them victory. With God's help they finally conquered the promised land and dwelt therein. Certainly God had a right to expect fruit.

2. *The nature of His expectation*. "He looked for grapes." He looked for the grapes of love, appreciation, obedience, holiness, and devotion.

3. *The extent of God's expectation from His vineyard*. He expected the fruit to be seasonable, as to time; good in quality; proportionate in quantity; increasing in amount; and enduring in nature.

God has done infinitely more for spiritual Israel, hence His expectations are greater. We would do well to consider:

1. *The ground of His expectation*. Certainly He planted His spiritual vineyard, the church, with the choicest vine. In speaking of Christians Peter said, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light"

(1 Pet. 2:9). Again, "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Pet. 1:3-4). God paid a great price for the plants in His spiritual vineyard. He gave the blood of His only Son to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. He has given us Christ who is described as "the rose of Sharon, the lily of the valley, the bright and morning star; the Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." We have His Word as a lamp unto our feet, and a light to our path.

2. *The nature of His expectation. "He looked for grapes."* Naturally God expects spiritual fruit from a spiritual vineyard. He expects the fruits of holiness. "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." He expects the fruits of the Spirit, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." God expects benevolence of His children. Paul said, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10). James said, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (Jas. 1:27). Furthermore He expects good works. "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. 1:10).

It is not uncommon for farmers to be disappointed in their harvest. This may be due to a bad season. There may be too much or not enough rain; there may be a late spring or an early fall. Or it could be due to a lack of diligence on the part

of the farmer. God was sorely disappointed with temporal Israel, not because of a lack of good soil, good plants, or care and attention bestowed on His part, but rather to personal failure on the part of Israel. When God looked for grapes, the vineyard "brought forth wild grapes." Many times God is disappointed with spiritual Israel, for instead of good grapes the vineyard produces the wild grapes of strife, division, contention, malice, guile, hypocrisy, envy, jealousy, covetousness, and all kinds of unrighteousness.

We should not overlook what God did with Israel because of the disappointing harvest. He said, "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: and I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it" (Isa. 5:3-6). Everything that God here threatened came to pass. Because Israel forsook God and served idols, refused to bring tithes, failed to observe the sabbatic year, and became unbearably rebellious, God suffered all Israel to go into captivity where they suffered for years and from which many of them never returned. If God dealt thus with temporal Israel, how do you suppose He will deal with spiritual Israel, upon whom He has bestowed so much greater care?

We dare not make the mistake of underestimating the wrath of God. Paul said, "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God . . ." (Rom. 11:22). God is wholly good, but He can be severe. He is severe because He is good. The Old Testament places much emphasis on the severity of God, whereas the New Testament majors on His goodness and

love. God's law has changed but His principles remain the same. He has always rewarded righteousness and punished iniquity and He always will.

Christians Must Be Separate From the World

Paul said, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2 Cor. 6:17). One will neither recommend himself nor his religion to men of the world by inconsistently trying to identify himself with them. The world respects an out-and-out Christian but neither God nor the world respects an inconsistent one. Jesus said, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24). But how can a person live in this world and yet be separate from the world? It is possible for a ship to be in water (that is where it is supposed to be), but it is disastrous if water enters the ship. It is possible to be in the world yet not be of the world.

1. *Physically, Christians are made up of the world.* Both saints and sinners were created from the dust of the ground. God said to Adam. "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." All physical bodies are composed of the same elements and possess about the same amount of chemicals. Only death can separate man physically from the earth. We enter the world without our consent and must leave it against our will.

2. *Socially, we must mix with the masses.* We cannot always choose our neighbors or the people with whom we work. We must mix and mingle with people of all colors, faiths, and kinds. In the parable of the tares Jesus tells of a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while men slept an enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat. When his servants saw the tares, they asked if they should pull up the tares. The master said, "Let both grow together until the harvest: and in

the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn" (Matt. 13:30). We should not make the mistake of thinking that Jesus is here teaching that sinners are to be tolerated in the church. In explaining the parable Jesus said, "The field is the world." The wheat represents Christians; the tares represent sinners. Socially, Christians must mingle with sinners but known sinners are not to be tolerated in the church. Paul said, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (2 Thess. 3:6).

3. *The world is the Christian's sphere of influence.* Knowing the powerful influence of Satan and the incessant dangers to which Christians are exposed in the world, Peter warned, "Be sober, be vigilant: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). James said, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (Jas. 4:7). Paul said, ". . . We are more than conquerors through him that loved us." Paul advised, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (Rom. 6:12). Obedience to the gospel does not annihilate Satan but it does bring him into subjection. Due to his subtlety he may surprise us. But with the Lord's help we can resist him; we need not let him "reign" in our lives. Physicians know that some shots will not make us immune to a disease but will greatly strengthen our resistance. Christians may obtain regular injections of divine serum through prayer and study of God's Word.

God does not want Christians to withdraw from the world into some convent or monastery where they will be totally out of contact with the world. When a great prophet hit an all-time low he went and hid himself in a cave. The Lord appeared to him and said, "What doest thou here, Elijah?"

Following Elijah's excuse the Lord said, "Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord" (1 Kgs. 19:9, 11). The Lord wants His people to go out into the wicked world and do battle for Him yet keep themselves free from the soul-destroying sin that has turned the world into a nauseating moral cesspool.

In describing the Christian's relation to and proper function in the world, Jesus said, "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men" (Matt. 5:13). There are few things more plentiful in the world than salt yet spiritually speaking there is an acute salt shortage. Salt is a very necessary and useful commodity. Most of us desire it in our food because it makes our food more palatable. Christians are like salt to the world because they make it a more pleasant habitation. Who would want to live in this world if the influence of godly people were completely removed? Salt is also useful as a preservative. Farmers may preserve their meat by rubbing salt into it yet a barrel of good meat and a barrel of good salt may be side by side and the meat rot. There must be proper *contact* between the two. This world today has become a rotting, stinking mass because of sin. There is a crying need for more Christian influence. Salt is also a good germicide. A little salt in warm water makes about as good a gargle as one can buy. Salt kills germs.

Furthermore, Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world . . ." (Matt. 5:14). Light, like salt, kills germs but it is more important than salt because light gives life. The sun is the source of all light upon earth. Without that light there could be no life. Our atmosphere is the medium through which the proper amount of light reaches the earth to produce life. Christ is the source of all spiritual light. Without that light there would be no spiritual life. The Bible is the medium through which that light shines into our lives. The moon

reflects the light of the sun; Christians must reflect the light of Christ. Truly the world is the Christian's sphere of influence.

4. *Spiritually, Christians must be separate from the world.* By faith the sinner is crucified to the world; by repentance he forsakes the world; by baptism he is delivered from the world; and by sanctification he is raised above the world. Isaiah said, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him: and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:7). When the Christian participates in worldliness his light ceases to shine; the salt has lost its savor and it is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out. Christians must abstain from all forms of evil. They cannot avoid being in the world but they must keep themselves spiritually separate from the world.

Christians Must Be Different

The word *Christian* literally means "a follower of Christ." The word is used but three times in the Bible; however, the infrequency of its use does not mitigate the importance of the manner of life which the word connotes. You can pay no one a higher compliment than to speak of him as a Christian, if he is a Christian in the New Testament sense of the word. To be a genuine Christian is to attain the ultimate in character. A Christian has been born again, partakes of the divine nature, and has become a new creature. This change is made possible only by obedience to the gospel of Christ. Before his conversion the apostle Paul was a rabid Pharisee who looked upon Christ as an impostor and considered the church for which Christ died as a disgrace to any self-respecting Jew. Consequently, before his conversion he assisted in stoning Christians to death. Just prior to his conversion he was enroute to Damascus armed with letters of authority from the high priest authorizing him to arrest Christians and put

them in prison. Sometimes we sing, "What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought since Jesus came into my heart." Paul expressed the great change in his life in these words, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). We would do well to consider some of the ways in which Christians are different.

1. *Christians are different from the world.* By the world we mean the world of evil as opposed to the church. Christians have been translated out of the world. God "hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1:13). When Enoch was translated he was taken directly from earth to heaven. Christians have just been translated out of the sinfulness that permeates society into the purified atmosphere of the church which Christ has cleansed with His blood. It is like the difference between the heavy smog of an industrial city and the rarefied atmosphere of the mountain top. Christians have been delivered from the guilt of sin. Genuine obedience to the gospel has made it possible for God to pardon their sins. Like the eunuch, they can go on their way rejoicing, facing all men with a clear conscience and an open countenance. Christians have also been delivered from the control of Satan, the most tyrannical master the world has known. In speaking to Christians Paul said, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies." God knows that Christians do sometimes sin. Satan is reluctant to relinquish that which he has lost and never relents in his ceaseless efforts to regain what he has lost when a sinner accepts Christ. But with Christ as our Master we can be "more than conquerors through him that loved us." Paul said, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine

which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom 6:16-18).

Christians are different from the world not only because they have been delivered from it and translated out of it but also because they have been transformed. Paul very aptly expressed another requirement which God makes of all Christians in these words: "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:2). A true Christian is a nonconformist. He refuses to condone the wickedness of the world in which he must live. Rather, he follows the advice of Solomon who said, "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away" (Prov. 4:14-15). To the contrary, Paul says we must "be transformed by the renewing of our mind." Some caterpillars, among the most repulsive of insects, build about themselves a cocoon from which they emerge later as a beautiful, multi-colored butterfly. This is truly a transformation. A sinner is like the caterpillar. A Christian is like the butterfly—*transformed!* God requires that they be different.

2. *Christians are different from good, moral men.* One may be good morally yet not be a Christian. A Christian must be good morally but he must be more than that. Cornelius was as good a man morally as one could hope to find in this world yet the Lord instructed him to send for Peter, who would tell him what he "ought to do." Cornelius did what Peter told him and thus became a Christian. In his prayer for the Ephesians Paul gave some idea of what God requires of Christians. He said, "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and

length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Eph. 3:16-19).

The good, moral man will enhance any community in which he lives yet his life is displeasing to God because he has not obeyed God's will. He has not come to grips with the problem of sin which could be dealt with only on the cross. Christ gave His life as a ransom for all, but only those who accept the Christ in compliance with His will can become recipients of the ransom. He lacks the motivating power of the indwelling Spirit and the indwelling Christ. He lacks faith to propel, hope to sustain, and love to induce him to become usefully employed in God's service. No one, however good, can lift himself by his own bootstraps. Jesus said, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (Matt. 12:30). To be saved from sin the good, moral man must renounce his allegiance to Satan and declare his allegiance to Christ. Morality never did or can save anybody. All must obey the gospel of Christ to be saved.

3. *Christians are different from mere church members.* All Christians are church members but not all church members are Christians in the Biblical sense of that word. Some people have the mistaken idea that all they need do to be saved is to be baptized. If preceded by genuine, sincere faith, repentance, and confession, baptism brings one into Christ where alone salvation is found. Those important steps deal only with past sin but the future requires more. A college education may be desirable and helpful in life but it will not guarantee an adequate living unless the knowledge is diligently applied in one's chosen vocation. Paul told the Philippians to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." He urged the Corinthians to "be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." Genuine Christianity requires devotion, consecration, faithfulness, and total

commitment. Jesus said, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Lk. 13:24).

4. *Christians are required to be different in many respects.* While they must be different *from* the world, the good, moral man, and the mere church member, they are required to be different in other ways also.

(a) *The objects of a Christian's love are different.* Someone has said, "The things that we love are the things that we want; the things that we want are the things that we go after; the things that we go after are the things that we get; and the things that we get are the things that we have to give to our fellowman." It has been said that "love makes the world go around." Certainly the world needs more love and less hate. Unfortunately, it seems that but few people have much conception of what true love is. The majority have the idea that love has to do only with sex. When God created man He gave him intellect, sensibilities, and a will. Psychologists divide the sensibilities into emotions, affections, desires, and sentiments. The affections consist of such feelings as love, hate, gratitude, friendship, jealousy, sympathy, anger, and pity. Love is one of the most impelling motives known to man. In the New Testament the Greek word *agapao* is used to express God's love for His Son, for the human race generally, to such as believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and to convey His will to His children concerning their attitude toward one another. It is known for the actions it prompts and it seeks opportunity to do good unto all men. Those ideas are parts of W. E. Vine's definition of *agapao*. The other word for love is *phileo*. According to Vine it represents tender affection and has to do with man's love for others of his race and kind.

No one of the apostles was characterized by greater love than John. None of the others wrote as much about love as did John. He knew that it could be dangerous to the Christian if directed to the wrong object; hence he said, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 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. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 Jno. 2:15-17). We are living today in a pleasure-mad world. Pleasure has become a goddess to which even some professed Christians will offer time, money, morals or virtue to get this goddess to smile upon them. Satan uses every weapon in his well-supplied arsenal to persuade Christians to yield to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, or the pride of life.

Paul said, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:1-2). Jesus urged His disciples to lay up treasures not upon earth but in heaven, for He said, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:21). In contrasting His law with that of Moses He said, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matt. 5:43-44). Paul said, "Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head" (Rom. 12:20).

Christians should also love God's house. David said, "For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Psa. 84:10). "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord" (Psa. 122:1). How different from some who have obeyed the gospel. In Hebrews we read, "Let brotherly love continue." Paul said, "But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another" (1 Thess. 4:9). Christians are known for what they hate as well as for what they love. Paul said, "Let love be without dissimu-

lation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" (Rom. 12:9). God will not tolerate hypocrisy. We should hate, detest, abominate all evil. One cannot look at a picture of the cross on which Christ died without seeing God's hatred for sin and His love for the sinner unless his eyes have been blinded by Satan.

(b) *Christians are different in their thinking about God and His Son.* Atheists think there is no God. Pantheists think that God is everywhere, that God is not a person, but that God exists in every material object. Polytheists think that there are many gods that rule the universe. In the recent past some were boldly declaring that God is dead. The Bible teaches and Christians believe that there is one God who created all things and that in Him we live, move, and have our being. We truly believe what we often sing: "Our God, He is alive; in Him we live, and we survive."

Furthermore, Christians are different in what they think about Christ. Many who fill pulpits in our land today think that Christ was just another great man who, like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, was ahead of his day in his thinking. Christians believe that Christ was the Word made flesh, or God manifest in the flesh. They believe that He was begotten by the Spirit of God, was born of a virgin, grew up in poverty, was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River, became the greatest teacher the world has known, died on Calvary, was in the grave three days and nights, arose, ascended to heaven where He now reigns over His kingdom, that He will one day raise both wicked and righteous from the grave, and that all will stand before Him in the Judgment to give an account for the deeds they have done during their lives upon earth.

What Christians really think about Christ was well expressed by an unknown author in the following:

Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village. He worked in a carpenter's shop until He was thirty and then for three years was

an itinerate (sic) preacher. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never owned a home. He never had a family. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place He was born. He never did one of the things which accompany greatness. He had no credentials but himself. While a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against Him. His friends ran away. One of them denied Him. He was turned over to his enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed upon a cross between two thieves. His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth while He was dying, and that was His coat. When He was dead He was taken down and laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen wide centuries have come and gone and today He is the centerpiece of the column of progress. I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that ever were built, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as has this One Solitary Life.

(Attributed to Dr. Philip Schaff)

(c) *Christians think differently about the Bible.* Many people today think of the Bible only as a masterpiece in literature. They consider it valuable historically, uplifting morally, and broadening intellectually; yet they consider it merely the work of fallible men, ahead of their time in their thinking but not inerrantly inspired. Christians believe that the Bible was written by men chosen and inspired of God who revealed to them through instrumentality of the Holy Spirit the origin, mission, and destiny of all mankind. Christians believe that no man or group of men could have written a book which so adequately explains man's relation to God and man's relation to his fellows. No other book contains the profound thought and much-needed knowledge that the Bible contains. No other book provides such an abundance of wholesome food for the soul. Paul gave the undeniable answer to the source of this great Book when he said, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear

heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:9-10). Again he said, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Peter put it this way: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:21). All true Christians must and do believe these things.

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(d) *Christians think differently about the church.* Millions today have an unscriptural concept of the church. They think of it as just another welfare organization designed to help care for the physical needs of the unfortunate or as an outlet for those who are unable to find something else that will meet their needs socially.

True Christians know that the church was a part of God's eternal purpose, that it was planned by the divine Architect, originated in the divine mind, was built by divine guidance on a divine foundation, has a divine Head, is composed of material cleansed by a divine process, and has a divine mission. We say they *know* this because the evidence is so overwhelming that the conclusion is undeniable. It was prefigured, foreshadowed, and typified in the Old Testament, and is the fulfillment of the many promises and prophecies found in that part of God's Word. Christians believe that the church was purchased with the blood of Christ and is composed only of those who are old enough to weigh evidence and therefore mature enough to intelligently believe, sincerely repent of their sins, whole-heartedly confess their faith in Christ, and to be buried with Him in the waters of baptism. They are thus born again and rise to walk in a newness of life.

Christians believe that there is one body, the church, and that all must be members of that body to be saved, for Paul said, "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body" (Eph. 5:23). All who are saved must be a part of that which Christ came to save. Paul said that Christ will save the body and that the body is the church. The body, or the church, was that which Christ died to save. Christians believe that all of God's people should be of one mind and should speak only as the oracles of God. In what is truly "the Lord's prayer" which Christ prayed just a short time before He went to the cross, Jesus said, after praying for Himself and for the apostles, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (Jno. 17:20-21). Christ knew that if His followers were divided into warring factions, one group teaching one thing and another group teaching the opposite, many people would say, "They can't all be right and teach differently; but they could all be wrong, so we will just forget the whole thing!" Christ wanted the church to be one in its belief and practice "that the world might believe."

The apostle Paul set forth the platform on which all Christians can unite when he urged the need of "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." He said, "There is *one* body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:4-6). These verses set forth the platform for Christian unity. This platform was not the work of some committee or ecumenical council but was God's plan, revealed by inspiration and hence binding upon all. It has seven planks and one plank is just as binding as another. No more effective platform for unity could be devised. In one God we have unity of worship; in one Lord, unity of au-

thority; in one Spirit, unity of revelation; in one baptism, unity of practice; in one body, unity of organization; in one faith, unity of belief; in one hope, unity of aspiration.

The reason for so much division in the religious world is that some religious bodies reject one or more of the planks which do not suit their purpose. So far as I know, all religious bodies agree that there is one God, one Lord, and one Spirit, although there are some who differ over what constitutes the Godhead. We would do well to note that Paul said there were three members of the Godhead. Most are agreed that there is one hope but some insist that there are three baptisms while others say that baptism is not essential to salvation. Some contend that there are many faiths; consequently, there are many bodies. Inspiration says that there is ONE baptism, and ONE body. We would do well to note that Paul leaves no doubt as to what the body is. He said, in speaking of Christ, "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22-23). With language so plain we do not need a computer to figure out how many churches God will endorse. This is why Paul condemned division and why Christ prayed for unity. If we reject one plank in God's platform we might as well reject all of them.

5. *Christians are different in their practice.* It was not necessary for God to tell man to worship for man is by nature a worshiping being. God knew that all men would worship something but without instructions they are liable to worship the wrong thing. Men have worshiped things both animate and inanimate. Some yet worship the sun, moon, stars, mountains, rivers, lakes and streams. Some have idols made of gold, silver, wood or stone. Some today make a god or goddess of money, pleasure, popularity or pride. The Jews, God's chosen people, were so given to idol worship that God led them into captivity as a punishment. When Paul came to Athens he said, "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld

your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you" (Acts 17:22-23).

While God did not have to tell man to worship, it was necessary that He tell him *what* to worship and *how* to worship. After John had received the revelation from God on the Isle of Patmos he said, "And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God" (Rev. 22:8-9). God is the only proper object of worship. The first commandment of the ten which God gave to the Jews was, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." The theme of the Old Testament was, "I, the Lord thy God am one God, and there is none else beside me."

When Jesus talked with the woman at Jacob's well in Samaria, part of their conversation had to do with worship. Jesus said to her, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (Jno. 4:23-24). Of these verses N. B. Harde-
man said:

What does it take, friends, to constitute an act of worship which meets with God's approval? I submit three necessary elements—first, it must be directed to God, the right object; second, it must be done in spirit, which means prompted by the right motive, actuated by the loftiest purpose, and suggested on the part of the performer by a disposition to meet with the pleasure of high heaven; and, third, that act must be in truth, or according to God's word which is truth . . .

(Tabernacle Sermons, Vol. 2, p. 220).

Not all worship is acceptable to God. In the New Testament we read of vain worship, ignorant worship, and true worship. God will accept only the latter. God requires of all

His children that they worship Him in truth. If it is "in truth" it must be authorized in His Word.

Christians Must Be Strong In the Lord

To the Ephesians Paul said, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might" (Eph. 6:10). To Timothy Paul said, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 2:1). Physically, there are few things that we desire more than to enjoy good health and to be strong. Most people are willing to watch their diet, take vitamins, count calories, take regular exercise, consult their doctor—anything to be strong and to enjoy good health. This is as it should be, but how much more important it is that we be strong spiritually! At best, we will have but a short time to live on earth but eternity has no end.

To be strong spiritually we must have wholesome food. Neither philosophy, theology, a social gospel, nor the commandments and doctrines of men are conducive to spiritual strength. The soul must be fed regularly on "the living bread." Jesus said, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven." Again He said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." This "living bread" must be eaten, digested, and assimilated or there will be no spiritual strength. Exercise is equally vital. To Timothy Paul said, ". . . and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:7-8). Timothy needed spiritual strength to defend the faith against Jewish aggression and pagan opposition, to fight the good fight of faith, and to withstand the persecution which Paul knew would result in the death of millions. Persecution is not so prevalent now but all true Christians have a great work to do, battles to fight, and victories to win. In order to

do this work, win those battles, and gain those victories, we must have uncompromising faith, undaunted courage, and undying love for God, Christ, the Word, the church, and for our fellowman.

In order for a fortress to be strong, it must be fortified both internally and externally. It matters not how well it may be supplied with ammunition and fire-power or how many soldiers man the fort; unless the soldiers are well trained in the use of the weapons and have the courage to fight and the determination to win, they will not be able to hold the fort. This is equally true in the Christian warfare. The Captain of our salvation has provided us with the only ammunition needed—the Word of God. Paul declared that the gospel of Christ is "the power of God unto salvation, " furthermore, that "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." Christian soldiers must have a thorough knowledge of how to use the sword of the Spirit to use it effectively. Knowing that "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12), the Captain has provided His soldiers with adequate armor for protection. Paul said, "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:14-17). Thus armed, Christian soldiers can be "more than conquerors" providing they are as well fortified internally as they are externally. Such help is available. For the saints of old an apostle prayed that God would grant them "to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love . . ." (Eph. 3:16-17). "Let the word of

Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, " was his exhortation.

The indwelling Spirit, and the indwelling Word will provide the motivation and determination to fight valiantly. Robert Browning said, "When the fight begins within himself a man's worth something. God stoops over his head; Satan looks up between his feet—both tug—he's left, himself, in the middle: the soul awakes and grows. Prolong that battle through this life! Never cease growing till the life to come." In a church bulletin article by A. E. Emmons, Jr., we find this:

A story from the Civil War period tells of a woman who, when she heard the enemy was coming, grabbed a poker and rushed out of the house. Someone standing by laughed and said, "What good do you think that poker will be compared to guns?"

She replied, "At least they will know which side I am on."

We could wish today for a multitude like her in the church of our Lord. So many church members today don't know which side they are on, and some who think they are on the Lord's side are ashamed of it.

Such soldiers lack internal fortification; they will win no battles for the Lord and are a detriment rather than a help to the church.

The Lord Requires Supreme Obedience

The Sadducees were the first persecutors of the early church. They were incensed because the apostles were preaching through Christ the resurrection of the dead. This was contrary to their belief. On one occasion they put the apostles in prison, but that night the Lord sent an angel who opened the prison door and said, "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life." They obeyed. The next morning the Sadducees sent officers to bring the apostles into court. The officers returned and reported that they had found the prison shut, the guards standing without, but no prisoners. When the Sadducees learned that the

apostles were in the temple teaching, they were perplexed and sent and had them brought without violence. When the apostles appeared the Sadducees said, "Did we not straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:28-29). That required courage, but it is the kind of obedience which God requires of all who hope to hear Him say, "Well done!" at the Judgment.

Because of their unfaltering obedience all of the apostles except John met with violent death at the hand of their persecutors. For the same reason thousands of the early Christians were burned at the stake, devoured by lions, had their tongues cut out, had their fingers and arms cut off a little at a time, and were torn apart on stretchers. They were willing to die for their Lord because He had died for them. We should thank God that such persecution does not exist in our land today.

God has always blessed those who render supreme obedience to Him. He delivered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego from Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace because they refused to disobey Him. Because Daniel's peers were jealous of him, they persuaded the king of Persia to make a decree that if any man asked a petition of any man or god except him that such person should be cast into a den of lions. Daniel knew of the decree and that the king would comply with his decree; notwithstanding, he opened his window three times each day where all could see and prayed to Jehovah. Those who made the plot against Daniel told the king. The king loved Daniel and though he was sorely grieved when he heard what Daniel had done, he kept his word and cast Daniel into the den of lions. But the Lord closed the lions' mouths and Daniel was unharmed. God places a premium on obedience. Of Joshua it was said, "As the Lord commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua; he left nothing undone of

all that the Lord commanded Moses" (Josh. 11:15). Of Caleb God said, "He wholly followed the Lord." Of all the men of war who left bondage in Egypt only Caleb and Joshua were permitted to enter the promised land. Concerning Hezekiah we read, "For he clave to the Lord, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the Lord commanded Moses." In the Old Testament we find that all who obeyed God were blessed but all who disobeyed Him were punished.

In the New Testament we find the same to be true. God changed His law but He never changed His principles. Jesus said, "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" (Matt. 7:21). John said, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14). God requires that all men know and obey His will. We can't obey it unless we know it, and we can't know it unless we study it.

Conclusion

What doth the Lord require? During the Christian dispensation in which we now live God requires all who are old enough to obey the gospel intelligently to become Christians. The Christian life is abundant, challenging and happy. It is a serving, serene, surrendered, and must be a fruitful life. A Christian lives *in* the world but must not be *of the* world. He is to be different *from* the world, the merely good, moral man, and from some who are professed but not true Christians. Christians are different *in* what they love, think and do. They must be fortified both internally and externally in order to be "strong in the Lord." They put Christ first in their lives and are always obedient to His will.

God has every right to make reasonable requirements of man because of what He has done for him. He created man,

sent His Son to save him when he was in a helpless, hopeless, Godless, Christless condition; and sent the Holy Spirit upon the apostles to make them our infallible teachers. He has providentially preserved His Word as a "lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path."

God requires that sinners hear the gospel, believe in Christ, sincerely repent of their sins, confess their faith in Christ, and be buried with Him in baptism, thus being delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of His dear Son. Thereafter, they are not to be conformed to the world but transformed by the renewing of their mind. As members of the body of Christ, and as citizens of His kingdom, they must respect His authority, be obedient to His will, and worship Him regularly in spirit and in truth. They must be "steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58). If through temptation they sin and thus fall, God requires that the erring child repent of his sin and ask God for forgiveness.

To temporal Israel God said, "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." We are faced with the same alternatives. Which is your choice? Only in His Word can we find the answer to the all-important question, "What doth the Lord require?"

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Loren N. Raines was born July 1, 1895, on a farm near Sullivan, Indiana. Graduating from Sullivan High School in 1914, he spent the next three years working in a grocery store in his hometown. Having obeyed the gospel in early life, young Raines developed an intense interest in studying the Bible. He took an extended absence from his store work to attend a 12-week Bible Reading conducted by Daniel Sommer and later attended a 10-week study under A. M. Morris at Kinsley, Kansas. Raines preached the first sermon of his life in Pratt, Kansas, during the latter reading. Upon the completion of the Kinsley study, he entered Indiana State Teacher's College at Terre Haute for a 12-week teacher training course and began teaching in a rural school that year. Our subject spent 16 months in World War I, twelve months of it in France, after teaching his first school but reached home from France in time to resume his teaching career in September, 1918. The next six years found him committed to teaching in the secular education field and preaching each Lord's day to four different congregations each month.

On April 3, 1921, Loren married Opal Stivers of Sumner, Illinois, the daughter of Everett Stivers, a gospel preacher who labored many years in southern Illinois and Indiana. To this union were born two children. Max, the elder of the sons, is a prominent educator at Michigan State University. The other son died in infancy.

Brother Raines did his first work as a "located" preacher at Lincoln Street church at Bloomington, Indiana. After five years at Lincoln Street, he resumed appointmental preaching and enrolled in Indiana University where he earned his B. A. and M. A. degrees.

(continued on inside back cover)

From 1932 to 1951 the Raineses lived in Bedford, Indiana, where he preached each Lord's day. During this entire 19 years he was also involved in education. He served one year as Superintendent of Adult Education in Lawrence County and during the next 18 years he served as high school principal of three different consolidated schools. In 1951 he retired from teaching and moved his family to Salem, Indiana, where he spent six years as a minister of the Salem church.

In 1957 Brother and Sister Raines moved to Indianapolis where he began an eight-year tenure with the Emerson Avenue congregation. The work grew and prospered. From this congregation grew the High School Road Church, a peaceful swarm in Speedway, with which the Raineses worked for the next five years. They took Social Security at the beginning of the work in Speedway so that they could serve at a minimum expense to the new congregation.

Following this lengthy period in the Indianapolis area, Brother and Sister Raines moved to Robinson, Illinois, where they worked for three years. While at Robinson a call came to move to the Oolitic church just outside Bedford, their long-time home. Shortly thereafter they returned to Bedford where they now live and expect to remain throughout their earthly tenure.

As this work comes from the press in the spring of 1977, it has been over 60 years since Loren Raines began preaching the gospel. During this entire period few Lord's days have found him not filling a pulpit somewhere.

To know Loren and Opal Raines is to love them. I have been the honored guest in their hospitable home on numerous occasions and spent one entire meeting period with them while they were at Emerson Avenue. Brother Loren and his great wife are humble, dedicated, Bible-loving, jealous Christians. Their lives bridge a gap between two generations of preachers, particularly in areas north of the Ohio River. Brother Raines was strongly influenced in his love for the Word of God by Daniel Sommer, A. M. Morris, and E. M. Zerr. He has never sought publicity, but everywhere the Raineses have labored the work has prospered and has always reflected a very healthy condition when he left it.

Both Loren and Opal have been an inspiration to a multitude of younger preachers who have fallen within the scope of their influence.

What Doth the Lord Require? is to a large degree the summation of the life study and teaching of this great and good man of God. It bespeaks excellent organization and planning which characterizes his personal evangelism and his pulpit and class teaching. I count it a signal honor to be asked by Brother Raines to assist him in the publication of this work and have encouraged him to put in permanent form the rich material found here. This work is thorough, readable, fundamental to the core, and will prove itself usable by teachers and preachers of the Bible. Long after Loren Raines has departed this life, the material which has come from his pen will be blessing students of the Word of God.

James R. Cope
December 7, 1976