

**LETTERS
TO A
YOUNG METHODIST PREACHER**

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By

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Letters to a Young Methodist Preacher.

LETTER No. I.—THE BIBLE vs. CREEDS.

My Dear Theophilus:—I hear it whispered in the community that you are about to enter the Methodist ministry. Since hearing the report I have thought of you repeatedly, and after mature deliberation I have decided to address you this series of letters, thus contributing my mite toward helping you make "full proof of your ministry." The fact that a young man of education, wealth and social position enters upon the work of proclaiming the gospel of Christ to a perishing world is encouraging. It proves that there is still faith on the earth. Yea, it demonstrates again what has been proven to every generation, that God demands and His cause receives the best talent, the purest hearts and the most daring advocacy. I congratulate you; I congratulate your future fields of labor. May success attend you whenever and wherever you proclaim the word as it is written.

You may be surprised at my interest in you, but I assure you that it is hearty and unselfish. I have known you from boyhood, and your integrity is unquestioned, and your standing as a moral man is all that could be desired. I believe you are sincere in your new plans, and while our friendship has never known a cloud, it grieves me to see you become a preacher entrammeled by a human creed, for out of it grows an immense train of errors that are divisive rather than unifying in their relations to the children of God.

My congratulations, therefore, would be more enthusiastic if you had simply started out as a Christian, free to "preach the word" without fear of public opinion or ecclesiastical counsels or conferences.

There were no creeds in the apostolic church. This assertion needs no proof, but for your sake I repeat it with startling emphasis: In the apostolic times the creeds by which the church is now divided, and alas! subdivided, were utterly unknown. Creeds were born of the great apostacy which had begun its destructive work even in Paul's day (II. Thess., 2:1-17; I Tim., 4:1-4). Here is an important truth; Jesus came to unite all nations, Jew and Gentiles in one body (Eph., 1:10; 2:11-16), and as long as He was recognized as the foundation, head and central figure of the Christian system His followers felt no need of any uninspired formulation to express their thoughts concerning religion. All hearts beat in unison to the same Divine music; all eyes were turned to one common center. Just as soon as men lost sight of the personality and authority of Jesus they lost sight of His word as an all-sufficient rule of faith. As soon as they lost sight of the truth as it is written, they began to search for something to help them out of their difficulties. Apostacy is downward, and being accelerated in its tendency by the natural desire of man to take care of himself, it made exceedingly rapid progress, and its progress was away from the Bible into mysticism and speculation; away from unity into division; away from brotherly kindness into hate; away from righteousness into sin; away from the Son of God unto the sons of men; away from light into darkness. Sin is self-perpetrating, hence, the progeny of the first departure from the pure gospel became great, diverse and innumerable, and in the face of the prayer of Jesus Christ for the oneness of His people (John, 17:20, 21), many of His

professed followers declared, and still declare that divisions, creeds, sects or denominations are Scriptural, and desirable, and necessary. This of itself ought to strike you with great force. Whatever destroys our reverence for the word of God, whatever cuts us loose from its teachings, whatever tends to disobedience to its requirements is shameful, rebellious and dangerous in the extreme. If there were no creeds in the Church of Christ as He set it up and put it to work, it follows as inevitably as light follows sunrise that the restoration of New Testament, apostolic Christianity will bury all creeds in the dust of oblivion; and it follows also that whoever formulates, propagates and defends creeds, is to the degree of the intensity of his advocacy, an enemy to the religion of Jesus Christ, and an obstruction in the way of the conversion of the world. This is a grave charge and I pray you to weigh it honestly and deliberately.

What is a creed? In the common acceptation of the term, it is a formulation or compilation of the ideas or doctrines of a sect or denomination, and it is a human production without Divine authority, or even the sanction of profane history. What did the primitive disciples believe? Read that question again. Mark out the word "what" and substitute for it the word "whom," and you have the golden key that unlocks the mysteries of this important question. The creed of the first Church had only one article: Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God. The first Christians were not commanded to believe a doctrine, or a speculation, or a creed containing twenty-five articles, but simply to believe, reliantly, trustfully, unreservedly, unhesitatingly, unchangeable and eternally, that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God and the only Savior of men. Jesus Christ piled up no wall of untempered mortar and broken stones between His great loving heart and His obedient disciples.

This creed produced unity because it emphasized that there is one God, one Savior, one Church and *one* gospel, and because it met the wants of everybody. Its tendency was to lift men out of themselves and make them realize their dependence upon God. Human compilations have an opposite tendency. Will you deny it?

There are creeds and creeds. This is where the great difficulty lies. It proves beyond a doubt that there is and that there can be no unity in creeds. I affirm with ascending emphasis that it is impossible for uninspired men to compile or formulate a creed that will produce unity among the people of God. This is an age of personal investigation. Men are too far advanced in civilization to allow others, however pious, to do their thinking for them. In other words, the various religious factions can never unite on your creed or any other human creed. The reason for this statement is apparent. Creeds do not produce or maintain unity even among the adherents and advocates. Their friends are constantly in doubt as to their meaning, and one sect built upon one creed is liable to breed almost an innumerable host of contending factions. It is a great mistake to suppose that God grants us the privilege of garbling His word, and presenting our conceptions of it as the sum of all truth. Probably you will say that you do not claim that yours is the best creed. If not, you should by all means abandon it and adopt the best, for the best uninspired creed is of small consequence! Do you admit that your creed is imperfect? If so, you must admit, in view of the universally admitted fact that the New Testament creed is perfect, that it is, to take the most liberal view possible, a weak, frail and imperfect imitation of a perfect thing. I do not for a moment doubt the piety and sincerity of the men who compiled your creed. I doubt their wisdom. It seems to me that they

were blinded by party zeal and sectarian prejudice or they could have seen that their creed at best could only mark the boundaries of a party or faction as long as it should live. What is true of your creed is true of every other creed. Each creed is born of a factional spirit and marks the bounds of a party or sect. Sects are built on creeds. The creed and the sect go hand in hand, and they must live or die together. Is it not strange that the Methodist creed generates the Methodist spirit, that the Baptist creed generates the Baptist spirit, that Presbyterian creed generates the Presbyterian spirit, and that Lutheran creed generates the Lutheran spirit? Is it not also strange that these sectarian institutions maintain these distinctive features, when their leaders must know that the unity of the Church for which Jesus prayed can never be brought about while they exist?

I am profoundly convinced by history, observation and revelation, that creeds are wrong—absolutely sinful. This is a serious declaration. Please give attention to the proof. First, they originate, maintain and perpetuate divisions among the people of God in the face of the most conclusive proof that one of the great objects of the mission of Jesus in the world was to break down separating walls and make all the people one. Open your Bible and note the following: (a) God intended from of old to bless all nations through His Son and bring them together in one (Eph., 1:19, 10); (b) Jesus Christ declared that He would establish one fold or Church (John, 10:16); (c) He prayed for the unity of all believers (John, 17:20,21); (d) He died in order to make way for the unity of Jew and Gentiles (Eph., 2:15, 16); (e) He is the head of one body (Col., 1:18); (f) He is the Savior of one body (Eph., 5:23); (g) the original Church, just as the Lord of heaven set it up—was not divided (Rom., 12:4, 5); I. Cor., 12:12-14; Eph., 4:15,16; Eph., 2:19-22; 4:3-6; 5:30);

(h) divisions are emphatically condemned (Rom., 16:17; I. Cor., 1:10, 13; 11:18, 19; Jas., 3:16); (i) the people of God are commanded to come out of Babylon (I. Cor., 14:33; II. Cor., 6:14-18; Eph., 5:25-27; Phil., 3:16; Rev., 18:1-5). If you do not deny that creeds produce divisions, and I can not see how you can do it, you must see that you have taken a position that puts you in direct antagonism to the word of God. If you deny that they produce divisions, how do you account for the fact, and it is a fact, that your creed does not and can not produce a Presbyterian or a Lutheran, or an Episcopalian or a Roman Catholic? Second, they are tests of fellowship, and *in* this sense, keep the Lord's people divided. Had you ever thought of this? Please look at it with care. At first glance you will think I have made a mistake, but look deeper. Only Methodists trust, accept and believe the twenty-five articles of the Discipline? Why is this? Simply, it is the Discipline, only, of the Methodist Church! Do you see? This is true of the Augsburg Confession and the Lutherans, of the Westminster Confession and the Presbyterians, and of all the creeds and their adherents. I can not become a Methodist without accepting the Discipline. It matters not how pure, faithful, earnest and self-sacrificing I may be, I can not become a member of the Methodist Church without giving my allegiance to the Discipline. In other words, you would not and could not accept me as a member on the ground that I am a Christian unless I would accept your creed and become a party-Christian. You want to put the Methodist mark on the Lord's sheep. These things are true of all creeds and all sects. The sheep naturally desire to run together, but you wish to fence part of them off to themselves, and substantially declare that all other sheep, however purely bred, can not come into your

pasture unless you are permitted to put a mark upon them which was never put on the people by Jesus Christ or His inspired apostles. I love your Christianity, your piety, your morality, your zeal. I want your full fellowship, but I am only a Christian, a Christian only, and I can not and will not become also a Methodist in order to gain it. Why not lay down your creed and give your heart and mind to the propagation and advocacy of Christianity unmixed with tradition, so that we can meet on the common basis—the word of God and faith and obedience to Christ? Let us look further. I assert that your creed is a test of fellowship, and for this reason declare most earnestly that while your Christianity does much good, your Methodism does much harm, and further, I record it as my candid opinion that if you would abandon what is purely Methodistic and with the same zeal with which you are now distinguished, advocate Christianity only, you would be irresistible. The making of creeds—tests of fellowship—unknown to the word of God—causes men to lose sight of many of the important truths of the Gospel. You often hear men speak of "attaching" themselves to the Church, or "joining" the Church. The reason of this is plain. Men have invented certain ceremonies by which others are made members of the Church. The Baptists have one, the Methodists have another, the Presbyterians have another, the Episcopalians another, and so on through the entire catalogue. This is very misleading. Many have come to the conclusion that a man may be converted or saved or made a child of God and still be outside of His Church. What do you think of this? Is it true? Is it reasonable? Is it Scriptural? I answer, that it is not. Here is a proposition of great importance and I challenge contradiction and investigation: In the times of the apostles of Jesus Christ men did not "join" the Church,

but they, by obedience to the gospel, received remission of sins, and in receiving this great blessing they were Divinely made members of His Church, In other words, nothing was required in order to Church membership and Christian fellowship, save what was necessary in order to salvation. If you doubt it, read the Acts of the Apostles, but for fear you fail to do this I will offer some proof. In summing up some of the results of Apostolic preaching it is asserted that "The Lord added to the Church daily those that were being saved (Acts, 2:47)." Read this passage thoughtfully and deliberately. Look closer. What do you see? "The Lord added!" Who were added? Those who were "being saved." In other words, "being saved" and "being added" to the Church are simultaneous. Who does this? The Lord. When? At the moment we comply with the conditions on which these blessings are promised. Do you see any need of a creed or an experience here? If you will look into this subject carefully you will see that a man can not be a Christian outside of the Church, because that which is necessary to make him a Christian makes him a member of the Church without another act, mental or physical, on his part Again, the Church of Christ is called His body (Col., 1:18). Paul, and you concede that he is a good witness, declares: "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him (I. Cor., 12:18)." Study this passage with care. Notice who places the members. Notice where He places them. It occurs to me that this truth properly emphasized will dissolve many of the difficulties that now beset the sincere inquirer. Allow me to illustrate. An inquirer presents himself for admission into the Methodist Church, and you confront him with your creed. He presents himself for admission into the Presbyterian Church, and the Episcopal Church and other churches, with the same

result. He must accept your man-made creed in order to enjoy your Christianity. You receive him by your Discipline, baptize him by it, govern him and bury him by it. He can, as you admit, be a Christian without accepting your creed or any other creed, but he can not be a Methodist without it to enjoy your Christianity!

If an inquirer should present himself to you for membership, declaring that he believed in Christ with all his heart, that he was turning from all his sins, that he was willing to lead a Godly life all the remainder of his days, but declaring that he would not submit to any test of fellowship or comply with any condition or pardon save what is plainly revealed in the New Testament, what would you do with him? You would be compelled to reject him. Why? Again I ask, why? You can not and will not answer. I will answer for you. Your system makes Methodists, and you do not want a 'man unless he is willing to be both a Methodist and a Christian. So far as Christian fellowship—actual participation in the work and government of the Church—is concerned, your creed sets up a barrier as high as the Alps between you and every other Christian. One more passage: "Wherefore receive ye one another as Christ also received us, to the glory of God (Rom., 15:7)." Is not this the same as if the apostle had commanded us not to impose any conditions on each other in order to Christian fellowship and Church membership that are not imposed in the word of God in order to salvation? If this is not the meaning, pray tell me what it is? Do not such considerations as these shake your confidence in creeds, or, at least, lead you to doubt the practicability of making them tests of fellowship? I have studied these questions long and earnestly, and my conclusion is that if all creeds—human creeds—were destroyed, the peo-

ple of God—those who really love and serve Him—would as naturally run together as water seeks its level, and that "the sheep" long separated by human fences would be delighted to live together in the same fold and be known as "sheep only, only sheep"—Christians!

I suppose you will try to defend your creed on the ground that it is in harmony with Scripture. This is what all the creed advocates declare. Can they do it? Are they all in harmony with the Bible. If so, why do they not harmonize with themselves? The Bible harmonizes in all its parts, why not the creeds? Turn this thought over and look at it again. You stake your all on the statement of faith in your creed. So does the Presbyterian, so does the Lutheran, and yet no two of you agree! You are most positive that your creed contains nothing but the truth. The Episcopalian feels precisely the same way about his creed, and yet there is no fellowship among you. Let us look at your defense from another angle. If your creed is Scripturally correct, if it contains "all Scripture," if it leaves out nothing that should be known and done, what reason is there for its existence? If it states the truth exactly as it should be stated, and if it states it all for all people, why not go to the Bible for it? If your creed contains more than the Bible, it contains too much. If it contains less than the Bible, it does not contain enough. If it contains the same as the Bible, the Bible will answer every purpose, and there is absolutely no excuse for the expense, existence and perpetuity of the creed. What is the Bible? You answer the book of books? Certainly, but it is more than this. It is the revelation of God. It contains the truth. It reveals the way of salvation. It states the truth in God's own way. Can men improve up it? Could the fathers of the Methodist Church express the truth in better, plainer, or more expressive

terms than those used by the writers of the New Testament? Your creed leads to confusion. It is superfluous, you being the judge. Your creed is a reflection on the wisdom of God. He set up His Church and started it on its mission with no creed but the Christ and no discipline but the gospel. Your Discipline declares that the holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation; do you believe this? If so, throw away your creed. If not, have it revised! The Bible constantly proclaims its all-sufficiency as a rule of faith and practice. Hear it: "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 (II. Tim., 3:16, 17)." Do you believe this? If so, throw your creed away. If not, throw your Bible away. Which?

I sum up, by way of emphasis, this letter and, bring it to a close. I charge on your creed:

I. There were no human creeds in the Church of Christ as He set it up and as the apostles left it

II. Your creed was born of the great apostacy, and is therefore a departure from apostolic teaching.

III. Creeds breed, perpetuate and sanction divisions among God's people in open contradiction of His word.

IV. Creeds are exalted into tests of fellowship, thereby keeping the disciples of the Lord from fellowshiping each other.

V. Your creed contains only part of the truth, as you admit, but you will not give me a voice in your Church without submission to its teachings.

Affectionately yours,

J.

LETTER No. II.—RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD.

My Dear Theophilus:—In entering upon the ministry of the word you have assumed grave responsibilities; responsibilities that look even beyond the present life. The first great duty that confronts you is the necessity of earnest, patient, and enthusiastic study of the Bible. In this letter I propose to offer some suggestions that will greatly aid you in becoming thoroughly acquainted with the Holy Scriptures. If you neglect to study the Bible you can not hope to make a successful preacher. The demand of the age is better Bible scholars—sermons filled with the "thus saith the word." I am sorry to say that there are many Bible readers who do not seem to profit by their reading. This is remarkably strange. How do you account for it? It is easily explained. They read the Bible irregularly and without any definite end in view. They pick it up and read Job, Psalms or the Revelation, thinking that the Christian's duty may be found in one as well as the other. They read the Old Testament or the New Testament, just as fancy dictates, without discovering the slightest difference between the two. They think Abraham was a Christian in the precise sense that Paul was a Christian. They do not ask, When was this document written, or by whom was it written, or why was it written? They do not stop to consider whether it was intended for Patriarch, Jew or Christian. They say, forsooth, that it is all Scripture, and should all be accepted by the people of this age as of Divine authority in the way of salvation—under the reign of Christ. They remind me

of the sick man who took all his medicine at one dose, because his physician had left it for him! You can easily imagine the result. Is it not safe to say that the same disastrous results may follow the improper use of the sacred Oracles? I suggest that you treat the Bible as a sensible book and apply to it the same common sense rules of interpretation that we apply to any other book, whether historical, scientific, or otherwise. Do this and you will make rapid progress, neglect it and confusion will be the certain result. I speak of your responsibilities. If you will contemplate yourself in the light of New Testament teaching you will be positively startled, for you are in a great measure responsible for the souls of those whom you lead and teach. It will not do to fall back upon your sincerity and theirs, for a sincere mistake does not in any sense change the law of God or the penalty added thereto. If this is not conclusive, turn to the New Testament and read the astonishing declaration: "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)." Again, "And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch (Matt., 15:14)." It is bad enough to fall into the ditch yourself, but it is terrible to lead into it those who trust their destiny in your hands. I wish to burn this thought into your inmost soul. You desire to be a watchman upon the walls of Zion. Listen: "But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at the watchman's hand (Ezek., 33:6)." Almost any man can blow a trumpet, but you, my friend, must be responsible for the sound you make:

"For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle (I. Cor., 14:8)?" This is by no means the end. Hear the New Testament again. Paul commanded his son in the gospel to "preach the word (II. Tim., 4:1, 2)." Again, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. (Gal., 1:8, 9)." Accursed; how terrible is the thought! Again, "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 which are written in this book (Rev., 22:18, 19)." "Out of the holy city;" contemplate it!

You are commanded to speak in accordance with the oracles of God (I. Pet., 4:11), and there is not, neither can there be, any doubt as to the penalty for failing. It, therefore, behooves you to adopt some method of interpretation that will not lead you astray. Allow me to suggest a few rules that will materially assist you. (1). Give every word of Scripture its ordinary meaning unless there is something in the connection to show that it has an extraordinary meaning, God has graciously adapted Himself to us in revealing His will, for He has used our own language, and, therefore, brought His will into the domain of human experience. In order to understand the Scriptures you must understand the language in which they are written—the words, phrases and sentences of which they are composed—but you will make the mistake of your life if you inject into these words an un-

natural meaning. Beware. (2.) The smaller often suggests or implies the greater, and while a passage may imply more than it expresses it never implies less. This is frequently illustrated—sometimes the whole plan of salvation is condensed into a single sentence, while few conditions are specifically laid down. It is unscriptural, irreverent and dangerous to run to the conclusion that nothing else is required. It is all true even if you do not see the point. God has spoken often and in many ways (Heb., 1:1), and what He says always fits the occasion, and by patient investigation you will, I trust, discover what has long been a solace to me, that to the reverent and discriminating student all revelation blends into one harmonious whole. (3). The smaller or weaker must always yield to the greater or stronger. Now we are on treacherous ground. Let us move slowly. What do I mean by this statement? I answer, that in an effort to find out the meaning of the Word we must give heed to the testimony of the greater number of witnesses, particularly if their testimony is conspicuously clear, distinct and harmonious. To illustrate: If Moses, Isaiah, Jesus, Paul, Peter, John and James all unite in stating a truth so clearly that there can be no mistake as to their meaning, and Jude alone seems to present a different view, you must conclude that the first witnesses have stated the truth correctly and that you have failed to understand Jude. Do not array one Scripture or one witness against another, but conclude that your understanding is at fault; wait, and all things will become clear to your mind. (4). You must allow the Bible to interpret itself. This may be difficult at the start, but you can learn to do it. If Moses seems to get you into complications, call on Paul to help you out, and keep in mind that all the witnesses agree and that if you can put yourself in the proper attitude as to the time and circumstance under

which each witness testified, you will find no insolvable problems in the Word of God. (5). Make the Old Testament interpret the New Testament and make the New Testament interpret the Old. This narrows the question down to practical issues. (6). Study the Bible in the light of man's needs. It is God's book for man. It is the Great Physician's prescription for sin. It is our only guide through earth to heaven. (7). You must learn to properly divide the truth. Now I imagine that you are astonished. Divide the Word when it is one harmonious whole? Certainly. That is just what I said, and I mean precisely what I say. Allow me to explain. Every harmonious whole is composed of parts. There is a sense in which every part of your watch is independent and another sense in which it is dependent. This is so of our government. It is so of the human frame. It is true of the human mind. Suppose you substitute the "second hand" of your watch for the "mainspring," or your feet for your hands. See? "A place for everything and everything in its place" is good sense as well as good economy. Everything was written for a purpose. Find out what that purpose is or was and apply it where it was intended by its great Author, Everything was intended for some age or dispensation. Find out what age that is, or was and apply it accordingly. Everything was intended for some one—some particular character. Find out who it was intended for and give it to him. You may think this is overdrawn, hence I submit a few proofs. In contemplating a certain question Jesus Christ said: "All men can not receive the saying, save they to whom it is given. * * * He that is able to receive it, let him receive it (Matt., 19:10-12)." Paul addressed the young preacher Timothy, and through him the young preachers of every age; he said: "Study to show thyself approved unto God,,

a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (II. Tim., 2:15)." Young and inexperienced men are liable to run into error. Here is an unfailing remedy. In pursuance of this investigation, I wish to suggest to you that it is very important to bear in mind that there have been and that there are still two covenants or testaments, and if you wish to have clear conceptions of the truth you must learn the difference between them and forever keep it in mind. This is the first lesson in learning to rightly divide the word of truth.

Please open your dictionary at the word covenant and note the definition, "conditional promises of God as revealed in the Scriptures." In this letter I propose to further discuss the covenants. I trust you will follow me patiently. It is a favorite saying with Methodist preachers, that the Church began in the days of Abel, that it was broadened with Abraham, with Moses, and finally with Christ and His apostles. I must confess that this statement seems plausible, but I propose to ask if it is true and let the Bible answer. If it is true, what is gained by it? If it is false, what is lost by it? The first intimation of the coming Deliverer is found in the sentence passed upon the serpent (Gen., 3:14, 15). This is frequently called a promise, but it was not. Please observe that it embraced no conditions. The first promise was made to Abraham about two thousand years later (Gen., 12:1-3). This promise was unconditional so far as the world is concerned. God promised to make of Abraham a great nation, and as an unfolding of the promise He established His covenant with him and changed his name to Abraham. Turn to the seventeenth chapter of Genesis and read as I reason. Note that this covenant was to be perpetuated in Abraham's seed or offspring. The two conditions of membership are plainly

stated: (a) birth in Abraham's family: (b) purchase by the use of his money. A moment's reflection will convince you that you can not claim admission or membership under either condition. How absurd, therefore, is the claim made by your brethren, that this covenant was to embrace all nations. The sign or seal of this covenant was circumcision, a mark in the flesh—indeed, the covenant was based upon flesh—Abraham's seed, by birth and purchase. Keep this statement in your mind, for I may return to it further on. It is important to observe the design of this covenant. God had promised to make of Abraham a great nation, and to bless all nations through him. In order to carry this promise to successful issue, it was necessary to keep Abraham's blood pure. A little thinking will enable you to see that if Abraham and his offspring had intermingled, without restraint, with all other tribes, the promise would surely have been lost. The sense of it is this: God promised to do certain things for Abraham, his family, and the world through them. Hence the covenant—contract— and hence the establishment of circumcision as an unalterable mark or sign of the covenant. Primarily the covenant was based upon the flesh and money, as I have already suggested, but those who, like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses, looked beyond fleshly environments and temporal blessings, saw the climax of fleshly Israel in the Son of Abraham, Jesus the Christ. God had another design. While developing His purposes through the family of Abraham, He was also proving to the world that He keeps His covenant, and was gradually bringing His chosen people up to the high place, where, divorced from fleshly relationships, they could contemplate the spiritual, the permanent, the eternal. The nation grew, and although they were all in the covenant and bore its sign in their flesh, a very great

majority of them did not know God. During the sojourn in Egypt they doubtless imbibed, in a great degree, the ideas of their contemporaries. When the time came for their deliverance, God sent Moses to lead them out. He recognized them as His people—by covenant relation—notwithstanding they showed very little reverence for His name. He brought them out and made of them a mighty nation. He made a covenant with them, or rather expanded the provisions of the Abrahamic covenant (Deut., 5:1-4). I wish to emphasize here, for your benefit, this important fact; the covenant was made with Abraham and his seed and perpetuated in them, and not one provision was made in it for you or any other Gentile, save by purchase. Keep this in mind, for you have not yet come to the point where you can see that you are not a member of the Abrahamic or old covenant. The law of Moses, or the covenant ratified at Sinai, was two-fold in its design and application, (1). Laws were enacted looking to the suppression of sin and the maintenance and protection of the right—laws were enacted looking to the acts of individuals, and also of the nation. (2). A tabernacle was built and a ritual was given, and the people were commanded to serve or worship God. Paul expresses these truths, substantially: "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)." Let us pursue this line of argument further. In brief only two things were in view when the covenant was made and ratified at Sinai, conduct and worship. The ten commandments constituted the basis on which the covenant now rested. Indeed, they are called the words of the covenant (Ex., 34:28), and the stones on which they were written were called the tables of the covenant (Deut., 9:9-11). This

is endorsed by the apostle Paul (Heb., 9:4). Read these commands again, and you will see that they were chiefly aimed at vice. You will see also that they were only intended for one people and one age, for every man who is acquainted with the geography of the earth and its movements, knows that it is impossible for all men to keep the seventh day in regular order coming down from creation.

How long did this covenant last? Many of your contemporaries and all of your brethren, so far as I am informed, say that it has never ended. This is simply astonishing. If you were not born into the covenant or brought into it by purchase, I am curious to know how you got into it. Please answer this question. If you can not do it, you should, it seems to me, begin to see the inconsistency and indefensibility of your position. You are no Jew! More than this you do not desire to become one, and yet you put yourself, or endeavor to do so, in their old worn out shoes, and claim what they had as authority for your actions, under the dispensation of Jesus Christ! Again, I ask how long did the covenant last; is it still in force? I answer that the proof of its abolishment is overwhelming. You may think you see some proof of its perpetuity and perpetual authority, but I think if you will follow my line of argument you will be forced to concede the point. In the first place, the covenant was based upon the flesh, thus indicating its transitory character. It was limited to a very small family, thus proving that it was not and could not be God's great and universal plan of philanthropy. There is no process by which it can be made to appear that the fleshly basis has been removed and a spiritual one substituted for it, neither can it be made to appear that there is a new law of admission into an old institution; Christianity is a new institution and it rests upon its own basis. I think you are now prepared to

consider my answer to this question. The old covenant lasted till the death of Christ upon the cross—with His expiring breath it was abrogated—and from that time forward it was not even binding on the Jews to whom it was originally given. Jesus, by His death, dissolved all previously existing relations and placed all the world—every kindred, tribe and tongue—on the same basis. Before that time Abraham's descendants had been pre-eminently His people, but from that time both Jew and Gentile stood in the same relation to Him—sinners in His sight—and were required to do precisely the same thing in order to pardon. The abolishment of the old covenant made way for the establishment of a new one and the promulgation of a new law of admission. I now proceed to give the direct proof, and for convenience I will number my arguments and keep them distinct, and I challenge your scrutiny: (1). The members of the old covenant—those to whom the oracles of God had been given (Rom., 3:1, 2)—were the people who rejected the Messiah (John, 1:11). This proves conclusively that the covenant itself, without reference to the final fulfillment of the promise, was insufficient to furnish what the race needed. (2). Those who were members of the old covenant were not, on this account, entitled to membership in the new covenant. Slow, here! Read and think. Even John the Baptist, who did not live to see the new covenant inaugurated (Matt., 11:11), declared to these people that they could not claim the privileges and blessings of the coming Messianic kingdom because Abraham was their father (Matt., 3:7-12), and yet you are blind enough to claim that you are a member of the Abrahamic covenant when there is not a single syllable in the Bible to sustain you in your claim! Again, Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, a master in Israel, came to Jesus, who immediately de-

stroyed every hope, based on the flesh, of citizenship in His kingdom by assuring him that in order to enjoy citizenship in it he must be born again (John, 3:1-5). If the two covenants are identical, as your people claim, Nicodemus would have been a member of the second by virtue of his birthright in the first. And again, on the day of Pentecost the apostles of the Lord Jesus treated the Jews as aliens from God and required of them faith and obedience in order to membership in the Church of Christ (Acts, 2:1-42). (3). Members of the first covenant who were converted to Christ and made members of the new institution utterly and repeatedly repudiated the very thing you claim—that the fleshly covenant is still in force—and placed the hope of heaven on an entirely different basis (II. Cor., 5:15-17; Phil., 3:4-8). (4). Jesus declared that He had come to fulfill the Law (Matt., 5:17, 18), and after His resurrection He proclaimed that this had been accomplished (Luke, 24:44). (5). When Jesus expired on the cross the veil of the temple— behind which only the consecrated priest had been permitted to go for generations (Lev., 16:1-24; Heb., 9:6, 7)—was split from the top to the bottom, demonstrating beyond the possibility of a doubt that the things that had been sacred were sacred no more. (6). Jesus Christ nailed the "handwriting (read with care Ex., 32:15, 16) of ordinances" to the cross and took it out of the way (Col., 2:14-17). (7). The Jews—not Gentiles, to which class you belong, who were never in the Abrahamic covenant and never under the Law —were made dead to the law by the death of Christ (Rom., 7:1-4). (8). The law of Moses and all that pertained to it and all that depended upon its observance were done away or abolished (II. Cor., 3:1-18). (9). Primitive Christians were assured that they were not under the Law but under grace (Rom., 10:4). (10). Jesus destroyed the enmity

which previously existed between Jew and Gentile by breaking down the wall of separation—the Law—that had for ages existed between them (Eph., 2:11-15). (11). The first institution was taken away in order to make way for the establishment of the second (Heb., 10:9). (12). Now—in this age of grace or dispensation of favor—God's righteousness is made manifest apart from the Law (Rom., 3:20, 21), that is, through Jesus Christ (Rom., 1:16, 17). (13). The apostles were made ministers—able ministers—of the New Testament, and not of the "letter" or Law (II. Cor., 2:6). This passage alone, it seems to me, ought to satisfy the most incredulous. How do you explain it in the light of your theory of the identity of the two covenants? Come to judgment! (14). Jesus our Savior has obtained a more excellent ministry and He is the mediator of a better covenant or testament—both come from the same Greek word— which is established upon better promises (Heb., 8:6). (15). Jesus is the mediator of the new covenant and His blood is sufficient to make us clean (Heb., 12:24-26). (16). The apostles of Jesus, who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (Matt., 10:16-22; Luke, 24:50-52; Acts, 1:1-8; 2:1-4), declared, emphatically and unequivocally, that Christians are not bound to keep the Law of Moses (Acts, 15:19-29); but you, my friend, have started out to put this yoke upon the disciples of Christ. I warn you as a brother. (17). Paul assured the Galatian Christians that if they sought justification by the law they would fall from grace (Gal., 5:1-5). (18). After Christ came, the schoolmaster was dismissed (Gal., 3:19-25).

What is gained by keeping the Law of Moses? Nothing whatever. Do you dispute it? Well, here is the proof: (1). Righteousness did not come by it (Gal., 2:21). (2). It could not bring about justification (Acts, 13:39; Gal., 3:11).

(3). It could not give life (Gal., 3:21). (4). It made nothing perfect (Heb., 7:19). (5). It could not produce a good conscience (Heb., 9:9). There is not and cannot be any salvation in keeping the Law of Moses. This is clearly revealed in the case of the young ruler who came to Christ (Matt., 19:16-22; Luke, 18:18-23). He had kept the Law from his childhood, and while he only lacked one thing that one thing was equivalent to everything—sell all—follow Christ. It is also a fact that the violation of one statute involved the transgressor in all the penalties added to the whole Law (Jas., 2:10).

I can easily imagine that you see objections to this line of argument. I am sure you will say, that if it is true, the promise of God has failed, for He said to Abraham: "My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant." Perhaps your exegesis of this passage is incorrect. God did not, I think, necessarily imply that this covenant should never end, but that in a certain sense His covenant should remain in the family of Abraham, and this it has done, for the new covenant—really the everlasting covenant—was made with the house of Israel and the house of Judah—his direct descendants (Jer., 31:31-34). In addition to this, you will notice that the perpetuity of the covenant was suspended on the obedience of those with whom it was made, and they broke it more than they kept it (Ex., 32:1-28; Isa., 24-5). Again, I hear you say that if the Law of Moses is abolished, sin is abolished, for sin is the transgression of Law (I. John, 3:4). If this objection can be sustained, Gentiles are not sinners, for the Law was never made obligatory on them. The world is under a new law (Isa., 2:1, 2; Jas., 2:25), hence, sin abounds. The Christian is delivered from the task of keeping the Law, and he does not refrain from adultery, theft or false witness because of the com-

mands given through Moses, but because he is converted to God, which proves that Christianity lifts men to a higher plane than did the Law of Moses. You lead a life of purity. Why is this? Because of the ten commandments? You are compelled to answer in the negative. Why? Because you love God and Christ and purity and for no other reason. Finally, I most solemnly declare that you do not keep the Law of Moses, and would not if you could, and could not if you would. Do you go to Jerusalem three times a year to keep the feasts of the Lord (Ex., 23:14, 17)? Do you keep the Sabbath day as required in the Law (Ex., 35:1-3)? It will not do to fall back on the claim that part of the Law has been abolished. This is begging the question. It all must stand or fall together. I wish to very earnestly urge on you the fact that there are two covenants. Two things may be alike, strikingly similar, but they can not be one. My hands are alike but they are not and can not be identical. All this talk about the identity of the two covenants is unadulterated speculation indulged for the sole purpose of maintaining your so-called infant baptism. Two covenants identical—pure nonsense! There are many striking differences. I mention two: The first covenant was dedicated by the blood of animals (Ex., 24:4-8; Heb., 9:18-19); the second covenant was dedicated by the precious blood of Christ (Heb., 12:24). (2). Moses was the mediator of the first covenant (Ex., 20:18-21; Heb., 9:18, 19); Jesus is the mediator of the second covenant (I. Tim., 2:5, 6). You are young and vigorous, and have promise of long life. You may spend your life in the effort but you will never be able to make these covenants one, particularly in the face of Paul's testimony that they are two (Gal., 4:21-31)!

Let me reason with you a little more. The fact that there is a "new covenant" should shake your confidence in your

old theory. What reason is there for this if it is a continuation of the old with a few, unimportant changes? It is new —all new. Let us examine the proof. Jeremiah, the prophet, a member of the old covenant by birthright, hundreds of years after Abraham and Moses, looking forward to what was yet to be, said: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith the Lord: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people; and they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more (Jer., 31:31-34)." Paul quotes this with an appropriate introduction and from your standpoint, with a very striking conclusion: "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: not according *to* the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith

the Lord: For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. 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., 8:6-13)." Look over these quotations and see if you can explain them in the light of your theology. You can not. I advise you to give up your theology for the truth must stand forever.

There is another weighty consideration. If the covenant has been one and unbroken from the beginning, how do you explain the statement of the great apostle of the Gentiles that the change of priesthood necessitates also a change of law (Heb., 7:12). Surely you will not contend that there has been one unbroken priesthood from the transgression forward. Let us see. For ages every man was his own priest (Gen., 4:1-5; 8:20; 12:7, 8; 35:1; 46:1, 2), but from the giving of the Law of Moses forward to the death of Christ the priestly office with its immunities and emoluments was confined to the family of Aaron (Num., 1:1-41; 16:1-40; 18:1-7; 17:1-13). But this priesthood was abolished and a new one inaugurated by the entrance of Jesus Christ into heaven (Heb., 7:22-28). For your convenience I will designate the priesthoods, the Patriarchal priesthood, the Levitical priesthood and the Everlasting priesthood. The first began soon after sin and extended to the promulgation of the Law. The second began with the rearing up of the tabernacle and ex-

tended to the expiration of the Christ upon the Cross (Ex., 40:1-33; Lev., 8:1-36; 9:1-24; Heb., 9:26-28). It will not do to fall back on the old hypothesis that Jesus was baptized to initiate Him into the Levitical priesthood, for three reasons: (1). He did not belong to the tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron, and could not, therefore, become a priest under the law (Heb., 7:12-15). (2). Jesus was not, in any sense, a priest on earth, and you ran not point out a single instance where He so officiated (Heb., 8:1-4). (3). He became a priest by the Father's oath after another order when he entered heaven by His own blood (Heb., 7:18-21; 9:11-13), and this occurred after the disannulling or abolishment of the Law (Heb., 7:18, 28).

The Cross of the Lord Jesus is the dividing line between the two dispensations (Gal., 6:14), as I have abundantly proven, for He nailed the first to the Cross and took it out of the way. Keep this in mind. It is of surpassing importance. If you were to leave the United States in order to become a missionary to Mexico, you would be curious to know when you had crossed the dividing line between the two countries. Suppose in pursuing your journey you should come to a large pillar, on one side of which you would see "U. S.," and on the other "Mexico," would you know when you had passed out of your country into a strange land? Most assuredly. Look at the Cross, it stands between the two ages. On one side you see the Law of Moses, the first covenant, the Levitical priesthood and animal sacrifices. On the other side you "see Jesus," ""the perfect law of liberty," the new covenant, the priesthood of Jesus, and His blood offered for the sins of the world. You must not, you dare not go back of the Cross for a full revelation of the will of God!

I think you are now able to make, successfully, the first

great division of the word of truth, hence I am ready to proceed with another line of argument. Suppose, in your travels, a man whom you believed to be honest should ask you where he could find an answer, a Bible answer, to the great question, "What must I do to be saved?" where would you tell him to go? Would you tell him to read Genesis, Psalms, Joel, or Acts? Suppose, during one of your sermons, a convicted sinner should in anguish propound that question to you, what answer would you give him? You may be in doubt as to what you would tell him or what you would do, but one fact stands as firm as the everlasting hills: that question is answered in the word of God! Again, suppose an earnest church-member should ask you where he could find instructions prepared and intended for him, what answer would you give? You might not, bound as you are by your creed, be able to tell him, but let me assure you that his desire is abundantly supplied by the writers of the New Testament. One of the greatest mistakes you make is in misapplying the word—instructions meant for erring Christians are twisted out of connection and applied to inquirers outside of the Church. This is a grave charge, but it is true, and you can not deny it. You can avoid this by always asking yourself the three questions previously recorded: (1). Who wrote this? (2). For whom did he write it? (3). What does it contain? If it were addressed to an alien, it is a serious mistake to apply it to a Christian. If it were addressed to a Christian, it is equally unfortunate to address it to an alien. Take another look at the New Testament—everything in its place—a place for everything. It naturally divides itself. Look! Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all testify to the same thing and furnish us the knowledge of what we must believe in order to become Christians (John, 20:30, 31). Acts of the Apostles tells us

what—as believers—we must do in order to be saved (Acts, 2:37, 38). The epistolary writings are addressed to the Church—to the saved—and tell the people of God how to live in this present world. The revelation of Jesus Christ informs us of that which is awaiting us in our future home. You will find Jesus in the four testimonies. You will find what to do to be saved in the Acts of the Apostles. You will find Christian duty in the Epistles. You will find prophecy in the Revelation.

I exhort you, "most excellent Theophilus," to study the word of God with all possible diligence, and be sure to do it with a submissive heart and an unprejudiced mind.

Affectionately yours,

J.

LETTER No. III.—THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM.

My Dear Theophilus:—I trust that you have read, marked and fully assimilated my last letter. If you have done so, you will find it easy to comprehend what I shall say in this. I shall, therefore, proceed to discuss what is probably to you a novel subject—the Keys of the Kingdom of God. What is this Kingdom? What are these Keys? How and by whom were they used? These are legitimate questions. How would you answer them? Take them one by one and attempt to formulate a Scriptural answer to each, and you will probably find either yourself or your theology involved in an inextricable difficulty.

I will now undertake to answer the first question, What is this Kingdom? Please turn to the New Testament. At Cesarea Philippi, Jesus asked His disciples what men said concerning Him, and after they had told Him the various answers that had been given to the question, He asked them, "Whom do ye say that I, the Son of man, am?" Peter answered: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus blessed him and declared that upon that rock He would build His Church, and assured him that the gates of hell should not prevail against it. He said further to Peter: "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., 16:13-19)." This is clear and unequivocal, and gives us a start toward finding an answer to our question. It is the Kingdom of heaven,

the Kingdom of Christ or the Reign of Christ. In general terms, What constitutes a Kingdom? I answer: (1). A foundation or constitution. (2). A territory. (3). Subjects. (4). A King. (5). A Law of admission. When you find all of these together, you may be certain that you have also found the Kingdom of Christ. In the light of these propositions I submit to your consideration three important questions: (1). Where is the proof that the Kingdom of Christ began in the days of Abel? (2). Where is the proof that the Kingdom of Christ began with the establishment of the Abrahamic covenant? (3). Where is the proof that the Kingdom of Christ began at the proclamation of the Law of Moses? You will find these questions very difficult to answer, but I hope to be able to show you that it is a matter of little consequence whether you answer them or not.

The Kingdom of heaven is the reign of heaven in the hearts of men, or if you prefer it, the reign of Jesus Christ in the hearts of men. What is the foundation or the constitution of this Kingdom? I answer, Jesus Christ—not Jesus Christ as interpreted by your creed, or any other creed, but Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, as He is seen and interpreted by the writers of the New Testament. Do you ask for proof? Here it is: "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)." Again, "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 (Matt., 16:14-18)." Study this quotation carefully. Observe that the Church or Kingdom of Jesus Christ is built upon Jesus Christ—not on a theory, not on a prophecy, not on a speculation, not on a human creed, not on a doctrine, but upon a person. This clears away the mist and the fog, and brings us face to face with a fact—the greatest fact in history—Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God and the only Savior of men. Are you not willing to build upon this foundation? Question: Do you not think that the multiplication of human creeds has had, and still has, a tendency to cover up the Divine creed—confession—or constitution? I answer for you in the affirmative, and I further suggest that in making a human creed a test of fellowship you, my young friend, stand in the same condemnation! Another proof: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ (I. Cor., 3:11)." Is not this clear? Is it not conclusive? Is it not satisfactory? Why not build upon this and nothing else? What is the territory of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ? This question contains a seed-thought. Think it over. On the very threshold I most emphatically assert that the Kingdom of God was established upon earth, and that its territory is the whole world. "Kingdom of Heaven"—phrase suggests the true and beautiful thought that God's Kingdom is let down from heaven to earth—to the thoughts, affections, minds and lives of men. It took forty centuries to demonstrate to man, by his own experience, that God rightfully claims the whole earth. This claim was not established until Jesus proved by His resurrection and glorification, that earth's corruptions could not hold Him here. You need not look for the Kingdom in reality until you hear a proclamation of Divine love and forgiveness that comprehends the whole race, and this is first

found in the last and world-embracing commission of Jesus Christ. Who are the subjects of the Kingdom of Christ? I answer, All who believe, honor and obey Him (Jer., 31:13-14; Heb., 5:8,9). Who is the King of this institution, when did he become King, when, therefore, was this Kingdom set up on the earth.

Please indulge me the privilege of an elaborate reply. Let me impress upon your mind the important fact that I am writing to you concerning an institution over which Jesus Christ the glorified Son of God reigns in undisputed authority. Did He reign in the days of Abel, in the days of Abraham, in the days of Moses, in the days of John the Baptizer, or even while He trod the paths of men? By no means. "The Christ" is a revelation of the New Testament age. All that was known in ancient times concerning Him was wrapped up in promises and prophecies which few of the ancients understood. You can not deny this, I am sure. While Jesus is, in general terms, a New Testament revelation, His power was not fully made known until He conquered death and hell in His triumphant resurrection from the dead (Rom., 1:4; Rev., 1:17, 18). It is evident—unquestionably—that the kingdom was not set up until Jesus was made king. Now if we can find the beginning of His reign we will not need to search farther for the kingdom. When did the kingdom come? Evidently not "before the foundation of the world," for in that remote time there were no subjects for a kingdom. It did not come when God pronounced sentence on the serpent, for He placed it in the far away future (Gen., 3:14, 15). It did not come when He made the promise of the Redeemer to Abraham (Gen., 12:1-3), Isaac (Gen., 26:1-5), and Jacob (Gen., 28:10-15; Gal., 3:16), for in each instance He put it in the remote future. It did not come when Jacob prophesied of Shiloh (Gen.,

49:10), for he placed His coming in the future and left it uncertain as to the exact time. It did not come in the days of Moses, for he, too, placed it in the future without setting any time for it (Deut, 15:15, 18; Acts, 7:37). It did not come in the days of Isaiah the prophet, for he placed the coming of Immanuel in the undefined future (Isa., 7:14; Matt., 1:22, 23). It did not come when Malachi uttered the valedictory of the Old Testament for he, like all his predecessors, placed it in the mystic future (Mal., 3:1-3). It did not come in the days of John the Baptizer, for he only announced that it was at hand (Matt., 3:1,2) and died before its beginning (Matt., 11:11). It did not come when Jesus taught His disciples to pray, for He taught them to pray for it to come (Matt, 6:7-13). It did not come when Jesus sent His apostles out under the first commission, for He commanded them to announce that it was at hand (Matt., 10:1-7). It did not come during the ministry of Jesus, for He taught His disciples that some of them would live to see it (Mark, 9:1); that it was the Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom (Luke, 12:32); they lived in constant expectation of seeing it come (Luke, 19:11-27); and He taught them that He would go away to receive His kingdom (Luke, 19:11, 12). The last statement ought to be final with every thoughtful Bible student. It did not come at any time during His earthly pilgrimage, for when His enthusiastic friends attempted to crown Him king by force, He withdrew and concealed Himself (John, 6:15). It did not come when He died upon the cross, for immediately following this event one of His disciples who was an honorable and distinguished man was still waiting for it to come (Mark, 15:43). There are other weighty considerations pressing to the same irresistible conclusion. The kingdom of Christ is "within" men, that is in their hearts and minds

(Luke, 17:21); indeed Jeremiah declared that God would "write" His law in their minds or inner parts (Jer., 31:31-34). The kingdom could not be set up—fully set up—until its subjects were thoroughly prepared for it. Jesus devoted three years to the preparation of this material and if you can find the place where His disciples fully comprehended His mission you will there find the inauguration of His reign. Let me propound a few questions. Do you think the kingdom of God was within Peter when he declared that the Lord should not be permitted to die, when his Master called him Satan (Matt., 16:21-23)? Do you think the disciples had the kingdom of God within them when they disputed as to who should be the greatest in the kingdom, thus showing that they entirely misunderstood the nature of it (Matt., 18:1-4; Luke, 22:24)? Do you think the kingdom was within Peter when he attempted to fight with the sword (Matt., 26:51, 52) and when he denied the Lord and enforced his denial with an oath (Matt., 26:69-75)? Do you think the kingdom of God was set up in the disciples, when, notwithstanding His repeated predictions that He would rise again, they received the news of His resurrection as idle tales and believed not (Luke, 24:11)? Do you think the kingdom had fully begun in Thomas when he emphatically declared that he would not believe until he had examined for himself the wounds in the Redeemer's hands and feet (John, 20:24, 25)? This is an important thought. It took time to divorce the disciples from Judaism, worldliness and sin, and bring them to a full understanding of the sublime principles of the reign of Christ. Besides this, as demonstrated in a previous letter, the new institution could not be set up until the first was taken out of the way (Heb., 10:9), and it continued in full force until Jesus expired upon the cross (Rom., 7:4). Do not forget that Jesus lived and

taught and died under the law of Moses, and that His reign began since the law (Heb., 7:28). When was the kingdom set up? In order to answer this, it is only necessary to determine when the material was ready and when Jesus began to reign. It was predicted that He should reign over the house of Jacob forever and that His kingdom should never end (Luke, 1:33). Did He begin to reign when He was born, a helpless babe in the manger at Bethlehem (Luke, 2:8-12)? Did He begin to reign when He became so poor that He did not even have a place on which to lay His head (Matt., 8:20)? Did he begin to reign when He was spit upon and scourged by His foes (Matt., 27:26-31)? Did He begin to reign when He submitted to a death of disgrace upon the cross (Matt., 27:32-35)? Did He begin to reign when He was placed between two thieves and insulted by them (Matt, 27:39-44)? Did He begin to reign when the sun put on the garb of night, and when all nature reverberated His despairing cry, when He became "obedient to death," the king of terrors (Matt., 27:45-50)? Did He begin to reign when He was entombed in mother earth while His disciples, the only acknowledged friends to His kingdom, abandoned all hope and returned to their former calling (Matt., 27:62-66; John, 20:1-3). Perish the thought! When did He begin to reign? Can you answer? I will answer for you: When He entered heaven by His own blood and was exalted at the Father's right hand (Acts, 2:32-36; 5:31). Here we have the kingdom, for a mighty conqueror is on the throne. This leads us to the contemplation of the law of admission into this kingdom.

What is the Law of admission into this kingdom? This is the great question of the ages. All men everywhere, in every age are interested in the answer to it. How would you answer it? To whom and where shall we go for an

answer? Not to Moses, for his authority ceased with the death of Jesus (John, 1:17; Rom., 10:4; Eph., 2:11-16). Not to John the Baptist, for his preaching was all in the future tense (Matt., 3:1-12). Not to Jesus, for He is glorified in heaven and the righteousness of faith says for us not to call Him down (Rom., 10:5-8). I know it is your custom to pray to God, to Jesus, to the Holy Spirit to come down, but I trust that, from this time forward, in the light of the truth, you will know and do better. This brings us around to what I introduced at the beginning of this letter—"the keys of the kingdom." Do you see any relation between the law of admission and the keys of the kingdom? I do, and I think I can show it to you. However, before proceeding, I wish to say that the law of admission as expounded by the properly constituted authority and received and obeyed by men not only admits them into the kingdom, but prepares them for citizenship in it. I can not be too emphatic on this point. There is nothing recorded of six months' probation, but the gospel clearly reveals the fact that men were made citizens of the kingdom of God as soon as they heard, believed and obeyed. What kind of preparation is needed in order to citizenship? You can find an answer to this in what is required of aliens in order to citizenship in our Republic: (1). A man must be informed in reference to the existence of our government and our institutions. (2). He must believe what he hears, (3). He must turn his back upon his native country. (4). He must be naturalized by swearing allegiance to our Constitution. (5). He must take upon himself the name of an American citizen—it would be both treason and perjury to wear any other name! I trust you will bear in mind that the same process that prepares the foreigner for citizenship makes him a citizen, and the same process that prepares a man for citizen-

ship in the kingdom of Christ makes him a citizen, but in the Methodist Church, I regret to say, you have one process to make him a Christian and another to get him into the Church. What preparation is needed in order to become a citizen of Christ's kingdom? Jesus Christ set a little child in the midst of His disciples and told them if they did not turn and become as little children they should not enter the kingdom (Matt., 18:1-4). Hence, in order to become a citizen of this kingdom, "a man" must become like a "child." The child is innocent—a man must, therefore, become innocent. The child is easily led—a man must, therefore, be taught to follow his King in every charge on the strongholds of sin. The child is teachable—a man must, therefore, be an anxious learner of the truth. The child, if properly managed, is obedient—a man must, therefore, be obedient to every mandate of Jesus Christ. The citizens of the kingdom of Christ are all in harmony with Him—in heart, in mind, in life and in desire. Whatever, therefore, brings men into harmony with the will of Jesus Christ makes them citizens of His kingdom or members of His Church. You need not trouble yourself about getting men into the kingdom. Induce them to honor and obey the King and He will attend to that—He will make them "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones (Eph., 5:30)." You cannot reverse the process and take them into the kingdom and subsequently instruct them— everything in its place and everything in the way ordained by the Supreme Ruler and Savior of men!

The keys of the kingdom of heaven—to whom were they given? I answer, In a primary and important sense, to Peter (Matt., 16:17-19), but also to all the other apostles (Matt, 18:18; John 20:2,23). What is meant by the keys of

the kingdom? A key is a symbol of authority—of power to lock and unlock. It is no exaggeration, no stretching of the imagination to say that Jesus authorized His apostles to do an important work and they did it. If Jesus, as abundantly demonstrated already, went away to receive His kingdom, it follows that, as He did not return, He did not and does not personally proclaim and expound the principles of His kingdom on earth. Surely you can not doubt this. It would be a serious divergence from the truth to say that He fully made known the terms of admission before His departure, for He sent the Holy Spirit down to do this very work, and so stated in terms of such clearness that it is impossible to fail to catch His meaning (John, 14:15-18, 26; 15:26). Again, if we rush to this unwarranted conclusion we lose sight of and discount the greatest fact in history—Jesus Christ has entered heaven to appear in the presence of God for us (Heb., 4:14-16). You must see that the full gospel was not preached until the ascension and coronation of Jesus, for two all-sufficient reasons: (1). It was not completed. (2). No one, not one!—understood it prior to that event. Jesus went up on high in order to be King and He left the privilege and responsibility of making known His will to the twelve apostles. This is a fact, but you seem to have entirely lost sight of it. We may refer to Abraham or Moses, or John or Jesus, but the last court of appeals is the apostles, who were Divinely inspired, illuminated, and guided by the Holy Spirit in order that they might preach and record an infallible gospel for all generations. This assuredly brings us to the Acts of the Apostles, and here we find the sum of all revelation—the will of God in Christ—condensed into a few pages. Study them well. I greatly desire to exalt the apostles in your estimation. I also desire to emphasize their authority as the proclaimers and inter-

preters of the will of Heaven. They were to set upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt., 19:27,28). They were to speak in public what Christ spoke to them in secret (Matt., 10:26, 27). They were chosen and ordained by Him to inaugurate a work that should be permanent (John, 15:16). They were sent by Him as He had been sent by His Father (John, 17:18). They were to teach all nations (Matt., 28:11-20). They were to preach repentance and remission of sins in His name (Luke, 24:45-47). They were to preach the gospel to every creature (Mark, 16:15, 16). They were to speak as the Spirit of God craved their utterance (Matt., 10:20; Acts, 2:1-3). Whatever they bound on earth was to be bound in heaven (Matt., 16:19; 18:18). They were to remit and retain sins by making known the terms of pardon dictated by the Head of the Church (John, 20:22, 23). Their position was, indeed, an exalted and responsible one. The sum of the matter is, Jesus called them, taught them, sent them—left them and ascended up on high—to make known the law of admission into His kingdom. They alone were authorized to bind and loose in His name. There is no appeal from what they spoke and wrote, and more, they wrote for every age and every nation. If you do not give an apostolic answer to inquirers you do not answer them at all. Where did Peter bind a mourners' bench on the people? Where, in apostolic times, can you find a precedent for your revivals? Where did Peter, James and John set up an anxious seat, invite penitents to it, and in the great excitement of singing, prayer, exhortation and confusion, rush people into the kingdom of God, and exhort them to join "some Church," assuring them that they could take their choice? Where did these men of God take persons into the Church on "an experience of grace"? Where did they take persons—take

them into what—on six months' probation? If you can not find apostolic precedent for these things, do you not think it extremely dangerous to preach and practice them? The curse of God rests upon any man—yea, every man—who perverts the gospel (Gal., 1:8, 9). Did Jesus teach these men for naught? Did the Holy Spirit speak through them for naught? Is their testimony a failure? Are you not afraid to practice things in the name of religion that have not the shade of Scriptural proof to sustain them? Do you think God will hold you guiltless when you lead blind people into the ditch? Do you think He will approve you when you insult His ambassadors by substituting your own ways for theirs (II. Cor., 5:18-21)? Do you not feel your accountability for the souls of the men and women to whom you preach?

When and where were the keys of the kingdom first used by Peter and his associates? In other words, when did the reign of Christ formally and fully begin on earth? I answer, on the day of Pentecost, in the city of Jerusalem. The prophets Isaiah and Micah unite in declaring that the law of the Lord should emanate from Jerusalem (Isa., 2:1, 2; Mic., 4:1, 2). The Lord Jesus in His last instructions to the apostles commanded them to begin at Jerusalem (Luke, 24:45-49; Acts, 1:1-8) and Peter declares substantially that they began at Jerusalem (Acts, 2:1-4; 11:155) and Luke declares that the church was at Jerusalem (Acts, 8:1). Paul in contrasting the two covenants of which I have written, makes Jerusalem the beginning of the second, declaring that Jerusalem was the mother of all the churches (Gal., 4:22-31). All roads lead to Jerusalem—all lines of history past and present converge in the first Pentecost after the ascension of Jesus, for there the apostles for the first time in the world's history opened up the plan of salvation for all

nations with the assurance that their words and acts were ratified in the courts of heaven. Here we find the kingdom in its fulness; the constitution, the territory, the subjects, the law of admission, and the King! You can not find them before this. In the second chapter of Acts we have a detailed account of the preaching and teaching of the apostles, and the results that followed. This was the laying of the foundation for all future ages, and every example of conversion in every age must harmonize with this, for was it not ratified in heaven? Is there any appeal from this? If so, to whom or to what shall appeal be made? This was, to borrow a popular Methodist expression, the first great revival. I challenge you to produce a single Methodist revival that corresponds to this in any essential particular? You can contrast your work with the work of the apostles under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I am sure of one thing, the work of the apostles will not suffer by the contrast! Do you think so?

The keys of the kingdom were used to open the door of faith to both Jews and Gentiles, and the door of mercy will stand open to the end of the age. You need not worry yourself about the true church if you will take the Book as it reads. I am sure you can not controvert this statement. Every church that builds upon the same foundation, wears the same name, stands for the same doctrine and does the same work is a church of Christ. Here is another: Every church that deviates from the apostolic model is to the extent of its deviation an invention of man! Can you improve on the church of Christ as He set it up? If yes, point out the particular. If no, lay down your Methodism and go back to Jerusalem—to the old foundation—and let creeds, confessions and speculations look out for themselves.

Affectionately yours,

J.

LETTER No. IV. — THE HOLY SPIRIT'S MISSION.

My Dear Theophilus:—I trust you are growing in grace and in the knowledge of the truth—in favor with God and men. I congratulate you on your disposition to re-investigate the principles on which you have been building. This shows an inquiring mind, a generous heart and a noble soul. Your example is worthy of imitation. I now bring to your consideration another important subject. Indeed, I do not hesitate to say that, to this age, it is pre-eminently important because of the endless variety of vague and uncertain ideas entertained concerning it. I regret to say that, in my judgment, the Methodist Church is in a great measure responsible for this confusion. It is not a pleasant task to make this charge on you, but I am convinced that it is well founded. I think the trouble originates in a misconception. Who is the Holy Spirit? To one who attends one of your revivals, the impression is inevitable that you believe that the Holy Spirit is an "influence" or "power" simply. This is a serious mistake. The Holy Spirit is a person, God—Jehovah—our Father. Keep the thought of personality in your mind, and difficulties apparently insurmountable will disappear. Lose sight of it, and you will live in confusion as you have in the past. More than this, when you pray for the Holy Spirit to come "directly" from God in order to convert sinners, you set aside the mediatorial work of Jesus Christ, nullify the conditions of the gospel, repudiate the work of the apostles, and leave the sinner utterly undone and helpless. In view of these incontrovertible facts, I ask

your attention while I discuss every phase of the Holy Spirit's work as revealed in the Bible, and I lay down one proposition to which I shall frequently allude in this letter: In all His manifestations where man is personally and directly involved, He operates in harmony with the constitution of man, save in cases where the object is the confirmation of some great truth or the divulgence of some great plan where a miracle is needed to confirm and stamp upon it the seal of Divine authority, and that all His miraculous manifestations ended with the completion of the remedial scheme or the death of the last apostle. In other words there are no miracles in our day. The apostles and early Christians received extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit for extraordinary purposes, but those purposes having been fulfilled, the gift ceased. The message of the Holy Spirit has always been the same, from Pentecost downward, and these extraordinary manifestations, such as tongues and prophecies, constituted no part of it. They were rather concomitants designed to, once for all, call attention to the message, and challenge every man and every age to investigate its truthfulness. Denominationalism, of which, I regret to say, you are a part, makes the Holy Spirit inconsistent and contradictory in His teaching, for you claim that He leads one man to be a Baptist, another to be a Presbyterian and another to be a Methodist, when these sects do not fellowship each other—when their teachings are absurdly contradictory—in the face of the prayer of Jesus that all His followers may be one (John, 17:20,21). Do you think Jesus would so fervently pray for one thing and then send the Holy Spirit into the world to contradict, oppose, and set up something else? If you do, your credulity is great beyond measure. I doubt, my friend, if you believe this, but you have married yourself to a theory that teaches that

every one is right if he is sincere, and you must be consistent and "liberal" if you are a "strong" and uncompromising Methodist!

The Holy Spirit is in a great degree a New Testament revelation. In the Old Testament we have God, Jehovah, and occasionally "The Spirit of God"; in the New Testament we have the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This will be clear to you if you will reflect that the design of revelation is primarily to make God known, and incidentally to make known His will to the world, and that revelation was gradual from the transgression to the day of Pentecost. God revealed Himself to man as he was able, by growth and knowledge, to understand and obey. At first He only intimated His purpose; further on He made a promise, and subsequently confirmed it with an oath; further on He thundered His will from Mt. Sinai, and finally He manifested Himself in the flesh and walked and talked with men (John, 1:14).

The question of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, by reason of ignorance, has caused many to stumble. I will, therefore, discuss it first. I hardly need to say, after what has previously been said, that it is peculiar to the New Testament age. I will also state here that it only occurred during the apostolic age. The first intimation of God's intention to thus manifest Himself was through John, the harbinger of Christ: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire (Matt, 3:11)." This was addressed to a mixed multitude and it is easy to see that God would baptize the good with or rather in His Spirit, and the wicked with fire. It is a flagrant misapplication of the word of God to say that this was all addressed to the good,

and the prayer in which God is besought to baptize men with the Holy Ghost and with fire, has foundation neither in common sense nor in the apostolic writings, and I suggest to you that a thing that has the approval of neither of these, is dangerous. "Baptized in the Holy Spirit"—what does it mean? An answer to this question will solve many dependent mysteries and difficulties. Baptism carries in it the idea of overwhelming, hence, men were to be overwhelmed with the Holy Spirit—God—to the extent of becoming in mind absolutely under His control and direction. This of course was nothing short of a miracle. It overruled all the ordinary laws governing mind and took possession of both mind and tongue. As it was an extraordinary occurrence, there must have been also an extraordinary end in view, and certainly was. The power God uses is always proportioned to the work He has to do. What did He design in the baptism of the Holy Spirit? I answer, the design was two-fold: (1). To enable or capacitate the apostles to preach an infallible gospel, and to prove to their contemporaries that God was with them. (2). To demonstrate to the Jewish brethren at the house of Cornelius: "That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel (Eph., 3:6)." Joel, the prophet, predicted that in the last days—evidently the gospel dispensation—God would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh, resulting in wonderful works. I digress long enough to call attention to the fact that if the Lord should pour out His Spirit now as you often ask Him to do, the same results would follow—there is undeniably no room for doubt here. Joel's prophecy was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (Acts, 2:16-20)—another proof that Pentecost marks the inauguration of the kingdom of Jesus Christ on earth. As before intimated, the baptism of the Holy Spirit

was to guide the apostles into all truth. It was not specifically for their benefit but for the benefit of others (John, 14:26). You speak of the baptism of the Holy Spirit— "of power" as you call it—as if it were the same as conversion, but you can not produce a single proof to sustain you in your position. After the resurrection of Jesus, He commanded His apostles to tarry in Jerusalem until they should be endued with power from on high (Luke, 24:49), or as another report of the same interview has it, that they should be baptised in the Holy Spirit not many days hence (Acts, 1:5). I pause to call your attention to the fact that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was not promised to the world (John, 14:17). Next time you let your enthusiasm lead you to pray to God to baptize unconverted men in the Holy Spirit, think of this—and try to quit it! You have no assurance that such a prayer will be answered. When was the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit to the apostles, fulfilled? On the day of Pentecost. Methodist preachers have been praying for "Pentecostal showers" for generations and the prayer has never yet been answered, as I can prove by you. Turn to the second chapter of Acts. If you will read carefully, we can soon bring the matter to a satisfactory adjustment. You claim that you have been— that many of your brethren have been—baptized with the Holy Spirit. I deny it. How can we settle the controversy? By appealing to the record. You read and I will note: (1). Those to whom the baptism of the Holy Spirit was promised—it was not promised to the world!—were all with one accord and in one place. (2). There came a sound from heaven. (3). It came as a rushing mighty wind. (4). It filled all the house where they were sitting. (5). There appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire. (6). It sat upon each of them. (7). They were all

filled with the Holy Spirit. (8). They all spoke with other tongues—languages previously unknown to them—as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts, 2:1-4). (9). All who received it became preachers at once—without further education. (10). The men—wonder of wonders!—preached baptism for the remission of sins (Acts, 2:38)! You claim that you have been baptized in the Holy Spirit repeatedly, and yet you never saw a congregation all in one accord, no never. You never heard a sound come from heaven like a rushing, mighty wind. You never saw a house filled with miraculous power. You never saw "cloven tongues like fire." You never saw a whole congregation influenced by miraculous power. You never saw a man miraculously educated—enabled to speak with tongues, and you have never yet seen a Methodist preacher who would preach what the first recipients of this power preached—or who gave to inquirers the answer these men gave, and you never will, for the moment he does this he becomes a heretic in the estimation of his brethren and all sister sects! You claim that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is essential to salvation—that without it there is, there can be no pardon. I call on you to prove this claim to the world. The souls of men hang trembling in the balance. I deny that I have been, that you have been, that any other man in this age has been, so baptized. You insist upon it. The book is open before you. I challenge you to the contest. Just work one miracle or speak one language which you have never learned from man, and I will give it up. I do not doubt your sincerity, but I can not take your word for it, I insist upon Bible proof. There are three ways by which you might establish your claim: (1). By introducing the words of Jesus, where He promised it to the world and to all ages—that is to the unconverted. (2). By showing that the apos-

bles—ambassadors—of Jesus after preaching the gospel always prayed for the Lord to baptize sinners in the Holy Spirit. (3). By the actual reproduction of the scenes of Pentecost. You pray for this, but up to date it has not come, and I confidently predict that it never will. The second baptism of the Holy Spirit occurred at the house of Cornelius, the Gentile. Peter was present on both occasions, and is, therefore, a competent witness. We have seen what occurred on Pentecost. Read the account again. I want to avoid all possibility of quibble or mistake. Have you read it? Read also the tenth and eleventh chapters of Acts. Well, here is Peter's testimony: "And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them as on us at the beginning (Acts, 11:15)." What beginning was this? Pentecost, most assuredly. Read that passage slowly and thoughtfully—"as on us at the beginning." This certainly affords no comfort to you. If Peter's testimony is to be relied on, the demonstration contained all the miraculous elements seen and experienced on Pentecost, the immediate results were precisely the same, while the remote result was that when the Jewish brethren—environed by family pride two thousand years old: "Heard these things they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life (Acts, 11:18)." In neither case had the baptism of the Holy Spirit anything to do with the salvation of those who received it. I am sure you will not deny this in reference to the apostles on Pentecost, and the multitude did not receive it. This is just as true of the house of Cornelius. These people—like all others—were required to believe in Christ and obey Him in order to salvation, and the miracle was for the purpose already indicated. If it were otherwise the baptism of the Holy Spirit would have been continued through the ages,

but there is no proof that it was. I have asserted that the Gentiles were saved by faith and obedience. Let me prove it: (1). The angel who commanded Cornelius to send for Peter told him he should tell him what to do (Acts, 10:1-7). (2). The three men who went as messengers to Peter told him that Cornelius desired to hear word's of him (Acts, 9:19-22). (3). Upon his arrival Cornelius told Peter the same thing (Acts, 9:32). (4). After the conversion of the Gentiles, Peter rehearsed the whole matter, in self-defense, to his brethren, assuring them that the angels of God had commanded the centurion to send for him, with the assurance that upon his arrival he should tell them words by which he and his house should be saved (Acts, 11:1-14). Saved by words—saved by preaching—saved by faith—saved by obedience. (5). Peter in the great council at Jerusalem declared that God made choice of him—gave him pre-eminently the authority to bind and loose—that the Gentiles by his mouth should hear the word of the gospel and believe (Acts, 15:1-7). I can prove by you that these people were not saved by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Do you doubt it? Turn to your Discipline. Does it not say that men are justified when they believe, or by faith alone? Certainly. Then it follows that they were saved by their faith when they heard the words of Peter! If men are "justified by faith alone" they are justified without anything else. Do you still, in the face of this argument, claim that you have had the baptism in the Holy Spirit? If so, produce the signs. Possibly you will say the signs do not necessarily follow. If not, by what means can you prove that it is the baptism of the Holy Spirit? The only way known to me by which it can be identified is, by what is written. If you know of any better way to do it, I am anxious for you to show it. Miraculous gifts were conferred by the laying on

of the apostles' hands, but this in no way sustains your claims (Acts, 8:16, 17; 19:1-6). There is another way to test your position: Do you give the same answers to inquirers—circumstances considered—that were given by Peter and Ananias and Paul? If not, it is incontestably certain that you have been baptized in another spirit! Do you tell the people, who, like the Pentecostans, have heard and believed the gospel, to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins, assuring them that when they do these things they shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts, 2:1-7, 38)? Do you tell men, who, like Saul, have fasted and prayed and waited, to arise and be baptized and wash away their sins, calling on the name of the Lord (Acts, 22:1-16)? Do you tell men, who, like the Jailor, have never heard the gospel, to believe on the Lord Jesus, and then, without hesitancy, or intermission, unfold to them the provisions of the unsearchable riches of Christ, and baptize them the same hour of the night (Acts, 16:19-33)? You know you do not. You tell death-bed stories and other touching incidents, and when the people are thoroughly aroused—when their animal natures are all stirred—call them to a mourning bench of your own invention, and by songs unknown to the word of God, and by prayers designed to deepen the excitement, rush them through a process for which you have not one syllable of proof in the book of God. I tell you, my friend, it is time for you to stop and consider.

There is one thing on which we can agree—that the conversion of men is begun, carried forward and completed by the Holy Spirit and that the Holy Spirit is God, but we are not agreed as to the method by which He does this work. God is in heaven and we are upon earth. How does He, therefore, influence us in order to bring us into salvation

and into His service? It is evident that He has but one method, and in our efforts to discover it we must bear two things in mind: (1). God's methods must be in harmony with the constitution of man; in other words it must not set aside the natural laws by which all mental operations are controlled. (2). It must not conflict with or set aside the mediatorial work of Jesus as revealed and defined in the New Testament. Miraculous conversion is out of the question—the theory antedates antiquity itself! It is a fact that God sometimes—yea, often—operates outside of the natural laws governing mind and outside of the scheme of redemption revealed in the Scriptures, but when He does this His object is not the conversion of men. A few examples will enforce and illustrate this statement. In creation the Spirit of God moved—with a mighty force—upon the face of the waters (Gen., 1:2). This was force, pure and simple. Sometimes in your revivals you petition God to "move upon" the people, making it appear that you desire an irresistible force to cause them to turn. Let me give you a little advice. When you are disposed to send up such prayers, pause a moment and ask your Bible if the apostles ever uttered such petitions. There is no force in conversion. Force belongs to the domain of matter. Man is more than matter. He is an intelligent being and must be treated in harmony with his nature. Again, God often acts directly in order to destroy. The flood (Gen., 7:1-24) and the destruction of Jericho (Josh., 5:1-24) are examples. He also uses force to punish the incorrigible. The destruction of Sennacherib's army (II. Chron., 32:21, 22) and death of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts, 5:1-10) are examples. You propose to take man out of his sphere, place him in the domain of force and convert him without regard to his nature, or rather in spite of his nature. The creation of man was a

miracle. The destruction of the wicked will be a miracle, but the miraculous element in the plan of salvation is in the incarnation and resurrection of Jesus, and the inspiration of His apostles; but in its application to man, so far as hearing, accepting, believing, repenting, obeying, living, are concerned, there is nothing miraculous whatever. The work of bringing man back to God is in harmony with him as he is, without any force in addition to the gospel of Jesus Christ. You can not have a revival and proceed along this line, for there is not enough excitement in it. It takes excitement to make converts under your system. I think your mind is now prepared for a clear-cut proposition, and here it is: In conversion, the Holy Spirit—God—acts or operates upon the minds of men through the instrumentality or agency of the gospel. You can easily grasp this, if you wish to do it, but I do not ask you to accept it because I say it, but because it is true. Consider my proof: (1). Man was made in God's likeness and image, and is, therefore, a thinking, reasoning being (Gen., 1:26-27). This is a fundamental fact. Satan by deception (Gen., 3:1-6) planted the seeds of sin and dissolution in him, and he did it by a natural process—reasoning, hearing, believing and doing (I. Tim., 2:13-15). Look at the sinner, consider his ways. There is nothing wrong with him, save the fact that sin and rebellion have corrupted the fountains of his nature. He does not need any new faculties, but he needs to have the old ones cleansed and put in tune with the music of redemption. How is this to be done? You say by a miracle—a direct impartation of the Holy Spirit in answer to prayer. I say it is to be done in harmony with his constitution, by introducing a motive that will grow by cultivation and ripen into full obedience to the King of heaven and earth. Which strikes you as the more reasonable?

There is a primary and important sense in which the Kingdom of God is within men—in their affections, thoughts and lives (Luke, 17:21). With this view of the matter, turn to the parable of the mustard seed. Jesus tells us that it is an exceedingly small seed, but when it is grown it is the greatest among herbs and affords protection for the fowls of the air (Matt., 13:31, 32). The seed of the Kingdom—the motive to do the will of God—is planted in the human heart, and it grows until it subjugates the entire man, body, soul and spirit. If God departs from nature's laws and converts men as you believe, by the performance of a miracle, why does He not cause vegetation to grow in the "twinkling of an eye"? The cases are in most respects parallel. The production of the first mustard plant was a miracle, but since that time it reproduces itself by the operation of natural laws and cultivation, but never without seed. The formulation of the scheme of redemption was a stupendous miracle, but its application proceeds along natural lines in harmony with the directions submitted in the New Testament. The miracle was in the completion of the plan, but the carrying out of the plan was natural—"that is, in harmony with our natures, notwithstanding we are distorted by sin and folly. Jesus compared the starting of the Kingdom of heaven in the hearts of men, to sowing seed in the field, and declares that the seed of the Kingdom is the word of God (Luke, 8:1-18). Please answer a question: Is the word of the Holy Spirit as it is written, if faithfully preached, wholly believed and honestly obeyed, sufficient to save men from the condemnation of sin? If no, of what use is it? If yes, why pray for the baptism in the Holy Spirit? If no, why do you devote your time to preaching that which, if believed and obeyed, would really do no good? If yes, why do you have a creed and why teach sinners to expect

a miracle in order to convert them? Please answer another question: Is the plan of salvation revealed in the Scriptures, and is this plan perfect in its adaptation to the needs and wants of men? If no, what use have we for the apostles and their records? If yes, why have a Methodist Church—why not take the Church of Christ as He left it? (6). The human element in the work of redemption. This proposition may surprise you but a little thinking will relieve you. Salvation originated in the God of love, but Jesus became a man—subject to death—in order to bring it to the sons and daughters of men. This thought can not be eliminated—take it out of religion and you remove it largely from the domain of our experiences. Hear the apostle: "For as much 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; and deliver them, that through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage; for verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham; 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., 2:14-18)." I suggest that you take your Bible and mark all the passages in the New Testament in which it is stated or implied that men are instrumental in saving men. You will be astonished at the result. Every passage of this character overturns your theory of conversion,, for if men are converted by the direct impartation of the Holy Spirit what can one man do to help another? He can preach to him but the object of preaching is to move man, while your theory makes

it necessary to bring the "power from on high." Reduce the thing to its essence and the only thing that will avail that you can do for him is to pray for him. I can not see, placing myself in your position, how the sinner's prayers can do him any good, for up to the time the baptism of the Holy Spirit occurs he is an unbeliever and "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin (Rom., 14:23)." The fact that Jesus Christ became a man suggests that the possibilities of man in helping man are great. During His pilgrimage He was constantly teaching, illustrating and enforcing man's obligation to man, and the last commission that He gave, was to the men whom He had chosen to go and carry the news of salvation to the whole creation or to every creature (Mark, 16:15, 16). So marked is this truth in the New Testament that after His ascension He refused to tell a penitent man what to do notwithstanding He was urgently asked to do so (Acts, 9:1-18). This very man incidentally explained this later on, for he was sent to preach the gospel, when he declared that the word or ministry of reconciliation was given to the apostles (II. Cor., 5:18-21). Jude, in perfect harmony with this, exhorted the brethren to contend for the faith that had once for all been delivered to the saints (Jude, 3). (7). The gospel. The gospel—the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ—is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believes—in other words it, inspired by the Holy Spirit, saves every man who keeps it in memory and obeys it with an honest heart (Rom., 1:16; I, Cor., 15:1-4). I should like to have you undertake to explain these statements—these passages of Scripture—from the standpoint of direct spiritual agency in conversion. (8). The power of the cross. Paul declares that the preaching of the Cross is the power of God (I. Cor., 1:18), and asks God to forbid that he should glory save in the Cross (Gal., 6:14).

I should like to know what place the Cross has in your system of conversion. True, you preach to the people with all possible vehemence, and warn them faithfully and earnestly, but when you want "power" you pray for it and assure your hearers that you are powerless unless the Holy Spirit comes. What a mistake! Powerless, when you have a chance to preach Christ as the apostles preached him. Powerless, when the plan of salvation—what a sinner must do—is laid down by men who spoke as God gave them utterance. I call you back to elementary principles—to the original gospel—to the perfect gospel. May God bless you in trying to learn it. (9). The perpetuity of the gospel. The gospel has lived over eighteen centuries. What keeps it alive? From your standpoint this question can not be successfully answered. I can answer it for you. The Holy Spirit—God—is in it, and hence it is not subject to death. As confirmatory of this, examine Paul's exhortation to Timothy: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou faithfully to men, who shall be able to teach others also (II. Tim., 2:2)."

I come now to another phase of this subject—the gift or indwelling of the Holy Spirit. How often the prayer has gone up to God to hasten the time when the hearts of all men shall everywhere become fit temples for the indwelling of His Spirit. Is this a proper prayer? Unquestionably. It is well to emphasize the thought that men's hearts must be clean and inviting in order that God may dwell in them. This is the best reason why your theory of conversion is false, for you pray to God to send the Holy Spirit "directly" to the wicked heart of the sinner. Let us examine a few passages. On the day of Pentecost, Peter promised those who would comply with the provisions of the Gospel, the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts, 2:38). This is fundamental—

for it was a part of the first apostolic sermon. Again, this same apostle declared that God gives the Holy Spirit to all who obey Him (Acts, 5: 52). Paul confirms this by declaring to the Galatians that because they were sons—not to make them sons as you seem to think—God had sent the Spirit of His Son into their heart, crying Abba Father (Gal., 4:6). How do you like this proposition: God—the Holy Spirit—through the agency of the Gospel begins His work in the hearts of men and carries it on to completion, and, after preparing Himself a habitation there, takes up His abode? Where does your spirit dwell? In your body of course. Over and over again it is asserted that converted men and women constitute the body of Christ and that the body is the church (Rom., 12:4, 5; Col., 1:18; Eph., 4:15, 16). Paul declared to the Corinthians that they were the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelt in them (I. Cor., 3:16, 17), and to the Ephesians that they were built together—one body, one church, one people, "For a habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph., 2:22)." The Holy Spirit does not dwell in the world—"whom the world can not receive"—but in the church or body of Christ (John, 14:17). Your prayer to God to baptize everybody in the Holy Spirit is at variance with the Word of God. It is your duty to persuade men to obey the Lord in His requirements. In doing this He will place them in the body, and because they are His own, take up His abode with them.

You have a great deal to say about the witness of the Spirit, and I am sure you will be interested in a brief discussion of it. Paul declared: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God (Rom., 8:16)." The sense of this passage is, that the Spirit of God testifies and our spirits testify also. You want the Spirit to do all the testifying. In what way does the Holy Spirit tes-

tify to the fact that we are the children of God? These are transcendently important questions. On what ground respectively do these two witnesses base their testimony? How would you answer these questions? I believe that a serious effort to do so will shake your confidence in your doctrine, but I must confess that this would not disturb me in the least! I will answer the questions, for I am sure you will not. The terms or conditions of salvation are submitted by the twelve witnesses, apostles. When we intelligently and heartily comply with these terms the Holy Spirit, who dictated them, testifies in His promises that we are accepted, and our spirits bear testimony to the same fact. Do you think the Holy Spirit would dictate the terms of pardon and then testify to man's spirit that he is pardoned, who has never complied with the conditions? I leave you with this question.

We have the earnest, pledge, of the Holy Spirit—God— of our final redemption, if we continue faithful to Him. There is, there can be, no uncertainty along this road. God has spoken. If we hear, believe, obey, continue, there is no doubt of the result. Jesus Christ is pledged, God our Father is pledged and the Holy Spirit is pledged to our eternal benefit There is no room for doubt here. You can easily test yourself. You may not be able to explain how the Holy Spirit dwells in you, but you can know whether or not it is true in your own experience. Have you done what the Holy Spirit commands? If so, have you the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance? If you have obeyed the form of doctrine (Rom., 6:16-18), and if you have the fruits you can rest—having the "peace of God that passeth all understanding."

In closing this letter, "I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified (Acts, 20:32)." Affectionately yours, J.

LETTER No. V.—THE GREAT COMMISSION.

My Dear Theophilus:—Did you ever preach a sermon on the Great Commission? If not, I suggest that you prepare and preach one upon it as soon as possible. It will be instructive to you and also to your people. In order to help you to the attainment of these desirable ends I propose to discuss it in this letter. This commission stands alone in the world's history. The circumstances under which it was given all proclaim its solemn significance. We have four records of this commission all covering substantially the same ground: (1). "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 Spirit; 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. Amen (Matt., 28:18-20)." (2). "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 (Mark, 16:15, 16)." (3). "Thus it was written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remissions of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (Luke, 24:46, 47)." (4). "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained (John, 20:22, 23)." This commission embraces the whole gospel in condensed form. It is a little strange that you and your brethren always make

it convenient to find subjects elsewhere. What objection can you have to taking it and discussing it item by item?

When was the commission given? This is important. I answer, After Jesus had arisen from the dead and before His ascension to the Father. It is His farewell to earth and to His apostles. The circumstances surrounding the Lord and His own at this time were both sad and peculiar. Why had not such a commission been previously given? For the simple reason that the time had not come. Did you ever study the progressive development of the Kingdom of God? If not, now is a good time to begin. Jesus said: "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how; for the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear (Mark, 4:26-28)." Here are many lessons. This quotation sums up God's work in redemption for nearly forty centuries. His plan was gradually unfolded from the transgression downward through the ages until it finally culminated in the cross of Christ. Men and things served their purposes—His purposes—and then sank into oblivion. Sometimes He chose a good man to serve His purpose, sometimes a bad one, but His object was always attained, and, as He came step by step down the pathway of the centuries, He discarded whatever was unnecessary to the further development of His plans. After He took a new step forward, there was no need for the preceding step save to show where He had been. He chose Abraham (Gen., 12:1-3), Isaac (Gen., 26:1-4) and Jacob (Gen., 28:10-15), and finally all their offspring as the instrumentalities by which to make known and illustrate His gracious purposes (Ex., 19:6). In doing this, He simply left all other nations to themselves, and, to keep the

blood of Abraham pure, He fenced the family in with the covenant of circumcision (Gen., 17:10-14) and with the Law of Moses (Mal., 4:4). After this all His dealings with men were for the benefit of this nation. When they obeyed Him, He prospered them. When they sinned, He sent their enemies to punish them. He gave them His revelations (Rom., 2:1, 2). If you will reflect that from the time of Abraham forward, God was using every possible means of bringing this nation up to a high plane of civilization and spiritual discernment, you will rid yourself of several difficulties that have hitherto beset you. All the prophets and reformers were sent to them, and nearly all of the first four books of the New Testament were addressed to them. "First the blade"—from Abram to Moses, "then the ear"—from Moses to the crucifixion, "then the full corn in the ear"—from the crucifixion to the end of time. Question: What use have we for the stalk and husk after we have gathered the full 'corn save to show where it grew? The Law of Moses was in full force, the tabernacle or temple service, in obedience to its requirements, continued until our blessed Redeemer expired. Hence, John the Baptizer and Jesus spent their entire lives on earth under the Law and lived in obedience to its requirements. The supposition of some that the Church of Christ was set up by John or during the life of Jesus is nothing less than absurd. It was impossible to set it up under the Law (Heb., 10:9). The inconsistency may be further seen in the fact that God's original promise (Gen., 12:1-3; Gal., 3:8) embraced all the world (Acts, 3:25, 26), and during the life of John and Jesus it was impossible to open the church to Gentiles, for the middle wall of separation—Law of Moses—was still standing and Jesus broke it down by His death: "That he might reconcile both

unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby (Eph., 2:11-16)." You may go behind the cross for history, law or prophecy, but if you wish to find redemption you must come to the cross. You can see that there was a profound reason for not giving a world wide commission during the earth-life of Jesus. I am now prepared to answer the question with which we started out: The Great Commission was given after the abolishment of the Law had destroyed all previous relations and made way for the proclamation of God's mercy to all the world. The cross is the dividing line—keep in its shadow and you will be safe doctrinally and practically. Go back of it and you will be involved in difficulties from which you can not extricate yourself.

By whom was the commission given? It was not given by Jehovah. It was not given by Moses. It was not given by John the Baptizer. It was not given by Jesus during His ministry. It was given by Jesus Christ, the triumphant conqueror of death, hell and the grave (Rev., 1:17, 18). The entire life of Jesus was one of obedience—He learned obedience by the things which He suffered (Heb., 5:8, 9). He came into the world to do the Father's will (Heb., 10:7-9). He came in His Father's name (John, 5:43), and even down to the hours of agony, in sight of the cross, He expressed Himself as subservient to His Father's will (Luke, 22:39-46). He fought His last great battle with death and darkness and in coming out of the grave demonstrated again beyond all doubt that He is the Son of God. The government of God (Isa., 9:6, 7) was placed upon His shoulders, and all authority in heaven and earth was given into His hands (Matt., 28:18), and, from beyond the wreck of buried years, down from the shining courts of heaven, reverberating through earth and sky—with new

emphasis and meaning—comes the voice of Jehovah: "This is my beloved Son: hear ye Him (Mark, 97)"! Why? Because He speaks with the voice of a conqueror, and because the Father has given Him the authority to dictate the terms of salvation to a perishing race. Doubtless, you have always supposed that Jesus had all authority or power above and below when He came to earth. This is a mistake for which there is no excuse. His earthly mission was to serve (Matt., 20:28), but He has by serving—what a lesson for us!—the right to the reverence, love and homage of all the inhabitants of earth and heaven. Indeed, He has led captivity captive (Eph., 4:8) and rightfully demands your loyal service, your most fervent love and your unrestrained obedience.

Why was the commission given? Because Jesus had paid the price of the redemption of all men (I. Pet., 1:18-20), and desired to gather His sheep into the fold—His own fold. Read the commission over again. Note its depth, its height, its world-wide comprehensiveness. He leaves no one to doubt His love for the whole race—"every creature," "all nations." Again, He had only completed the Divine side of redemption, and the commission gives the specification for the completion of the human side. He gave this commission so that the apostles might know what He expected them to do. If you are ever disposed to doubt the propriety of anything here laid down, let me remind you that the will of Jesus is supreme and it is treason to question it. The conditions embraced in the commission are not arbitrary or despotic but wisely adapted to the end in view. Jesus not only designed to test our allegiance, but also by the tests submitted, prepare us more fully for His service. In other words, the things required of us by our Savior and King on the ground of His authority or sover-

eignty, are the things which, when done, that bring the greatest and most lasting blessings down upon our own heads.

To whom was the commission given? I answer, to men like unto us. Man must, at last, carry the news of salvation to man. Paul describes the grandeur, dignity and responsibility of the apostolic office: "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to 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, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation; now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God (II. Cor., 5:18-20)." I am strongly inclined to use italics here. Look over this quotation and you will see that the word or ministry of reconciliation was delivered to the apostles, and that as ambassadors—an exalted office—of Christ, they besought men in His stead to be reconciled to God. This is not the first commission, Jesus sent them out previous to this, and commanded them, saying: "Go not in 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; and as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matt., 10:5-7)." Contrast these two commissions. The first contains no message of salvation; the second promises salvation to all who obey the Lord. The first was confined to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; the second embraced all nations and all ages. How do you account for the difference? Let me answer: Simply, the cross stood between the two. Oh the wonderful, the transforming power of the cross! It breaks down all restrictions and lets God's philanthropy flow without obstruction to every creature.

It turns the darkness of sin into the morning of everlasting day. It turns the wilderness of sin into a garden of supreme delights. It opens the gates of heaven, lifts us to the top of Pisgah and gives us a view of the city of God. The cross was the basis of the world-wide and age-lasting commission, and this commission was placed in the hands of men, and they were charged with the solemn duty of making known its provisions, and their interpretations were to be final. They were—in making the terms of pardon known—said to remit and retain sins. They were to bind and loose in the name of Jesus. God commanded men to hear Jesus Christ His Son; Jesus sent the apostles into the world to represent Him—to bear witness of Him (Luke, 24:48), and whoever hears them, hears the Father, hears the Son, hears the Holy Spirit. Whoever rejects them, rejects the combined authority of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matt., 10:40). What do you, in the light of these facts, propose to do with this commission? You can not risk your soul on any new interpretation of its provisions. You must appeal to the records of the apostolic preaching.

How long was this commission to last? That depends on how long time lasts—its provisions are good unto the end of the world. Jesus promised the apostles that He would be with them to the end of the world. Either the promise of Jesus has failed, or He is with the words and works of Jesus to-day—which will you take? The Great Commission is the sum of all that went before and the seed of all that was to come after it. It was a condensation of the life, doctrine, and power of Jesus, and under the labors of the Apostles it was to be unfolded into the Church of God. Jesus still lives and the commission is still authoritative.

What does this Commission embrace? This is practical.

It concerns you. It concerns me. It concerns everybody. It is a settled fact that there is no appeal from it. Therefore, it behooves us to endeavor to find out its meaning. Look at it calmly: (1). Let us contemplate for a moment the authority of Jesus. There is no limit to it in heaven or in earth. He is the only Lawgiver. He is the Supreme Architect of life and liberty. He is the Great High Priest over the house of God. He is the light of earth and time. The authority of Moses has ceased, and now we must hear and believe Jesus only, only Jesus. (2). The command to go. This command is the marching order of the Church of Christ. The philanthropy of God is seen in the command to go everywhere. God loved the whole world. Jesus tasted death for every man. People are to be sought. It was the duty of the apostles to carry the news of salvation everywhere, and it is our duty to take up the work where they left it—not to explain, or interpret, but to proclaim and make it known, without subtraction, addition or amendment, everywhere. Now it appears to me, that if your prayers will influence God to send converting power down, or to baptize men in the Holy Spirit, as you claim they will, you should simply stay at home and pray. I hold you to your doctrine. You claim in your revivals that you are powerless if the Holy Spirit does not come, and preaching does not influence Him, otherwise you would not have to pray for a baptism of power. The Lord's commission says for men to go. Yours says to pray. The word of reconciliation is here, the people are elsewhere; will you carry it to them, and when you get to them preach it as it is recorded? You are not powerless if you will go in the name of Christ and carry the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. I will tell you when you are powerless: When you clothe yourself in sectarian armor, and

preach with the approbation of men before your eyes. Beware of this! (3). Preaching and teaching. Here are two distinct ideas. Preach means to publish and authoritatively proclaim. Teach means to quietly and patiently instruct. The apostles were to do both. The idea of preaching or teaching is fundamental in the Kingdom of Christ. Christianity is something that is to be learned. The fact is, this has always been true. God communicates His will to man in a form that can be assimilated and understood. This was true in Eden (Gen., 2:16, 17). It was true at Sinai (Ex., 20:1-17). It is true under the gospel (Jas., 1:125)—it will be true forever. You can easily see the reason for this. God hangs the issues of eternal life and death upon His law (Mark, 16:15, 16), and as He does not trifle with His creatures, His law can be understood and obeyed. Again, the curse of Heaven rests on the man who perverts the gospel (Gal., 1:8, 9), or in any way mutilates it (Rev., 22:18, 19). Your idea of religion is, that it is something that can be obtained directly from heaven. In this you are mistaken. It is a revelation and may be taught, studied, learned; otherwise grace and peace could not be multiplied to us "through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord (II. Pet., 1:2)." The prophet predicted that under the new covenant the law of God should be written in the minds and hearts of men (Jer., 31:31-34). Surely this is clear enough. A good subject of a human government is one who understands the laws and obeys them. This guarantees to him all the privileges, blessings, and protection the government can afford. A good subject of the Kingdom of Christ is a man who understands the laws and obeys them. This guarantees to him salvation, consolation and protection in this life, and in the world to come, eternal life. This lifts Christianity out of the domain of the mythical and places it upon the high

plane of thought, intelligence, understanding, and re-emphasizes the words of the apostle: "He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true (John, 3:33). Let us pursue this line of argument further. It is contended by some—their number is growing smaller, I am glad to say—that men must be drawn by supernatural power before they can come to God. This, as you can easily see, puts the unconverted man in a very uncomfortable situation, for if he can not come without being drawn, and if he can not in any way influence the drawing power, he might as well give up in despair. I remember hearing a young preacher several years ago on this subject, and he proclaimed with considerable vehemence that the sinner must be drawn. He used as a "text" the words of Jesus: "No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day (John, 6:44)." How blinded he was, and how he Wandered in the mazes and quagmires of speculation and mysticism! The very next verse explains the mystery and scatters the darkness: "It is written in the prophets, and they shall all be taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." Comment is unnecessary. I pray you, avoid such blunders! Turn to the Acts of the Apostles: "And the word of God increased; and the number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith (Acts, 6:7)." Note the trend of this passage: the word increased, or was energetically preached—disciples or learners multiplied—many priests obeyed the Lord. This is the way they did it in the apostolic times. Would it not be a good plan to try the good old way now? In other words, preach and teach and live, and depend on these for results. Are you afraid to risk it? If not, why not do it?

The word teach in our version of Matthew's report of the commission means to make disciples. A disciple is a learner. Men become disciples of Christ by learning and doing what He requires. This is another proof that in the promulgation of the gospel, the Lord moves along natural lines. I have noted the fact that the commission is both a summary of what had preceded and the seed of what was in prospect. I call the statement up again in order to add that there is not a single mystery in it, and that there is nothing in it to suggest, even in the remotest degree, that conversion is miraculous. That idea originated somewhere. Can you tell where? (4). Hearing and believing. Here, again, is proof that Christianity is adapted to the nature as well as the condition of man. The method used to make the provisions of the gospel known proves that it reaches the mind of man through the organ of hearing. It also shows that man as the gospel finds him, is able to receive it, and that he does not need any "baptism of power" to enable him to do it. (5). Repentance. The apostles were commanded to preach repentance and remission of sins. Repentance is a change of mind leading to a reformation of life. It is not crying, mourning, or seeking, but changing! (6). Baptism. Here is the stumbling-stone, but it is a part of the Lord's commission to His apostles! It is mentioned twice, while faith, or belief, and repentance are mentioned one time each. This, to say the least of it, does not indicate that it is less important than the others. Matthew makes it appear that disciples of Christ—no babies—are baptized into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is solemnly significant—into the name. Do you know any other way to get into that sublime and awful name? Mark couples it with belief and makes salvation depend on the two, and he only reported and recorded the words of Jesus!

Let baptism stay in its place. If you make too much or too little of it, you wrench it from its Divinely appointed place. (7). Second teaching. Men are not expected to learn every thing before they yield to the gospel. As soon as they enlist, therefore, they are to be instructed and commanded to observe all the teachings of Jesus to the end of life.

Where did the apostles begin their labors under this commission? Doubtless you think that there is nothing in this question, but I think I can show you that there is something in it. There may be some doubt about the meaning of the commission, but if we can find where the apostles first opened up its provisions, we can learn to an absolute certainty how they understood it, and they understood it thoroughly, for they were Divinely illuminated and guided, in order that they might preach a gospel whose accuracy might entitle it to the credence of all thinking men. Fortunately the question is answered by the Author of the commission. He told them to begin at Jerusalem (Luke, 24:46-49). If you will turn to the second chapter of Acts, you will find what—rather whom—they preached, what they told men to do to be saved, and the results. I suggest, in closing this letter, that you will find infallible safety and security in following in the footsteps of the apostles.

Affectionately yours,

J.

LETTER No, VI.—WHAT MUST I Do TO BE SAVED?

My Dear Theophilus:—I undertake the pleasant yet responsible task of answering for you the most important question ever propounded or answered by mortal man. My object is to determine what the alien or sinner must do in order to be saved from his past sins—in order that he may have a new start in the sight of God and men. I am glad that, notwithstanding you are not very clear on what the sinner must do, you are convinced that he can and must do something. God has provided for our wants. He has opened the way. He has spread the feast. The Divine side of redemption is done, and yet millions are not saved. I account for this on the grounds that they either do not understand their part or they are too stubborn or too much in love with sin to do it. Where is the question answered? By whom was it answered? When was it answered? It is answered in the book of Acts—more properly, book of conversions. It was answered by the inspired apostles of Jesus Christ. It is not answered anywhere else. It is not answered by any one else. It never was fully answered until after Jesus went back to heaven. If you were called upon to answer this question, what would you say? You hesitate to answer; I will answer for you. You would say that the person who asked it must "seek," "mourn," or "pray." If you meant by "seek" that he should search in the word of God for his duty and do it, I would interpose no objection. If you meant by "mourn" that under the power of the truth he must be sorry enough on the account of his sins to forever turn his back upon them, you would not be far astray.

If you meant by prayer that every awakened sinner will pray, I would heartily endorse it; but you mean that the sinner can, by prayer, obtain pardon without complying with the terms on which it is promised. My greatest objection to your system is, you unduly magnify some parts of the gospel and thus put them out of all harmony with the purposes of the truth. Prayer is an absolute necessity—in its place. You take it out of its place and make it overshadow the conditions of the gospel. This is superlatively dangerous. It leads honest and earnest people astray. It leads them to expect salvation without complying with the conditions of the gospel. It encourages procrastination. If you convince an impenitent man that he can secure pardon at any time, for the asking, he will be very apt to put off his return to God from time to time. It encourages deathbed repentance. If a man thinks he can be saved whenever he asks God to do it he will put it off to the last extremity. It leads men to rob God of the service He demands—encouraging delay. It fosters rascality in the Church. There are many, under the influence of this doctrine, who think they can defraud and cheat their fellow-men and "make it all right" with God by prayer, while their victims suffer. There is nothing promised to the alien on the condition of prayer. His salvation is suspended on something else. Do you know what it is? You, as a preacher of the gospel, ought to know! Indeed, it is a shame for you to be ignorant of these things. In general terms I would say, the sinner's salvation is dependent upon obedience to the word of God. It is no great task to prove this. Solomon said: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear *God* and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty—happiness—of man (Ecc., 12:13). Peter said: "Of a truth God is no respecter of persons: but

in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him (Acts, 10:34, 35)." Paul says: "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)." John says: "Whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight (I. John, 3:22)." James says: "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word, this man shall be blessed in his deed-doing (Jas., 1:25)." If the man who does what God commands, does his whole duty; if he is, not may be, might be, can be or shall be, but is!—accepted with God; if he is made free from sin; if he receives what he asks of God; if he is blessed in the doing, what more does he need? This is a good and correct answer, but it is too general. How was the question— "What must I do to be saved"—answered by those who were Divinely charged with the great responsibility of answering it? I want a specific and Scriptural answer. It matters not how I answer it or how you answer it, or how any other mortal man answers it, but it is a matter of grave concern how Peter answered it or how Paul answered it. The question shows that those who propounded it were in deep distress. They wanted the correct answer. They wanted a full answer. Let us find the answer. Try Deuteronomy. It is not there. Try the book of Judges. It is not there. Try Solomon's Song. It is not there. Try Jeremiah. It is not there. Try Matthew. It is not there. Try Acts of the Apostles. It is there! Acts of Apostles is Christianity applied. It is the history of Christianity before man put his sacrilegious hands upon it. Every book

in the Bible has its place and purpose. Acts has a place and purpose. What is it? I answer, to tell men what to do in order to be saved from the dominion and guilt of sin. The question is there answered by men who received their information directly from heaven. Second-hand information is doubtful. Let us search for the answer. The question was propounded on three different occasions in apostolic times and three different answers were given. Perhaps you will think this strange and say that if the apostles were not uniform in their answers you may take the liberty to answer in any way you think best. Here is the proper solution of the difficulty: The inquirers were all, under the apostolic interpretation of the Great Commission, required to do precisely the same things, and the answers vary only because of the difference in the condition of those addressed. A wise physician—who doubts the wisdom of the apostles?— always adapts his treatment to the condition of his patient and changes it with the various symptoms up to convalescence and health. This is exactly what the apostles did. The sum of the gospel is: "Do the thing next to you." The apostles always started with Jesus on the cross and carried the inquirer forward through the conditions of the gospel to salvation from all past sins and citizenship in the kingdom of God. Another thing, every answer given is in perfect harmony with every other answer, circumstances considered. When was the question first propounded? On the day of Pentecost. This was the proper time because it was the beginning. Peter and his associates had earnestly and irresistibly preached the gospel, and when the climax was reached in the declaration that Jesus had been made a ruler on high, thousands were cut—notice that something had already pierced their inmost secrets—to the heart and in deep anguish cried aloud: "Men and brethren, what shall

we do (Acts, 2:1-37)." Again, Saul of Tarsus, a most malignant enemy of the Church of Christ, was on the road to Damascus, with authority to bind all who called upon the name of the Lord and cast them into prison. As he proceeded the Lord called him and with trembling and astonishment he cried out: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do (Acts, 9:1-22)?" Again, Paul and Silas were imprisoned at Philippi. The jailor mercilessly cast them into the inner prison and made their feet fast in the stocks, but the word of God is not bound. At the hour of midnight a mighty earthquake shook the foundations of the prison and liberated the prisoners. The jailor was so frightened that he drew his sword and was about to take his own life when Paul called to him and told him to do himself no harm, that the prisoners were still there. Immediately he demanded of Paul and Silas, having brought them out: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved (Acts, 16:30)." Read these accounts with care. I affirm that all these men were required to do the same thing in order to be saved and that the difference in the answers is accounted for solely on the ground of the difference of circumstances. What were the answers? Peter's answer on the day of Pentecost was: "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 Spirit (Acts, 2:38)." Ananias answered Saul of Tarsus: "And now, why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord (Acts, 22:16)." Paul's answer to the jailor was: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house (Acts, 16:31)." You have the subject before you. Compare these answers. Put them together. Do you see any improvement? Note the peculiarities of each. In Peter's answer there is not one word about faith. Is not

that strange? Faith is certainly essential to salvation— why leave it out? In the answer given to Saul there is not one word concerning faith or repentance. This is stranger still. It looks like salvation to water alone, but as this has no support or recognition in the commission I suggest that there must be some explanation of this peculiarity. In answer to the jailor there is nothing said relative to repentance and baptism. There seems to be a bad entanglement here. Can you straighten it out? I know how you have straightened it out in the past—you have taken the answer to the jailor as your guide and treated the others with the consideration of silence and indifference! What reason have you for this? Was not Peter a commissioned preacher? Is not his answer entitled to a place in your religion? Do you think it right to thus neglect him, particularly as Jesus first promised him the power to bind and loose in His name? What objection have you to Ananias as a preacher? Was he not laboring under a direct and special commission from God? You are bound to confess that his commission was all right—what are you going to do with his doctrine? Have I not as good a Scriptural authority for building upon water alone—baptism alone—as you have for building upon faith alone? It is easy to harmonize three witnesses by throwing two of them overboard, but after doing this, it occurs to me that you will have to harmonize yourself with the two rejected witnesses. I want to see you harmonize one of your mourners' bench revivals with the answers of Peter and Ananias. I do not hesitate to say that you can not do it and you will not try. When a man ties himself to a system at variance with the word of God, as you have done, it is impossible for him to harmonize these three answers without abandoning his system. All the mischief lies in the assumption that men are justified by faith alone. Abandon

this and you will see no difficulty in putting these answers together. Let me harmonize them for you. The first thing to do is to read the Great Commission. Now we know what these preachers were expected to do, and how they were required to do it. Either they did or did not follow the instructions. If they did not, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit failed. If they did, their teaching must agree. The commission embraced: (a) preaching; (b) hearing; (c) belief, or faith; (d) repentance; (e) baptism; (f) salvation. Of this there can be no doubt. Now take the account of each conversion and read it with care. Compare the different accounts. Note all the circumstances and surroundings. Do you not see in every case that the Lord's commission was faithfully carried out? All this being granted, you are prepared for my conclusions: The Lord's servants began with men where they found them, and they only required them to do what the commission required, or so much of it as they had not previously done.

Let us take each case and discuss it separately. You will find a full record of the first in the second chapter of Acts. The apostles had been waiting in Jerusalem for the fulfillment of the promise of Jesus, the baptism of the Holy Spirit. On the day of Pentecost this promise was fulfilled, and they, for the first time after His departure from earth, preached in His name. The preaching was plain, pointed, earnest, irresistible, overwhelming. It was addressed to the minds of the people, and it cut to their consciences. There were no deathbed tales or graveyard scenes in it. The preaching exalted Jesus Christ as the giver of life and the author of redemption. The result was astounding. Those who betrayed and crucified the Lord were convinced that they had slain God's own and only Son. Sorrow filled their souls. Anguish filled their minds. They saw them-

selves as they were. They asked what to do and the answer took them where they were and led them forward to remission of sins (Acts, 2:1-38). This occasion affords a remarkably fine contrast. When Peter and his co-workers began to preach, the people accused them of drunkenness. This showed that they were entirely ignorant of the apostle's mission. At the end of the first sermon, thousands cried aloud for help. This was an astonishing change. What produced it? It was not the baptism of the Holy Spirit, for only the apostles received this. It was not the gift of the Holy Spirit, for this gift was promised to them only on the conditions of repentance and baptism. What did it? Unquestionably the preaching of the gospel. It is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believes it (Rom., 1:16). It was faithfully preached at its introduction, and the results of the same kind of preaching can be easily imagined. Did the people believe it? Certainly. If they had not done so, they would not have asked what to do. In fact, if the circumstances do not establish the fact that they believed it, they were saved without faith, for the record does not say anything concerning it. To sum up: the Pentecostans heard the gospel; they believed it; they repented; they were baptized; they received the remission of sins; they received the gift of the Holy Spirit. You often pray you can have Pentecostal floods—just stick to the record for a "Pentecostal shower." I suggest a plan by which and preach what the apostles preached and give the same answer to inquirers that they gave. Will you do it? I am convinced of one thing—profoundly convinced of it: You can not preach Peter's sermons and give Peter's answer and stay in the Methodist Church. Your brethren will not tolerate it. Saul's conversion is wonderfully interesting. There was, apparently, a miraculous element in it,

but the glorious light and Divine voice were rather intended to make him a witness of the resurrection of Jesus, but if you can get any comfort out of this I am willing for you to have it, for men do not see lights and hear voices from the sky in our day. I do not think you will attempt to refute this. The Lord spoke to Saul. Saul inquired what to do. He told him to arise and go into the city and there he should be told what to do. Is it not a little strange, in the light of your theology, that Jesus did not tell him what to do? Why did He not tell him? Simply because He had commissioned men to do this work, and He would not take the work out of their hands. It was dangerous, as subsequent developments indicate, to establish a precedent, for notwithstanding His refusal to answer the question, you appeal to him to "come" and approve your works. The fact that He directed Saul to a man for the information he so much desired overturns your idea of conversion completely. Saul was stricken with blindness—this proves that the miraculous part of this occurrence is not repeated in our day—and was led into the city by those who accompanied him, and for three long days he fasted, prayed and waited— and yet he found no relief. How do you account for this? Probably you will say, "he was keeping something back." This is purely gratuitous. He had already shown himself willing to give up everything and do what the Lord commanded, and was anxiously awaiting further instructions. It seems to me that you can see that if prayer without obedience would avail, Saul would have found relief long before the expiration of the three days, and without seeing Ananias, for everything in his character, both before and after this event, goes to prove that a more honest or earnest man never lived. This is further demonstrated by his conduct when Ananias came in and restored his natural sight and

told him what to do--he arose and did it! It is a little strange to you, no doubt, that Ananias did not encourage him to "pray on," and it is also strange that he did not call in some of the brethren of Damascus to sing and pray in order that Saul might "get through," "get religious," or "get a change." The reason he did not do these things is, that they were utterly, absolutely and unexceptionally unknown in Saul's day and for at least sixteen centuries after. They are recent inventions. The idea of praying to God to pardon a man who has not and will not do what He commands him—it is the very climax of absurdity! Doubtless you think this is severe, and it is. It is easy to destroy its force. Just turn to one passage in the book of Acts that contradicts it. Let me emphasize the fact that Saul, immediately upon finding out his duty, obeyed the Lord without changing the instructions. Your mourners would do likewise if they were properly instructed. They are generally sincere. The difficulty is, you do not give them the correct answer. You deceive them into doing that for which you have no warrant, either in reason or in the word of God, and the only justification you have of your course is your experience— you know it is right! How do you know it? By the word of God? Not by any means. Let me tell you how you know it: You have been taught that it is true and you accept it on the authority of your superiors in age and wisdom in the Methodist Church. Do you think Saul was a converted man? Certainly. Yet there is no mention in the record that he either believed or repented, However, the circumstances all show conclusively that he did both. He was converted under the Great Commission and he did everything commanded and done on the day of Pentecost. When Ananias came to him he just lacked one thing—

baptism—he had already believed with all his heart, and he had already deeply repented. If you were called to a man who had fasted and prayed for three days what would you do? Would you tell him to arise and be baptized in order to wash away his sins? You know you would not, and yet you "know" the very moment when you were Divinely, directly and unmistakably called to preach the gospel of the risen and glorified Redeemer! If you are called to preach, why not do it? It is not only important to preach it as it is recorded but also to respect the record in your practice. You may preach the gospel faithfully and afterwards substantially destroy the results by calling people up to the anxious seat to engage in the unauthorized and unreasonable work of trying to call "power" down from heaven.

The jailor's conversion is in every respect a model for us. It will greatly help us to review it with care. His conversion began precisely where all the others began and all the difference is that at the time he propounded the question he was without the knowledge of Christ and, hence, the first thing he was commanded to do was to believe. The earthquake played no part in his conversion. Indeed it would have had the contrary effect upon him if it had not been for the reassuring voice of the preacher of the gospel. I must be very careful here, I am determined to make you understand me. Let me catechise you a little. Please answer according to the book. Why did not Peter tell the Pentecostans to believe? Because they, under the power of his preaching, had already done so. Correct! Why did not Ananias tell Saul to believe and repent. Because he had already done so and it was not necessary to do so again. Correct again—you answer like a veteran! Why did Paul tell the jailor to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? Because the jailor had not up to that time heard the gospel, and the

first thing every man must do in order to be saved is to hear, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Correct—my letters are certainly doing you good! You have been accustomed to 'Sustain your doctrine of justification by faith alone by referring to Paul's answer to the jailor. It is a clear case of "wresting the Scripture." Read the thirty-first verse. That seems conclusive. Now read the next verse: "And they spoke unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house." Does not this passage cover the remainder of the ground—repentance and baptism? If not, how did the jailor know anything about baptism, and if he did not repent why did he attempt to relieve the lacerated backs of the Lord's servants? The jailor was baptized the same hour of the night. No six months' probation here! Conclusion: All the examples of conversion recorded in Acts of the Apostles harmonize among themselves and with the Great Commission, but they do not harmonize with your theory of conversion and can not be made to do so.

If a man is saved or pardoned what proof has he of it? This is important to every man. What evidence have you of your acceptance? I sum it up in this manner: The way of salvation is revealed, fully, in the New Testament and whoever complies with the requirements laid down receives the remission of sins, and by virtue of this obedience he is, without any other act on his part, made a member of the Church of Christ or the Kingdom of Christ; and the word of God, thus obeyed, becomes the first evidence of his deliverance from the thralldom of sin. Can anything be better than the combined promises of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit? In addition to this the young Christian realizes in his own heart that his tastes and relations are all changed. What evidence did the Pentecostans have of their pardon? The promise of God. When did they have

it? When they believed? No. When they repented? No. When they were baptized? Yes. In other words, the apostles laid down the conditions on which pardon was promised by the Head of the Church and no man could claim the evidence of pardon who had not complied with all the conditions. This was true on Pentecost. It was true with Saul. It was true with the jailor. It is true now. It will be true until the sounding of the last trump. It is a matter of no consequence how you feel. Pardon is not suspended upon feeling, but upon the commands of God. I do not discount good feeling—at the proper place. I know I am pardoned because I have complied with the demands of God and I therefore have good feelings. You reverse the Divine order and make feelings the first evidence of pardon in defiance of the gospel.

Affectionately yours,

J.

LETTER No. VII.—WHICH is THE TRUE CHURCH?

My Dear Theophilus:—While you are a zealous and uncompromising Methodist, and while it is the desire and dream of your life to see the Methodist churches swallow up all the world, and to see your particular Methodist Church swallow up all other kinds of Methodists, you make a show of liberality by declaring that it is a matter of no consequence what church a man belongs to, and you go so far as to say that a man can reach heaven without being a member of any church. This seems liberal enough, and if you will substitute the Church of Christ, without prefix or suffix for the Methodist Church, I will say that, in my judgment, it is entirely too liberal—more liberal than the word of God. In this letter I propose to answer for you, the question— How many I know I am a member of the Church of Jesus Christ which is the pillar and support of the truth? I shall not submit any opinion. I want to answer it in a way to insure that there can be no danger of a mistake as to my meaning. How would you answer it? I am inclined to think you could give several incorrect answers to it! I heard you say in your last discourse at Pleasureville, that you recognized all the denominations as churches of Christ, and all their devoted members as Christians. I admire your kindness of heart and your liberality of spirit, but as you grow older and see more of denominationalism, I feel sure you will not be quite so liberal. I agree with you that there are Christian-hearted men and women among them all, but it is my candid conviction that they are so in spite of

denominational creeds and tenets—by virtue, rather, of their sincere and earnest disposition to know and obey the truth. Denominationalism, in all its phases, is unknown to the word of God, and without even an apparent recognition or endorsement from heaven. This is enough to lead you to seriously doubt the wisdom and propriety of so many sects, but it does not seem to affect you in this way. Look at it from another angle: There is scarcely a doctrine or tenet presented by one denomination that is not at once denied, contradicted and trampled upon by another. When it comes to the things believed, among denominations, there is no unity whatever, and you know it. There is no Divine authority for the introduction of sectarianism in the world, and everything in the way of experience and observation unites in declaring that the dissolution of all sects will hasten the evangelization of the earth. The ammunition wasted in denominational bombardment in the past would, if properly used—with only Christ and His kingdom in sight—bombard the bulwarks and ramparts of the devil for a hundred years. Think of the heart power, the mind power and the physical power that have been worse than wasted in the last century, in the advocacy of human creeds and speculation, and in the establishment and maintenance of sects. Think, again, of the millions and millions of the Lord's money that are wasted every year to advocate things that are not once named in the Bible. In our efforts, therefore, to find the true church, I unhesitatingly say that one sect or denomination is as good as another, that a man has a perfect right to choose the one he likes best, or he may, if he chooses, let them all alone, and that none of them, as such, have any Scriptural authority for their existence. They are all of men. Which is the true church? I mean, how may I certainly,

infallibly, know that I am a member of the Church of which Jesus Christ is the Head. You admit that the Lord set up a Church in the world. You also admit that the denominations around us are of recent origin, and that not one of them can find its name in the word of the Lord. It is easy to see that if we wish to find the true church we need not look up any sectarian records or landmarks. If Jesus Christ set up a church He evidently, in turning it out into the great wilderness of human sin and speculation, put marks upon it by which it might be perpetually recognized in its march down the pathway of history—marks that time could never efface or change. It is evident, also that all the disciples of Jesus in apostolic times belonged to this church without joining it, for upon obeying Him as His will was unfolded by the apostles under the Great Commission, He made them members of it. Peter was a member of this church. Paul was a member of this church. Timothy was a member of this church. John was a member of this church. They were not members of anything else. Denominationalism is a child of apostacy. How can we find the true church? Where can we find the true church? How can we know that we have found it? Suppose Paul, the apostle, should come to life and get up out of the grave, and look for the Church of Christ as he knew it, as he helped to set it up, do you think he could recognize all denominations in the aggregate as the true church? Suppose he should come to you with the New Testament open in his hands, inform you that he was hunting for the Church of which he was a member eighteen hundred years ago, and ask you to give him the marks by which you claim identity with the ancient Church, what would you tell him? You could not give him your church name, for that is unknown in the New Testament. You could not present him with

your Discipline, for the first Church had no discipline save the gospel. You could not offer him your doctrine of justification by faith alone, for he did not teach this to his contemporaries. You could not invite him to participate in one of your mourners' bench revivals, for he never saw anything like that. He might interview all the denominations with precisely the same results. Would not this convince him that there has been a grievous and an inexcusable apostasy from the gospel as he preached it and from the church as he saw it? Do not misunderstand me. I am not making war on the Methodist Church. I love you. I love your people. I am trying, only, to convince you that what is purely Methodistic—of human origin—is unnecessary, sinful, and subversive of the desire of Jesus to make all his disciples one.

Jesus certainly put marks, unmistakable marks, infallible marks, ineffaceable marks upon His Church, and I invite you to an examination of them as they are described in the ancient Records. First, however, I wish to say that the word church means, congregation or assembly. I shall treat it in both the general and in the local sense, for whatever may be affirmed of the local church may be affirmed of the general church save in this: There was no ecclesiasticism in early times. Each congregation was independent and conducted its own affairs without interference of priest, presiding elder or potentate. Neither the local church nor the church in the aggregate had any legislature or law-making power. The church was the ground and support of truth—the conservator of the gospel of Christ. I now call your attention to the church of Christ as He set it up and to marks He placed upon it: (1). The foundation of which He built it Every institution is built upon something. The church of

Jesus—in every sense—is built upon the truth, upon the great fact that He is the Son of the living God (Matt., 16:13-19). The foundation under every building measures its strength and determines the perpetuity of the structure. You will admit this. It matters not how great the building every stone presses toward the foundation. Suppose you desired to erect a building of great strength and height would you not use the best material and employ the most skillful mechanics? Certainly. Would you after completing the foundation of your building gather up all the fragments of stone and scatter them on the foundation before beginning the building? The very suggestion is absurd. Yet this is what you have done in laying your creed on top of the ancient creed and building your church upon it! The ancient creed or foundation had only one short article—Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God—but your creed—broken stones—has so many articles that it absorbs the Divine creed until men are liable to lose sight of it. Who authorized you to do this? Please refer me to book, chapter and verse in the New Testament. I can refer you to something in the New Testament that looks the other way. Paul says, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ (I. Cor., 3:11)." God laid the foundation of His Church and He never authorized man, or angel, to change it—to add to it, or take from it—or to substitute anything else for it. Paul in this connection warns us to be careful how we build. We are builders on the foundation already laid and we must build according to instructions or take the consequences. It is impossible to erect a building that will endure the ravages of time unless the foundation is secure—the building can not be stronger than the foundation. Is the Christian foundation strong? It is stronger than death, hell and the grave combined (Rev.,

1:17, 18). You certainly can not improve on this foundation. Why not build upon it, solely? (2). Jesus was and is the Head of the Church, and the church has no other head. He reserves to Himself the right of supreme ruler, dictator and law giver. Paul says: "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; 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 fullness of him that filleth all in all (Eph., 1:19-23)." Again, "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence (Col., 1:18)." This mark is distinctive and perpetual (3). The name of the church and its members. I am aware of the fact that you claim that there is nothing in a name, but you contradict your own claim, for you glory in the name Methodist, and in the Methodist Church. I am convinced that there is much in a name, and I think I can persuade you to believe it, too, if you will hear me patiently, As a matter of fact, there is nothing in heaven, earth or hell than can be identified without a name. Without a name you would wander upon the earth a "fugitive and a vagabond." You could not own property, you could not communicate with your fellowman, and you could not even be a subscriber to a newspaper. The primary design of a name is the identification of the wearer, and the name of the church will assist us in its identification. Suppose all the denominations should forsake their peculiar names—what

would be the result? You could not, under ordinary circumstances, distinguish a Methodist from a Presbyterian, or a Baptist from a Lutheran, and this is the desirable end for which I labor and pray. There is much in a name. Indeed, there is salvation in it. Proof: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved (Acts, 4:12)." Without a name for each—the name indicates the differences—all religions, false and true, would blend into one great mass. It occurs to me that a man of your natural brilliancy and respectable attainments ought to be able to see this. I fear you are blinded by the god of this world, and that you claim that there is nothing in a name because your denominational environments are such that you can not peaceably wear the name of Jesus without prefix or suffix. What was the name of the first church—the church set up by Jesus? Let the New Testament answer. Jesus in reply to Peter's confession, said: "Upon this rock I will build my church (Matt., 16:18)." What church—whose church? Read and think—not your church, nor my church, nor his church, but the church of Christ. Do you see it? It is an indisputable fact that Jesus set up His own church and you have no right to fasten upon it any human name, and you do it at your peril. Each denominational name emphasizes a denominational peculiarity. Your name emphasizes your "method." The Baptist name emphasizes "baptism." The Presbyterian name emphasizes the "presbytery." The Episcopal name emphasizes the "episcopacy." I do not hesitate to say that so far as the salvation of men is concerned nothing needs emphasis save that which is common to you all—the Lordship of Jesus and the supreme authority of the holy Scriptures in matters of faith and conduct. Question: If there

is nothing in a name, why do you not give up your sectarian name and wear the name that simply honors Christ and expresses your relation to Him? Echo answers, "Why?" So much for denominational names. I confess that there is "nothing" in them over which to disagree, for one is as good as another, but individually and collectively they represent ideas and doctrines that are at variance with the word of God. I see no difference in them—all of them are man-made and heaven-doomed! If the Methodist name were unnecessary in the days of Paul, on what ground do you claim that it is unnecessary now? If all the primitive disciples of our Lord were contented to wear the name of Jesus without human addition, on what ground do you object? It is certainly not wrong to wear the name given in the New Testament. What was it? I answer, The Church of Christ (Rom., 16:16), or the Church of God (I, Cor., 1:2). This is the mark He put upon His church. Let us be content to let it remain. As to the members of the body, they were called by different names, depending—not on sectarian creed or denominational affiliations—on the angle from which they were viewed. They were called saints (Rom., 1:7). They were called brethren (Rom., 10:1). They were called the children of God (Matt., 5:45). They were called disciples (John, 15:8). They were called sons of God (I. John, 3:2). They were called Christians (I. Pet., 4:16). We have a right—an inalienable right—to wear any or all of these names. They are our birthright. They are the marks placed by 'Divine authority upon the people of God. The word Christian is derived from Christ, and expresses primarily our relation to Him. It is more comprehensive than any of the other appellations. It exalts the name of Jesus. Peter says we are to glorify God in this behalf—name (I.

Pet., 4:16). It is a name on which we can all meet as brethren, a name on which we can all agree. Have you any objection to this name? None whatever. Is it not a fact that the name Methodist is heard in your assemblies and in your society ten times to where the name Christian is heard once? Is not this strange? Is it not enough to cause you to drop your head in shame? It, at least, re-emphasizes the folly of trying to improve on Divine revelation, and it should by all means drive you out of sectarianism into the full freedom and simplicity of the ancient children of God. (4). The law of admission. By this I mean that admission to the church was, and is still, suspended upon conditions, and these conditions were, and are, revealed in the gospel. Isaiah predicted that the law should be promulgated from Zion (Isa., 2:1-3). Paul says that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made him free from the law of sin and death (Rom., 8:2). James says that men are blessed by looking into the perfect law of liberty and continuing therein (Jas., 1:25). I call your attention to the important fact that men are released from sin when they do what is specifically laid down in the word of God. This is a mark placed by its Founder upon the primitive church, and its members had no greater duty or privilege than to make known the conditions of salvation to a perishing race. This is your duty now. Instead of doing this you devote your time often to the narration of heartrending stories and in following them up with exciting exhortations in which the mind and conscience are *not* moved half so much as the emotional nature, and men are promised pardon on easier terms than those submitted by Jesus Christ. In the ancient church men stood for the truth as it was revealed by the Holy Spirit. Now men are indifferent to its demands. Which is the safer course? (5). The unity of

the church. If there is one foundation and only one; if there is one Head and only one; if there is one name in which there is salvation and only one; if there is one law of pardon and only one, it follows beyond question that those who receive these things are one. The Church of Christ was originally one. Denominationalism and sectarianism were not known to Peter, James, John, Paul, Aquilla and Timothy—there were no Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Episcopalians in the church as Jesus set it up. No sane man doubts this. If they were not in the Apostolic Church, what reason can you assign why they should exist now? What contingency has arisen to justify the division of the Lord's army into contending factions? Do you think His people can more successfully fight the devil by antagonizing each other? Do you think they can do more than they are doing by dividing and re-dividing again? Any serious attempt to answer these questions will show the absurdities of sectarianism. I have asserted that Jesus set up one church—men divide it and men keep it divided. Allow me to give you a few proofs. Luke says the multitude of disciples were of one heart and one soul (Acts, 4:32). Do you see any sects here? Do you see any attempt to justify divisions here? Again, Paul asserts that the church was one body, and that the members were members of each other. Does this look like thanking God for divisions? Does it not throw a shadow of suspicion upon your claim that God has set up all the denominations in order that every man may take his choice? Admitting that this passage does not contradict your teaching on this point, just open your eyes and look around you. If God has set up all these orders to allow men to take their choice between them, why do they not take it? I can not see that the multiplication of sects increases

piety and godliness in the land. Do you? If you answer in the affirmative, I suggest that you encourage the multiplication of sects rather than devote your time to the upbuilding of Methodism. Let us consult Paul again: He says, in his time, that all were baptized by—by the instructions of one Spirit—one Spirit into one body (I. Cor., 12:13). You baptize men into the Methodist body. The Baptists baptize them into the Baptist body. The Presbyterians baptize them into the Presbyterian body. The Episcopalians baptize them into the Episcopal body. Here are four bodies—distinct in creed, in practice, in spirit—not one body. You can not—your doctrine and spirit make it utterly impossible—baptize a man into the Baptist body, and there is not a Baptist on earth who could baptize a man into the Methodist body. Indeed, he would not if he could and could not if he would. Let me show where you are all wrong: you practically agree on your theory of conversion—that it is a profoundly mysterious miracle. You all agree that every man who passes through this is a Christian, a child of God, an heir of heaven. Then they are all one, brethren in Christ by reason of their birthright. You take a few of them and add Methodism to their Christianity. The Baptists take a few and add Baptism to their Christianity. The Presbyterians take a few of them and add Presbyterianism to their Christianity. The Episcopalians take a few of them and add Episcopalianism to their Christianity. Granting, for argument's sake, that your theory of conversion is correct, Divinely healed and approved—if it really and truly makes Christians—you are guilty of dividing the body or Church of Jesus Christ, in the face of His prayer that all His followers should be one (John, 17:20,21). You argue that the various sects are all practically one. Are they one in name, in creed, in Spirit? You know they are not.

Christian unity from your standpoint, is sentimental, invisible, ethereal. Could anything be more unsubstantial? Invisible! Let us see. What do you mean by that? Manifestly that in spite of outward forms, names and creeds, there is a unity of hearts. Why do you not, therefore, strive to get people into the Baptist Church? There is only one honorable and sincere answer: You are divided—your sectarianism, respectively, keeps you divided. Do you still insist that unity exists among the various Protestant bodies? Paul turns the seven-fold light of truth upon it, in his letter to the Corinthians, who were not divided in creed, or name, or doctrine, but in reference to the preachers who had labored among them: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment (I. Cor., 1:10)." Is Paul a good witness? If so, you must openly reject his testimony or yield to his instructions. Which? Again, Paul exhorts the Ephesians to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace: One body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God (Eph., 4:1-6). This is more than theory, more than sentiment; it is substantial unity—unity in faith, in doctrine, in practice. It is entirely impossible to produce and maintain unity in the body of Christ without first having unity in teaching, for every system of doctrine inevitably reproduces itself in the converts. You may reply that the Lord gives us latitude in the interpretation of the seven-fold unity of the Church as described by Paul. Where is the proof? All that is wanted is, proof! If the word of God is a revelation, and you will not deny it, no interpretation is needed—just read, mark, learn, digest— do!! Finally: "But speaking the truth in love, may grow

up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love (Eph., 4:15, 16)."

In the light of the foregoing, I repeat the questions with which I started out, Which is the true Church, and how may I certainly know that I am a member of it? I answer, the true Church is the one established by Jesus Christ, and of which all the primitive Christians were members by reason of their birthright, and we may know that Church by the marks its Founder placed upon it. I may certainly know that I am a member of the true Church if I build upon the same foundation, recognize the same Head, observe the same law of admission, help to maintain the same unity and wear the same name. There can be no schism in the true body of Christ, for when it divides it is no longer His body. If the departure from the ancient gospel produced sects and sectarianism, the abandonment of sects and the destruction of sectarianism will bring us back to original ground. The work to be done demands unity of heart and action. Will you not fall into the ranks of those who plead for the restoration of primitive, Apostolic Christianity and the Church of Jesus Christ as He set it up by His own ambassadors?

Affectionately yours, J.

LETTER No. VIII.—FAITH AND CONFESSION.

My Dear Theophilus:—In your brief experience as a preacher you have been called upon to answer many perplexing questions, such as; Is faith important? What is faith? How many faiths are there? What is the basis of faith, or what must I believe in order to be saved, or in order to become a Christian? How does faith come or how can I come into possession of it? What effect does faith have upon the heart? What effect does faith have upon the life? What relation is there between faith and pardon? You have honestly attempted to answer these questions, but the persons asking them have not always appeared to be satisfied, and, indeed, you have not always been satisfied with your answers, but as you are young in the cause you have dismissed your misgivings in the hope that as the years go by and as you dig deeper into Divine revelation all these questions will find a permanent and satisfactory answer. Allow me to suggest that in this you are sadly mistaken. The difficulties you have in answering these questions satisfactorily and Scripturally will beset you through life, for the simple reason that your theology is out of tune with the Word of God. I suggest to you that before your attachments are too strongly formed, before your duties become too complicated, it will be wise for you to adjust yourself to the plain teachings of the Word and let "theology" take care of itself. In doing this you will become free to answer the questions of all inquirers' without fear or hesitancy. In order to aid you in

the attainment of this desirable end I will answer these questions for you in the light of the gospel. I am not bound by any human creed or system, and I am perfectly free from ecclesiastical restraint—to answer them plainly, and Scripturally.

Is faith important? From your standpoint it is extremely so. With you it is the only condition of salvation. In this you exalt its importance to a point where it is out of harmony with its place in the scheme of redemption as revealed in the Bible. You can not refer to any passage in the Scriptures in which it is said, or from which it can be legitimately inferred, that justification is by faith alone. Indeed, it is clear to the man who reads the Bible simply to find out his duty, that faith is only one of the many things entering into our justification. Open your Bible and read as I give you the references. Keep them distinct in your mind: (1). We are justified by Jesus Christ (Acts, 13:39). (2). We are justified by His blood (Rom., 5:9). (3). We are justified by His resurrection from the dead (Rom., 4:25). (4). We are justified by knowledge (Isa., 53:11). (5). We are justified by faith (Rom., 5:1). (6). We are justified by words (Matt., 12:37). (7). We are justified by grace (Rom., 3:24; Titus, 3:7). (8). We are justified by the Lord God (Rom., 8:33). How does this array look when placed beside your doctrine of faith alone as defined in your Discipline? Faith alone! Look at it. Roll it over. Look at it again. "Alone" means absolutely without anything else—without repentance, without blood. Do you sincerely believe this? It is wise to leave the conditions of the gospel precisely in the place and in the relations in which they are placed in the Book, for in emphasizing them too much or too little we change their significance altogether. Faith is important when left where God placed

it. When taken out of its place it becomes a snare and a deception. How important does the New Testament make it? Now we are getting down, to work. Let it speak for itself. Jesus, in closing the Great Commission, said that, "He that believeth not shall be damned (Mark, 16:16)." Surely that is bad enough! Another witness: "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin (Rom., 14:23)," Still another: "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 (Heb., 11:6)." I record it as my conviction that it is impossible to overestimate the importance of faith unless in our effort to make it prominent we lift it out of its place in the gospel. Faith is the great center of power that moves us forward in obedience to the commands of the Lord. To the unbeliever there is no God, there is no Savior, there is no salvation, there is no church, there is no reward, there is no punishment. How important it is, therefore to get men to see that they can not please God without faith. To the man who believes, there is one Law-giver who is able to make alive or destroy, and the whole Bible is pregnant with the weight of eternal meaning. What is faith—what is belief? Webster gives good definitions of both words. Faith: "The assent of the mind to the truth of what is declared by another, resting solely and implicitly on his authority and veracity; reliance on testimony; the belief in the facts and truth of the Scriptures, with a practical love of them; especially, that confiding and affectionate belief in the person and work of Christ, which effects the character and life, and makes a man a true Christian." Belief: "Assent to a proposition or affirmation, or the acceptance of a fact, opinion, or assertion as real or true, without immediate personal knowledge; reliance upon word or testimony; partial or full assurance without posi-

tive knowledge or absolute certainty; persuasion; conviction; confidence; as, belief of a witness; the belief of our senses." Suppose you take this definition as a text and prepare a sermon on it and endeavor to show that it harmonizes with your theory of conversion. You can not do it. You will not dare attempt it. This definition is in perfect harmony with the Word of God, but I confess my inability to make it harmonize with your doctrine and practice. Paul gives two definitions of faith: (1). It is taking God at His word and depending on His promises for results whether we can see the end or not (Rom., 4:16-21). (2). It is the basis of things hoped for, a conviction of things unseen (Heb., 11:1). To bring it down to every day English, it is taking God at His word to-day, to-morrow and forever. What do I mean by this? God has promised us salvation on certain conditions. Faith proceeds to do what is commanded even when there is no apparent relation between the things commanded and the objects in view. Example: Jesus Christ said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved (Mark, 16:16)." "Shall be saved!" It is simply a question of doing what He commands and trusting Him for results. Did you ever tell an inquirer this? Why not tell your mourners this? If you would do it there would be fewer delays and more genuine conversions. This truth lies at the bottom of all revelation. It is illustrated in Abraham when he turned his back upon his native country in obedience to the voice of Jehovah (Gen., 12:1-4). Indeed, it is illustrated in the life of every child of God in every age.

How many faiths are there? There is one faith and only one (Eph., 4:5), and there never has been more than one in any age since man sinned. I am aware that when the fact that faith is taking God at His word is urged upon you with

vigor you take refuge behind the claim that this is only historical faith. Granted. Do you know of any faith that is not, in an important sense, built upon history or testimony? If you do, define it, and give Scriptural proof and by all means tell how it comes. Faith is trust. It is built upon testimony. No one in our time has seen Jesus. We must trust Him and we can do it only by accepting the testimony of those who heard and knew Him. This is the one true faith.

What foundation does faith or belief rest upon, or what must I believe in order to become a Christian? Everything must have a foundation, and a secure one, in order to be enduring. Upon what kind of a foundation does faith rest? I answer, that it rests upon Jesus Christ the Son of the living God. This is abundantly sustained. Anticipating the incarnation, Jehovah said: "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee (Ps., 2:7)." At His baptism His Father acknowledged Him in a voice that rang through earth and sky and reverberated through the ages: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased (Matt., 3:17)." Nathaniel, the guileless Israelite, confessed him: "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel (John, 1:49)." Peter confessed him at Cesarea Philippi: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matt., 16:13-16)." On the mount of transfiguration after Moses, the great Lawgiver, and Elijah, the great Law-restorer, had laid their honors at His feet, the Father again confessed Him and recognized Him as worthy of the reverence and obedience of men: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him (Matt., 17:1-5)." Martha confessed Him: "Yea, Lord, I believe thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world (John, 11:27)." He confessed Himself before the high

priest. "And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God: Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven (Matt., 26:63, 64)." He also witnessed a good confession before Pontius Pilate (I. Tim., 6:13). John declares that he wrote, "That ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name (John, 20:30, 31)." Paul says that He was, "Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead (Rom., 1:4)." Peter says: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved (Acts, 4:12)." Again, Paul declares that Jesus is the same yesterday, to-day and forever (Heb., 13:8). The foregoing quotations will give you the Bible conception of the basis of faith. As it looks beyond earth and time it must rest on a basis that will resist the ravages of decay. Our faith is based on the Son of God. He laid down His life that He might take it again (John, 10:17, 18). He fully established His claims when He arose from the dead (Rom., 1:4). He has, by virtue of His own victory over the power of darkness, the keys of death and hell (Rev., 1:17, 18). He is the light of the world (John, 9:5). He is the King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev., 19:16). Faith deals with one person—with the only begotten Son of God. It does not deal with an opinion or speculation. It does not deal with a man-made creed or confession of faith. You may consider that the statement—that Jesus Christ is the Son of God—is not broad enough. I answer that it pleased the Lord to lay this foundation, and He invites us to build

upon it (I. Cor., 3:10, 11). This creed met the wants— present and future—of the early disciples. It is undoubtedly broader than your creed. All the world can stand on the Divine Creed—"and yet there is room!" Only a party, sect or denomination can stand on your creed. It has many articles, but it is too narrow for anybody save Methodists. Did you ever reflect on the immensity of the Divine creed? Jesus Christ is the Son of God—the most wonderful, the most comprehensive proposition ever submitted to the consideration of man. It sweeps all time and reaches out into everlasting years. It is the only creed ever formulated that is broad enough for every nation and every age. This foundation does not crumble or fall with the effects of time. This creed does not become obsolete and demand revision or abolishment! Jesus is the Son of God, the revelation of God, the best and final interpretation of the needs of man. This foundation, unlike all others, can bear up more than ever has been or can be put upon it. Jesus is mighty to save. Look to Him. Do you insist that there is not "power" enough in this to suit you? Perhaps not. Let us turn to the oracles of God: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling; and my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God (I. Cor., 2:1, 5)." How does this strike you? "Power of God"—what is that? Doubtless you will say, The baptism of the Holy Spirit. Not by any means. What is it? Let Paul decide: "For the preaching of the cross is to

them that perish, foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God * * * but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God (I. Cor., 1:18, 23, 24)." What is the power of God? The cross—the Christ! Where does our faith stand? In the power of God—in Christ. What must a man believe in order to become a Methodist? In Methodism, most certainly. Can he become a Methodist without doing this? You well know that he can not. What must a man believe in order to become a Christian? Simply, in the Founder of Christianity—can you point out the necessity for anything else? If so, what is it? What did the Pentecostans believe in order to become Christians (Acts, 2:1-42)? Simply, that Jesus is the Christ. What did the Samaritans believe in order to the remission of sins (Acts, 8:1-12)? Simply, that Jesus Christ is the Savior, the only Savior. What did the Ethiopian eunuch believe in order to become a Christian (Acts, 8:26-40)? Simply, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. What did all the first converts to Christianity believe? Would to God I could sound it through all lands—they believed that Jesus was all He claimed to be, and they did not believe anything else! Here we can agree. Here we can stand together. Here is another significant fact: Believing this only will not make a Methodist, a Baptist, a Presbyterian, or an Episcopalian! It takes something in addition to the Divine creed to make these kinds or any other kind of sectarians. If you will take the Bible, read it, believe it, obey it and live it, you will be a Christian, and that is all that is required.

How does faith come, or how do I come in possession of it? There are two answers to this question: (a) It comes by

hearing; (b) it comes directly from God. Both of these answers can not be true. Which will you take? The second, of course. In order to bring the matter nearer a conclusion, I raise another issue: Can a man believe? I claim that he can for three reasons: (1). He can as he is, without any miraculous assistance, believe anything else, good or bad. Believing the gospel requires only the exercise of the same faculties that are exercised in accepting anything else. The assent of the mind, the yielding of the heart, to the fact that Jesus is the Son of God, followed by trust in Him, is the only thing that is required or that can be done. You and your associates have done much to interfere with the conquests of the gospel among thinking people, by overemphasizing the miraculous element in religion to the neglect of the natural element. Miracles—many astounding miracles—were wrought in attestation of the Christ and His mission, but no miracle is wrought upon the gospel to make it intelligible, and no miracle is wrought upon man in order to compel or enable him to believe it. Do you not see that in praying for "power from on high," you practically declare that the gospel is insufficient for the purpose for which it was promulgated, and that man is not capable of accepting it without help? Really, we have "power from on high," for the Holy Spirit is in the gospel and has always been there (John, 6:63). But your theory sets the gospel aside, and also every law governing mind known to man. In your revivals, man's reason and judgment are nullified, and he is reduced to the level of a mere machine. He is not expected to "think" or "reason" his way into Christ, but to "get religion"—as if it were a garment made and let down upon him from the New Jerusalem—as a result of a faithless prayer. "Faithless" prayer—I stand to the declaration. I can prove its truthfulness by you. Do you not claim that men are jus-

tified by faith only? Yes. Then it follows that the moment a man believes he is justified. Before he believes he is an unbeliever, most assuredly! Therefore, all the praying and mourning and seeking at the mourner's bench are done in unbelief, for if they were not the sinner would be justified the very moment he believes—"in the twinkling of an eye." It follows, also, according to your theory of conversion, that the only thing a sinner can do is to go to the anxious seat and roll and agonize in unbelief, while you pray salvation down upon him. He can not assist you in the least while in unbelief, and the moment he believes he does not need your help. If you can, while he is in helpless unbelief, pray converting power down upon him at the anxious seat, you could do it just as easily, and just as successfully, if he were on the opposite side of the earth. It resolves itself into this: his salvation depends not on his prayers, for prior to it he is in blind unbelief, but upon your prayers for him. If your theory of conversion is correct, you can save more souls by praying than by preaching—indeed, I can not see why you can not "turn the world upside down" by a single prayer! I call upon you to bring the whole world to a knowledge of salvation—immediately—or abandon your theory of conversion, and go back to primitive Christianity and operate in harmony with the constitution of man. (2). Eternal life is suspended upon believing (John, 3:36). This is the greatest blessing promised to man. Let us reason a little. Man is doomed to death—natural and eternal. He greatly desires to live on. God is just, merciful and good. Would He mock His dependent creatures by suspending salvation on an impossibility? Yet this is just what He has done— from your standpoint! (3). Jesus has declared that the unbeliever shall be damned (Mark, 16:16). Would a just and loving Father damn a man for failing to do that which he

can not do, however earnestly he may try? Yet this is just what He has done—from your standpoint! You may say that this is extreme, unnecessarily severe. Let us see. You teach that a man can not believe unto salvation until he is baptized in the Holy Spirit. Up to this time he is blinded by unbelief—he could not believe if he would and would not if he could. In other words, he can not believe without power from on high, and as unbelief is helpless to bring the power, he is unable to believe, and dying in this condition he will be damned—damned for failing to do what to him was utterly impossible. In a recent sermon you intimated that "a certain people"—on whom you were quite severe—taught that it is "useless for a sinner to pray." I knew what you were after. I convict you of inconsistency. You claim that prior to the direct and miraculous descent of the Holy Spirit, the sinner is in unbelief—unbelief shuts the gates of heaven—and only the prayer of faith will be recognized. Yet you urge, beseech and exhort the sinner to "pray," "pray on," "pray more earnestly," when your own theory makes it impossible for God to hear him, or answer him. He can not Scripturally pray for faith until he gets it, and after he gets it he does not need to pray for it. You teach him to pray for pardon and expect it, when you know he can not pray in faith, for when faith comes pardon comes! I preach the gospel to him earnestly. I exhort him with all the fervency of a heart on fire, with love for God and man. I show him the way. When he is properly awakened he will pray. I urge him to do what God commands him— "calling on the name of the Lord." The only difference is, I go along with the Lord and His apostles, and you do not. How does faith come, or what must be introduced into the sinner's mind to enable him or induce him to believe? You say the Holy Spirit—direct, electric, irresistible. I say the

Holy Spirit through the agency or instrumentality of the gospel. If the Spirit of God comes to the spirit of man without the agency of the gospel, I am unable to see the need of the gospel. Can you assign any good reason why it was given? I can, however, see the need of it if the Holy Spirit operates through it. Keep in your mind as I proceed that I emphatically condemn and repudiate both the "word alone" and "spirit alone" theories on the ground that it is impossible to separate the Holy Spirit—God— and His word. How can a man's mind be influenced to accept a new financial theory? Testimony must be introduced into it either through the eye or ear—his mind can not be reached successfully except by communicating through these natural channels, and the testimony must come from such a source and be of such a character as to produce conviction as to its truthfulness. This same process holds good in every department of human action—why should it not hold good in conversion—turning to God? Let man stay in his natural place and you will experience no difficulty in getting him to Christ by using gospel means, only. Men are made believers by the introduction of "the testimony" of the prophets and apostles into their minds, through the organ of sight or the organ of hearing. Divine intelligence must be imparted in nature's own way. John says of the first: "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 (John, 20:30, 31)." Why were these things revealed? In order that men might read them and believe. Believe what? That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Why believe this? In order to receive life through His name. This quotation sums it all up. Can

you improve on this summary? Paul says of the second: "But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach. * * * But they have not all obeyed the gospel, for Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Rom., 10:6-8, 16, 17)." The righteousness of faith says for you not to call down Christ from above, and yet how often—alas! how often!!—this is done in your revivals. Where is the word? In our hearts and minds. It is not in heaven, it is not beyond the sea (Dent., 30:11-14)! Jesus represents Himself as a sower, His word as good seed and the hearts of men as the soil (Matt., 13:1-23; Luke, 8:1-18). If the word of God—the gospel of Christ—is the seed of the kingdom, how can we get the kingdom to grow in the human heart without planting the seed, and how can we plant the seed except by introducing it through the eye or the ear? If it takes a miracle to plant the seed we might as well fold our arms and wait, for we can not perform miracles. If the seed is good, and if we can plant it, there is no need of the miracle. The Great Commission emphasizes this. Jesus commanded the apostles to go and "teach" or "preach," making it plain that what he desired men to know and do in order to salvation was to be known and communicated from one man to another. Where did the apostles get their information? From Jesus Christ. Where did the first converts get their information? From the twelve apostles. Where do we get our information? From precisely the same source. They were empowered to

speak for that age and every other age. Everything depended on the faithful, earnest, aggressive preaching of the gospel. Wherever the gospel of Christ was proclaimed, God worked in men, the Holy Spirit worked in men, Jesus Christ worked in men, for the apostles preached the combined gospel of Father, Son and Holy Spirit (I. Pet., 1:9-12). Luke gives us a summary that seems so appropriate here that I cannot refrain from quoting it: "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house, and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized (Acts, 18:8)." Could you—would you—quote this as a proper characterization of one of your revivals? I answer for you, you could not. You carry on your work in another manner. You would report a revival something like the following: "We have closed a most gracious revival at Mt. Pisgah. The presence of the Holy Spirit was apparent from the beginning. Many were baptized with the Holy Ghost, and the meeting closed with twenty-two persons still at the altar. Forty-three were converted, eighteen have joined our church, six have gone with the Baptists and the remainder are undecided, but I confidently expect the majority of them to join our church on probation at my next appointment. One of the pleasing scenes at the close of the meeting was the baptism of a number of infants. This is gratifying, for lately Methodists have grown somewhat indifferent on this subject." A ten year old child can see the difference, and it is not in your favor either! Paul says: "We have the mind of Christ (I. Cor., 2:16)." How do we get the mind of Christ? Let him answer: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom (Col., 3:16)." If Christ dwells in us by faith (Eph., 3:17), we certainly have His Spirit, and having His Spirit we have, "The spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of council and

might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord (Isa., 11:1, 2)." Faith comes and grows by hearing and doing the work of God (John, 6:28, 29).

What effect does faith have upon the heart—the seat of the affections? This is certainly an interesting question, It also concerns the whole race. It is universally conceded by believers in Christianity that men in sin are impure in heart. Many think that a miracle is needed to drive the devils of hate, envy, malice, corruption from the heart, but if you will reflect that all these inhabitants of the sinful heart have entered through the natural channels, you can be easily convinced that they can be driven out through the same channels. Faith purifies the heart (Acts, 15:9). How does it purify the heart? By installing Christ as the sole inhabitant of it—as its ruler, guest and only hope. The gospel introduces Jesus into the heart—into the affections. He crowds out hate, envy, malice and corruption, and heaven is where Christ is! I think I hear you say that Jesus holds out the hope of heaven to the pure in heart (Matt., 5:8), and that inasmuch as faith purifies the heart, men can reach heaven by faith only. I confess that at first glance this appears conclusive, but there are strong considerations against it. What are they? Look at the pure heart. It is without rebellion. It is submissive. It is resigned to the will of God. Do you grant this? If so, you can get no comfort out of your argument, for the very moment a heart rebels against the law of God—refuses to obey Him it is no longer pure. I am sure this is conclusive if anything is so. If you wish to appeal from it you are at liberty, so far as I am concerned, to do so.

What effect does faith have upon the life—the actions? This is an easy question. If Christ is enthroned in the heart as its supreme ruler it is easy to see what the results

will be in the actions of the individual. Faith shows itself in the words of our mouths and in all our acts. This is another way of saying that Christ—his authority and character—manifests Himself in our actions. Faith precedes action—actions manifest faith. Abel's altar and sacrifice expressed his faith (Gen., 4:1-4). Enoch's walk with God was an expression of his faith (Gen., 5:21-24; Heb., 11:5). Building the Ark was an expression of Noah's faith (Gen., 6:13, 14; Heb., 11:7). Abraham's long and perilous journey from his native country to Canaan was an expression of his faith (Gen., 11:27-32; 12:1-5; Heb., 11:8-10). Men of God in all ages have expressed their faith in God's promises by doing God's commands. The expression or confession of faith by overt acts is indispensably necessary. God requires us to believe and do, and one is as important as the other. Allow me to lay down for your contemplation a very comprehensive proposition: When God promises us anything—the remission of sins, for example—on conditions, faith shows itself in complying with the conditions, and we may appropriately say, that the compliance with the conditions is faith at work, and finally that we are saved by faith, when it is plain beyond room to doubt that we did not reach the blessing until we complied with the conditions on which it is suspended. I agree with you that we are saved by faith—not faith only—but not until it brings us to the place where salvation is promised. The Pentecostans were saved by faith when they obeyed the Lord in His requirements. This principle runs through the entire history of the early church. We are not saved by the works of the Law of Moses for it is abolished, but by obedience to the mandates of God's own Son (Rom., 3:28; Eph., 2:8, 9). The question of justification by faith alone perplexes you. You accept it as the truth, but the difficulty is to prove it.

Let the word of the Lord be final: "Ye see then how that by works—not works of the Law of Moses—a man is justified, and not by faith only (Jas., 2:24)."

What relation is there between faith and pardon? Faith is an act of man (Phil., 1:29), pardon is an act of God (Isa., 55:7). There is great confusion on this point. You are to blame for much of it. In some of your sermons you declare that nothing is needed but the blood of Christ. Again, you declare that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is the great thing needed. Again, you proclaim your undying allegiance to the doctrine of justification by faith alone. You are unsettled in your position. You can not harmonize your doctrines among themselves and it is impossible to harmonize them with the word of God. Faith leads to obedience, obedience leads to Christ, Christ leads to the remission of sins (Rom., 6:16-18), Keep in mind that pardon is an act of God, that it is promised to us on conditions, that we are justified by faith when we comply with the conditions, and that our first evidence of pardon is our own consciousness that we have complied with the conditions heartily, and thus cast ourselves upon the promises of God.

What relation exists between faith and feeling? Faith is based upon a foundation—Jesus Christ—more enduring than time. Feelings fluctuate with the influences that move us and they have no substantial basis whatever. Here is a proposition that will startle you, and it ought to startle you: There is not one command or promise in the word of God based upon feelings. Feelings play the chief part in your revivals. You teach the people that they must feel that they are pardoned, whereas the gospel gives them an opportunity to know it. Did you not, in a recent sermon, lay your hand solemnly and impressively upon your fleshy heart and thank God you had evidence of your acceptance there? Suppose

that heart should cease to beat, where then would your evidence be? It is a grave mistake to suppose that the animal nature—body, appetites, emotions—can bear testimony to the redemption of the spiritual nature. The animal nature plays no part—reliable part—in it, save as it is guided and governed to the glory of God. Our bodies must be crucified (Rom., 6:6), kept in subjection (I. Cor., 9:27), and all their propensities must be mortified (Col., 3:1-5). Feelings are too uncertain, too fluctuating to be reliable evidence of anything. Your feelings often mislead you, as you must acknowledge. Did the word of God ever mislead you? Some years ago during a protracted meeting, a preacher was accosted at the church door by a brother with the question: "How do you feel?" The reply struck the key-note: "My feelings are not by any means good, but my faith is all right." Our feelings may change with each passing cloud, but faith in the Messiah is enduring as the everlasting throne. You may feel that you are right in the sight of men when the proof all goes to show you are not. Doubtless you would like to know how I account for the fact that so many apparently find relief at the mourner's bench who depend so much upon feelings. I see no difficulty in explaining that. However, before doing so I want to record my conviction that your mourners are sincere. Here is my answer, weigh it well: A man who has always been taught that he will find pardon at a certain point—whose experience has never seen anything to the contrary—will, on reaching that point experience relief, not because he has been fully obedient to the gospel, but because he has been taught that way. The attainment of any object that has cost us great exertion always brings relief and joy, and in addition to this, many persons sincerely make up their minds even amidst great excitement to serve God, and decision

always brings relief. But feelings are delusive. I insist upon this. Jacob sincerely felt that Joseph was dead when he was alive and prosperous (Gen., 37:31-36; 41:1-43). A man may be sincerely and conscientiously mistaken. The only way that is Infallibly safe is to take God at His word and do what He commands, whether you feel like it or not. Men must confess their faith in Jesus with the mouth (Rom., 10:9, 10), Do not hide your faith, but do like the people in apostolic times, come and confess and show your deeds (Acts, 19:18). The church is founded on Christ (Matt., 16:13-18), and it is appropriate that all who desire to become members of it should publicly confess their faith in Him. This is the good confession (I. Tim., 6:12, 13). Have you ever made it?

Affectionately yours,

J.

LETTER No. IX.—REPENTANCE.

My Dear Theophilus:—In this letter it is my intention to enter with you upon a thorough examination of the Scriptures touching repentance. It is unnecessary to enlarge upon its importance, as this is universally and unexceptionally admitted. I am convinced that it is greatly misunderstood. If you doubt this, interrogate the next few men you meet. One will say that repentance is a change of heart. Another will say that it is religion. The majority, however, will say that it is godly sorrow. To what is this diversity traceable? Who is accountable for it? These are grave questions. I do not think the Bible is accountable for it—yea, I know it is not. Where, then, does the blame rest? Upon the teachers and leaders of the people—the preachers—many of whom claim a special and direct Divine call to the ministry. Diversity of preaching makes diversity of ideas touching religion. Unity in preaching will bring about unity among the people.

What place does repentance occupy in the scheme of redemption? I answer, a place of superlative importance. What place does it occupy in the gospel order? Our answer—a Scriptural answer—to this question, if known everywhere, would rid the world of some of its most pernicious errors. In order to bring the matter to your attention, I affirm that it is next in order to, or that it follows, faith. I will endeavor to establish this proposition beyond doubt or cavil: (1). The position occupied by faith in the plan of salvation. Perhaps you may not be able to see what

this has to do with it. Nevertheless, it does have something to do with it, as I shall be able to abundantly show. If I can show that, after hearing the gospel, the sinner's first duty is to believe it with all his heart, it will naturally follow that repentance must follow it, next in order or somewhere else. Does it please God for sinners to repent? Evidently: "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance (Luke, 15:7)." "But without faith it is impossible to please him (Heb., li:6)." It seems to me that this should be conclusive, but with some it is not. To all such I submit one question: If a man disbelieves the gospel, what necessity can he see for repentance? (2). There are passages that are interpreted as opposing my proposition. As I want to go to the bottom of the subject I will quote them in full: (a) "For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him (Matt., 21:32)." (b) "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel (Mark, 1:14, 15)," (c) "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts, 20:21)." (d) "Repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God (Heb., 6:1, 2)." This seems to plainly contradict my statement, but let us endeavor to take in the whole situation. The passages marked (a) and (b) are misapplied by you and others. Both John (Matt, 3:1-10) and Jesus were sent to the Jews (Matt., 15:24) who had, by covenant relation and tradition, been believers in the one true God for two thousand years.

The Law of Moses had been given to these people (Mal., 4:4) and its design was to bring them to Christ (Gal., 3:21-25). In many instances they sinned grievously in departing from their schoolmaster. If you will read the book of Malachi you will see a portrayal of the condition of the nation that will positively startle you. The prophet warned them of the coming of the Lord's harbinger, but it is evident from the testimony of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John that, morally, the nation had not improved to any considerable extent. They were living in total disregard of the Law—a large majority of them were—hence, they were unprepared to receive either the harbinger or the Messiah. The first object of John and Jesus—like Othniel, Ehud, Jephthah, Samuel, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Joel and Malachi—was to restore the Law to the people and induce them to obey it. I would paraphrase the two passages, liberally, as follows: "You are children of Abraham and have enjoyed the covenant relation with God for centuries, but the schoolmaster given you at Mt. Sinai, to bring you as a nation to the Messiah, you have continuously broken; repent of this wickedness—this sin in thus disregarding God—and come back to your schoolmaster, and believe in the Son of God, as was God's intention concerning you." It is evident that these passages do not contain a message of salvation to the whole earth, for they were spoken before the abrogation of the law (Heb., 10:9). The two passages marked (c) and (d), express the object of repentance and faith, rather than the order in the plan of salvation. This is evident from the fact that in every example of conversion recorded in the book of Acts, where detailed accounts are given, faith invariably comes first. (3). God's law has been broken, man who broke it is at variance with his Maker. Repentance is "toward" God. If a man can repent toward God without

faith, he can repent without Christ. Jesus is between God and man (I. Tim., 2:5). How can a man approach God without the intercession of Jesus (Heb., 7:25)? Let Him answer: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me (John, 14:6)." Jesus grants repentance: "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins (Acts, 5:31), Does He, can He, grant repentance to those who deny Him and wickedly traduce Him? Conclusion: If repentance, under the gospel dispensation, precedes faith in Christ, or if a man can repent without faith, he can repent without Christ, and if he can repent without Christ he can repent without a mediator, and if he can repent without a mediator Christ died in vain! Do you doubt the correctness of this conclusion? (4). If repentance precedes faith in the gospel order, what produces repentance? Every effect must proceed from an adequate cause. What cause produces repentance? Perhaps you say, godly sorrow produces it. Granted, without further discussion, but what produces godly sorrow—the strivings' of the Holy Spirit? Granted, but the Holy Spirit strives through the gospel and the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every believer (Rom., 1:16) and you put faith first in spite of yourself! (5). Repentance is produced by the goodness of God (Rom., 2:4) and the fear of the coming Judgment (Acts, 17:30, 31). If a man believes neither, what is there left to induce him to repent? If you can not convince the people that God is good and that He will punish the wicked, you are powerless to help them and you can only do these things by faithfully and earnestly preaching Christ. The preacher's mission is to preach Christ as the revelation of God, and if this is done faithfully it will certainly bring men

to repentance, but it has never yet brought any man to repentance who persistently and stubbornly refused to believe it, and it never will between this and the end of time. It is easy to see why you and others so earnestly contend that repentance precedes faith. The gospel has more conditions in it than you can successfully harmonize with your theory of conversion—justification by faith alone—hence, you put repentance first, and practically define repentance as crying, mourning, weeping, while waiting for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which results in faith. (6). The gospel is the power of God unto salvation—repentance is one of the conditions on which salvation is suspended—to every one who believes (Rom., I:16). Close the Bible, and how would a man know what repentance is, or that it is demanded of him. All the conditions of salvation are made known in the gospel. Those who do not hear the gospel do not know what to do. Those who claim that, in the gospel economy, repentance precedes faith can not furnish one case in which a man has repented who has not previously heard the gospel. All the power under heaven to induce a man to repent is wrapped up in the gospel. It is God's power, His only power to turn us from darkness unto light. Those who reject it are doomed—they can not repent—they can not do anything. Prayers and tears and groans and agonies are unavailing to the man who wilfully and rebelliously turns away from the good news of Jesus. (7). In the Great Commission—the sum of all that went before, the prophecy of all that was to follow—teaching is made obligatory as the first step unto salvation. There is no appeal from this, for the authority of the apostles was to last to the end of time (Matt., 28:18-20). Whoever places repentance before faith reverses the order given by Jesus Christ. Will you attempt it? (8). Every example of con-

version of which we have the details in the book of Acts, shows beyond a reasonable doubt that the order was preaching, hearing, believing, repentance, baptism, salvation. If you know of a single exception I shall gladly consider it. If you can not find one exception the theory should be abandoned by all intelligent and God-fearing people. A man who preaches that which he can not sustain by the word of God and induces men to practice it, is undeniably on dangerous ground. What Scriptural support can you give to the mourner's bench?

What is repentance? How can this be determined? By finding out the meaning of the word and by appealing to the Word of God for corroboration. Webster defines it: "A change of mind, or a conversion from sin unto God" * * "the relinquishment of any practice from the conviction that it has offended God." I would go farther than this, and say, that it is such a change of mind that leads directly and inevitably to a reformation of life. Let me emphasize that it is a "change of mind." A calm survey of the situation will enable you to see many things that hitherto seem to have escaped your attention. Something must be brought to bear upon the mind in order to change it? What is the office of the mind? Thinking! Therefore, repentance is a change of thought. This throws new light —bright light—upon the subject. As a man thinks, so he acts. In order to change the life or conduct, it is necessary to change the thought. In order to change the thought something must be introduced into the mind that will carry sufficient weight to produce conviction—strong conviction •—and reflection, resulting in regret, sorrow, contrition, remorse, change of thought, reformation. A good illustration is found in Moses. Although brought up in affluence in the Court of Egypt, his thoughts were constantly with his

oppressed brethren. Finally he could not restrain himself longer, and he attempted to strike the shackles from the suffering Hebrews, but they ungenerously and even insultingly refused to recognize him as their deliverer. He at once changed his mind, gave up his long cherished hope, turned his back upon them and forsook Egypt (Ex., 2:1-15; Acts, 7:20-29). His change of mind, or thought, was sudden, complete, and surprising. It was brought about by the operation of the conduct of his brethren upon his mind. You can take in the contrast, I am sure—one day, deeply concerned in the welfare of his brethren, the next day, a wanderer among strangers. We call changes like this, repentance. Again, after he had wandered forty years, the Lord appeared to him and commissioned him to go to Egypt and lead His people out. So completely had Moses changed his mind that he declined to go, and it took argument after argument to change him back to his original purpose (Ex., 3:1-22; 41:1-13). Strictly speaking, the mind does not change, but thought and purpose do change. Notice what caused Moses to change his purpose concerning his brethren. Another illustration: During the reign of Amaziah, in order to strengthen his army, the king hired one hundred thousand soldiers of Israel. His mind was thoroughly made up that this was the best thing for him to do, but a man of God came to him and by sound argument convinced him that his course, if persisted in, would prove disastrous, and so fully, radically, and determinedly did he change his mind, that he was willing to lose the immense sum that he had invested in his army (II. Chron., 25:5-10). The king, under the power of persuasion—argument—changed his mind—his resolutions—and as a result completely changed his plans. So it is under the gospel. Men hear it and believe it, change

their minds—purposes—and correspondingly, their lives. Again, Jesus declared that the men of Nineveh repented at the preaching—mark you, people do not repent before they hear and believe something—at the preaching of Jonah (Matt., 12:41). Read the book of Jonah. The prophet entered the city with the startling cry: "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." The effect was electric. The king humbled himself and proclaimed a fast, and said: "Cry mightily unto God: Yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands." The mighty cry was not repentance, but an expression of fear and remorse. Their repentance is described in terms of unmistakable plainness. "God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not." Please sum this up: Preacher, preaching, hearing, believing, contrition—deep remorse—repentance and reformation. Jesus endorsed this repentance and certainly it was not "in order to faith." You think the conduct of the Ninevites furnishes some comfort for your mourner's bench system, but it does not. These people cried unto God and turned to Him. In your revivals men cry unto God and cry, and cry! I like to see a sinner's stubborn will broken. I like to see him humbled under the mighty hand of God. The objection I urge against your procedure is, you encourage the sinner to believe that he, under the Great Commission, can obtain pardon without complying with all the conditions on which it is promised. Penitence is a good thing—absolutely necessary, but it is dangerous to substitute it for obedience, and that is just what you do. I advise you to teach the people to turn and do the will of God. Mourning will not undo the past, and not one promise, to the alien, is suspended upon it in the New Testament. You

exhort the people to "seek" as if pardon were lost and had to be found. Pardon is suspended on conditions—these conditions are not arbitrary or despotic, they not only bring the sinner to pardon, but prepare him in heart and thought to enjoy it—it is your duty and privilege to make the conditions known. I have intimated that repentance deals primarily with the mind—the understanding—and secondarily, with the life or conduct. Consider my proof: "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; 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., 55:7-9)." Again: "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ (II. Cor., 10:4, 5)." These two passages sum up man's restoration to God in a change of thought, a return to Him—pardon! Here is more help from a different point of view: "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in me (Acts, 26:18)." Again: "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints (Eph., 1:48)." Repentance is the enlightenment of the mind—the opening up to the mind the glories and blessings of redemption. It is not miraculous, for it proceeds in per-

fect harmony with nature as expressed in the constitution of man. A man's mind is changed in reference to God, to Christ, to redemption, precisely in the same manner that it is changed in reference to anything else—otherwise Christianity is not adapted to man as he is—either its Author did not know the laws governing his mental and physical actions, or knowing them, disregarded them—and it is not adapted to man, and is therefore false and delusive. This involves your doctrine in a difficulty from which no mortal man can deliver it. You are hopelessly involved and entangled in doubt, in speculation, in uncertainty. The turning of the thought toward God—and we can only turn to Him through Jesus Christ, by faith in Him—is immediately and invariably followed by a change or reformation of life. Heart and mind or affection and thought govern actions and determine destiny. The man who loves God and thinks of Him with reverence will enter enthusiastically into His service. It is useless to talk about reformation apart from repentance—it is impossible. A man may drop an evil habit from policy or from the fear of ruin, but all true reformations must originate in a radical change of the thoughts, purposes and intents of the mind. It is impossible to lead a pure life if the fountains of life—heart and mind—are not pure. Purify the fountains and the stream will take care of itself. Leave them impure and you can not, by human or even Divine means, control the stream. Faith and repentance strike at the seat of the disease—at the roots of sin, and as Christ is the only, final and the eternal remedy for sin, it follows irresistibly and irrevocably that men can not repent without Him, and the only way to derive any aid from Him is to know Him, receive Him and believe Him with all the heart. I must, in passing, emphasize the fact that repentance, without exception, involves the act of turn-

ing; turning from sin, and turning to God; turning from unrighteousness and to righteousness; turning from the service of the devil and turning to the service of God; turning from the road to hell into the road to heaven. It is worthy of observation that if man had never sinned no necessity would have arisen for "turning." The whole remedial scheme is based upon the fact that man has departed from God, and this scheme is submitted in order to enable man to get back into the favor of his Maker. The prophet forcibly defines repentance: "Wash ye, make you clean; put away the evil of your doing from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and 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. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it (Isa., 1:16-20)." It is easy to see here that the two elements of repentance are a change of mind and a change of deportment. Change of mind must come first—reformation must continue indefinitely. Again: "Amend your ways and your doings (Jer., 7:3)." How simple—how easy—do you comprehend this? And again: "Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them: Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts (Mal., 3:7)." Is not this a fair proposition? What more could the sinner ask? In your revivals you reverse this order—you preach and exhort and then "call mourners." The first prayer you make is for God to come—to come with pardoning power! Why do you not teach the people to accept the Lord's proposition? Going

to the "mourner's bench" is not drawing nigh unto God, for He never commanded it nor anything like it. I can prove this by you. A man can not draw nigh to God without faith (Heb., 10:22), and he does not, according to your theory, come into possession of saving faith until he is baptized in the Holy Spirit! In your revivals, instead of emphasizing the necessity of turning "now," while under the power of the gospel, you teach that mourning will prepare them to turn. Some of your revival propositions are absurd. You ask all who want to go to heaven, or all who do not want to go to hell, to stand up—anything to get up an excitement. Allow me to make a suggestion. In your next revival try one or all of the following propositions: (a) All who are willing, without further preliminaries, to turn to God, stand up; or, (b) All who are willing to do, without delay, just what is specified in the Great Commission, and trust God for salvation, stand up; or, (c) All who are willing to do what Peter told the Pentecostans to do, stand up; or, (d) All who are willing to do precisely what the Ethiopian eunuch did, stand up; or, (e) All who are willing to do what Ananias told Saul of Tarsus to do, stand up; or, (f) All who are willing to do all that Paul told the jailor to do, stand up; or, (g) All who are willing to confess the Redeemer, as Peter and Nathanael and Timothy confessed Him, stand up; or, (h) All who are willing to follow Christ to the exclusion of all other leaders, and to wear His name to the exclusion of all other names, stand up. You cannot propound these questions in your revivals—they would kill any Methodist or Baptist or "union" revival ever started, and do it in one day! This seems strange. However, it is easily accounted for. You do not give your mourners an apostolic answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" and any serious attempt to do so would make you a Heretic in the estimation

of your brethren, and completely uproot your whole theory of conversion. Your revivals are conceived in emotions and brought forth in excitement, and the apostolic answers to inquirers would soon banish the mourners' bench and its advocates from the earth. Let me emphasize the fact that men, under the preaching of the truth, are expected to turn; not to-morrow, not next week, not next month, not at some indefinite time in the future after they have mourned for years, but now! There is no need for delay. Mourning does not help it. Seeking does not help it. Loud praying does not help it. It is an act of the mind involving the whole destiny, and should be done calmly, coolly, deliberately, once for all. I confess that It astonishes me to see a young man of your sense and attainments tie himself down to a system that forever prevents him from following Peter, Ananias and Paul. Surely sectarianism has blinded your eyes. I sum up my answer to the question—What is repentance? as follows, and ask you to consider it: Repentance is a change of mind, followed by a reformation of life, and it must be so radical as to change the whole mind and the whole life. Do you accept this? If yes, what need have you for the mourners' bench? If no, please give me a better one, with the Scriptural proof.

Is God willing for us to repent? Most assuredly. Yet it would seem from the manner in which you conduct your revivals, that you doubt it. If a sinner wants to turn, and God is willing, what is the use of mourning and waiting? You can not say that the sinner is unwilling, for he demonstrates by going up to be prayed for, that he is willing. God's willingness can not be doubted, unless we throw away the Bible. There are many proofs of this: (1). If He is not willing, why did He give the Bible? The whole Bible is based on one great fact: man has apostasized and God is

using every means in harmony with his nature in order to bring him back. Take this thought out of the Bible and what would remain? Next to nothing. (2). If He is unwilling for us to repent, why did He send Jesus? The promise to Abram was, that in him and in his seed all nations should be blessed (Gen., 12:1-3). The Great Commission includes every creature (Mark, 16:15, 16) and Paul declares that Jesus Christ tasted death for every man (Heb., 2:9). In summing up the object of His mission in the world, Jesus said: "For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved (John, 3:17)." This gives a chance to every man in every age. It amounts to this: God loves all men, He sent Jesus to show us the way to eternal life, the way is plainly made known in the New Testament, and now we are invited, commanded, exhorted, to turn from our sinful ways and walk in the footsteps of Jesus all our days. (3). The issues of life and death are hung upon the command to repent. Jesus, in addressing some of his contemporaries, said with great emphasis: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish (Luke, 13:3)." This applies with equal force to every age and to every accountable creature. It can not be evaded. God is just, and He would not suspend our salvation on an impossibility—on what He knew we could not do. (4). A man can change his mind on any other subject, when the proper influence is brought to bear upon it. The fact that a man can change his mind in reference to material things is conclusive proof that he can repent, if he so desires. You go along with nature in educational and financial matters—proceeding upon the well established fact that a man's mind is capable of changing and adapting itself to new circumstances, but as soon as you enter the domain of Christianity, you want to make man a machine and

pray God to send the power to move him. If a man can repent, he can do it now without any help outside of the gospel. If he can not do it, he is doomed, for it is "repent or perish" from the beginning to the end of the gospel. If your position is true, the appropriation of the principles of Christianity is wholly unnatural, and religion is out of tune with nature, as revealed in the mental and physical organization of man. (5). God proclaims His willingness in unmistakable terms. I shall call only two witnesses: (a) Ezekiel the prophet: "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live? * * Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive; because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die. * * * Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore, turn yourselves, and live ye (Ezek., 18:23-32)." Could anything be plainer than this? You claim that man is a "free moral agent," and that salvation is "free." Yet you either make all your mourners unwilling to be saved, or God unwilling to save them—there is absolutely no way out of this. If the sinner is willing, and his conduct goes to prove that he is; if God is willing, and His word proves beyond a shadow of doubt that He is, what is the use of mourning? I answer for you, None whatever, (b) Peter the apostle: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repent-

ance (II. Peter, 3:9)." God's promise is good to every man. It grieves Him to see us go astray. He sets right and peace and heaven before us, and invites us to come back to His fold. He does not force us to do it, but beseeches us on the ground that it is a pleasure to Him and infinitely better for us. Every material blessing sent down upon us; every moment's peace, and every groan from Calvary, call us to Christ. God is willing, willing now, this very moment. Do not encourage procrastination. Tell sinners what to do and urge them to do it. The promise is always good—good always!

What produces repentance? It is no difficult task to answer this question if we confine ourselves to the Book, but so much tradition has been promulgated under the guise of the truth, that outside theories first invite consideration. Your position is that the Holy Spirit—direct from God—enters the sinner's heart and convicts him of sin, shows him his dangerous condition, and turns him to God. Admitting for argument's sake that this is true, I wish to propound to you a question: From the standpoint of the sinner's conversion—turning, for that is all the word means—to God, what use is there for the Bible, the gospel, the church, preaching, or prayer? You pray for God to send the Spirit into the hearts of sinners and convict them of sin and bring them to repentance. Where did Peter, John, Paul, or Jude ever pray such a prayer? If your prayer influences one sinner's conversion by reason of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon him, what reason can you assign for the fact that the same prayer does not lead the world to repentance? Prayer is abused. I advise you to keep your prayers within the promises of God. The Holy Spirit does lead men to repentance, but never outside of the gospel—no, never! You keep men from repentance by encouraging them to wait for

a miracle, or for some tremendous shaking up of the emotional nature. Men who think calmly and move deliberately will not yield to such teaching. Men under the power of the ancient gospel neither "see great sights," "hear great sounds," nor "experience extraordinary feeling's." With them it is faith, thought, judgment. Which is preferable? Another consideration: Repentance is to be preached (Luke, 24:47). What is the use of preaching repentance if it, at last, must be brought about by a miracle? The preaching of repentance is another proof that under the last commission it follows faith, for what effect would the preaching of repentance have upon the man who does not believe the preaching? Jesus grants repentance (Acts, 5:31), but He does this only through preaching. The proof of this is overwhelming. Read Acts of the Apostles. Whenever the gospel was preached and believed, men repented, but nowhere else. I challenge you to produce one example to the contrary. Paul says that godly sorrow works or produces repentance (II. Cor., 7:10), but what produces godly sorrow? "Aye, there is the rub." Back of this there is another important question, What is godly sorrow? and back of this another, Who produces godly sorrow? Godly sorrow is—I can not see how it can be anything else—sorrow on the account of having broken God's law and trampled His mercies under foot. What produces it? The gospel, undoubtedly. You can easily see where this drives you. Paul sums it up very forcibly and plainly: "How shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent (Rom., 10:14, 15)? There are two things in the Bible by which, or on the account of which, men are led to repentance? Can you tell what they

are? I can tell you: (1). The goodness of God (Rom., 2:4). (2). The fear of the coming judgment (Acts, 17:30, 31). If a man can not be brought under the influence of these by the preaching of the gospel there is no other power on earth or in heaven to bring him to repentance—the cross, the preacher, the gospel, hearing, realizing God's goodness and severity, faith, godly sorrow, repentance—this is the gospel order.

What does repentance include? Simply a change of mind and a change of conduct. It embraces regret, but it is more than this. Saul regretted that he had broken God's law—because he was caught in it (I. Sam., 15:1-33)! It is sorrow for sin, but it is more than this. It is a resolution to forsake sin, but it is more than this. It is the actual abandonment of all sinful practices and the full surrender of everything into the hands of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Repentance is universally needed. Everywhere the sentence of the Lord of heaven, the penalty of the broken law, hangs threateningly over the human race. God calls, heaven invites, hell threatens. Exhort men to turn while it is day.

How does the power of God that "works in us" in order to repentance get into us? Much hangs on a proper answer to this question. Here is a man. Examine him. He has a double or twofold nature. He consists of an outer and an inner man, or a physical and a mental organization. Viewing man as an animal organization simply, we may confidently assert that repentance does not affect him, save as it changes his conduct. But viewed as a mental organization, we may confidently assert that repentance radically changes the current of his thought. How can we introduce converting power into him—his mind—so as to bring about repentance. It is unexceptionally true that uncon-

verted men, as they are, in sin, do not desire to repent. A motive or desire must therefore be introduced into the mind, and it must be done in harmony with his constitution, otherwise he will go on in his sins. I can not be too emphatic in stating that repentance begins in the mind and works its way out into the conduct. Physical feelings or emotions, therefore, have nothing to do with it. Converting power must reach the understanding through the natural channels, the eye and the ear. It does not come down from heaven like a flash of lightning and produce an effect like an electric shock. It does not effect the physical organization like heat and cold; in other words, it does not necessarily interfere with the feelings, save as the gospel changes the course of thought, and the excitement that is naturally attendant upon a change of conviction and a change of purpose. Repentance is a change of mind or thought, a calm and deliberate change, a change resulting from conviction; feelings are not a necessary accompaniment, they may follow, they may not, it depends altogether on the physical organization—some men are excitable, some are not. Excitement has nothing particular to do with it. If a man's emotions are deeply stirred it is all right; if they are not stirred at all no one can object, providing his conduct proves that the gospel has successfully done its work in his mind. I record it as my conviction, deliberately formed, that while there is generally excitement attendant upon a change of mind, it is better to suppress excitement than encourage it, and let men, while the gospel, pure and simple, is sounding in their ears, choose whom they will serve, calmly and deliberately, and once for all yield their minds and lives to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Doing this you will see fewer backsliders and more earnest, self-sacrificing and intelligent disciples of the Lord. The result in view is worth the best effort you are capable of making. Affectionately yours, J.

LETTER No. X.—BAPTISM.

My Dear Theophilus:—If there is any subject in the Bible about which there is no ground whatever for dispute and division it is baptism, and yet there is no subject which is so prolific of dispute, debate, controversy, strife and division. This is positively startling. I can not account for it on any ground save the unwillingness of men to do what the Lord commands. The gravity of this implication is such that full, fair and deliberate investigation is demanded. Is the Bible of God? We all agree that it is. Does it contain all things necessary to make us wise unto salvation, "and does it fully equip us for the battles of the Christian life? We all agree that it does. It seems strange, therefore, that we should disagree about anything that it contains, particularly as the prophet, in looking forward, predicted that there would not be, in the gospel age, any occasion for erring, even to the fool, or wayfarer (Isa., 35:8). I am sure that when men disagree about the requirements of the gospel that God's purposes are thwarted, for He planned no divisions in His kingdom. The baptismal question is important, if for no other reason, because so many are divided about its meaning. In discussing the subject I shall endeavor to give a Scriptural answer to three questions: (1). Who may legitimately or Scripturally be baptized? (2). What is the action, or how is it done? (3). What is baptism for? I trust you will follow me patiently and without prejudice, for you must give the first decision as to my success or failure.

Who may be, Scripturally, baptized? We can not over-

state the importance of this question. Look at it. The point sought after is, who, or what character may be baptized without doing violence to the teaching of the word of God? In order to bring the matter forcibly to your mind, I affirm that only penitent believers are proper subjects of baptism. In other words, it is not so much a question of years as it is a question of thought, understanding, faith and penitence. I do not object to the baptism of children if they are old enough to understand, otherwise I do object most strenuously and persistently. You believe and teach that the baptism of infants is in harmony with the gospel. I do not, and I propose to take up your arguments, one by one, and show you why I do not believe it. You base your first argument upon the Abrahamic covenant—although this is a long way to go in order to get authority to do a thing under the reign of Christ. Your idea is that God made a covenant with Abraham, continued it through Moses and completed it through Jesus and the apostles, and that inasmuch as Abraham's children—only the males—were circumcised to give them proof, an ineffaceable sign, of the covenant, it is right and Scriptural to baptize infants—both male and female—in order to bring them into the Church or new covenant! Do you not see that some of the points in this position fail to connect? Do you not see that it comes about as near establishing infant baptism on a Divine basis as the passage relative to Samson's three hundred foxes and the fire brands and the destruction of the standing corn of the Philistines would do it (Judges, 15:3-5)? This is the best argument you can present, and there is nothing in it, for three reasons: (1). The covenant had under it a fleshly basis (Gen., 17:1-14). (2). We live under the provisions of a new and better covenant, which was

established upon better promises (Jen, 31:31-34; Heb., 8:1-13). (3). All the members of the new covenant are to know the Lord (Heb., 8:11). But you have, as you think, an easy way out of this difficulty. You declare that the two covenants are identical (Gal., 4:21-31), and in order to get rid of circumcision and save "the baptism of infants" to the gospel age, you put baptism to the male infants in the room of circumcision and baptize the female infant anyway! Do you not think such a line of argument and action a little risky? Let us dig to the bottom of it. The two covenants are not and never were identical. They are similar in some respects, but they are fundamentally different, as every earnest Bible reader must see, and one direct proof that Jesus commanded the baptism of infants, or that the apostles practiced infant baptism will outweigh all the arguments you can build upon the perpetuity of the Abrahamic covenant in a hundred years. The old fleshly covenant was abolished and all its relations dissolved when Jesus died upon the cross (Rom., 7:1-4; Heb., 8:13). Baptism did not and does not come in the room of anything. It stands on its own basis. From your standpoint Jesus and all the other Jews baptized by John, the forerunner of Christ, received two marks or signs of one covenant, for they had all been circumcised in infancy. This is also true of all the Jewish converts in the first age of the Church. I call on you to point out a single particular in which baptism comes in the room of circumcision. In order to help you out I will admit, for the sake of argument, that we are still under the Abrahamic covenant, and that the new covenant is simply the perpetuity and broadening of the old. Now you have something to do. What is it? Prove that baptism comes in the room of circumcision—that the sign of the original covenant has been abrogated while the covenant it-

self has been perpetuated, and therefore justifies you in baptizing an irresponsible infant in the name of Jesus Christ. It is easy to affirm. It is easy to put your statement off on sincere and unsuspecting people, but now you must come forward with proof. Does Jesus say baptism came in the room of circumcision? Does Peter say it? Does Paul say it? Does anybody say it? If not, who do you say it? I will contrast circumcision and baptism and you will readily perceive the difference; (1). Circumcision was a sign of previously existing membership in the covenant — the conditions of membership were birth and purchase—circumcision was the proof of it. Will you affirm that baptism comes in the room of circumcision in this particular? (2). Circumcision was a mark in the flesh and made a visible sign. Will you affirm that baptism comes in the room of circumcision in this particular? (3). Circumcision effected only Abraham's male offspring or purchase. Will you affirm that baptism comes in the room of circumcision in this particular? (4). The uncircumcised child was cut off from the covenant. Will you affirm that baptism comes in the room of circumcision in this particular—will the unbaptized infant be damned? (5). Those who were circumcised were debtors to keep the whole Law of Moses (Gal., 5:3). Will you affirm that those who have been baptized are debtors to do the whole Law of Moses—if so what will become of those who can not go to Jerusalem three times a year to keep the Lord's feasts (Ex., 23:14)? (6). Those who were baptized on the day of Pentecost had all been previously circumcised (Acts, 2:1-42). How do you account for this, seeing they had all been in the old covenant? (7). Baptism, to a proper subject, is for the remission of sins (Acts, 2:38). Does it come in the room of circumcision in this particular? I am certain that

there is no basis for infant baptism in the Abrahamic covenant. You may "think" so, but you can not prove it. What, therefore, is it worth? Your next argument is based upon the words of Jesus: "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such—such characters, no doubt—is the kingdom of heaven (Matt., 19:14)." Not one word about baptism here. This passage shows that Jesus loved children and it does not show anything else. You might well quote this passage to prove that circumcision is forever binding on the human race! If it establishes infant baptism it establishes anything you wish to inject into it—a very convenient witness, indeed! It is supposed by some of your brethren that the Great Commission, as recorded by Matthew, furnishes some support to the advocates of infant baptism—the phrase, "all nations," is supposed to embrace infants (Matt., 28:18-20). One of your brethren once suggested this to me. I replied: "There are thieves, robbers, adulterers, defaulters, burglars and murderers in all nations; would you baptize them because they are parts of the nation?" Would you do it? If you will read the commission you will see that teaching must precede baptism—teach, baptize and teach again. You reverse the Divine order by placing baptism first. You generally make your final struggle on the household baptisms, of which we read in Acts of the Apostles. I think I can show conclusively that there were no infants in them. Take them in their order: (1). Lydia and her house (Acts, 16:10-15). This, you seem to think, is conclusive proof, but all the "proof" there is in it is assumption, pure and unmixed. You assume that Lydia was a married woman. You assume that she had children. You assume that she had her children with her as she traveled through the country as a "seller of purple." You assume that some of her children

were infants. You assume that they were baptized. Luke plainly says of the place where this prayer-meeting was held that women resorted there, but makes no mention of children, for the good reason that none were there. (2). The jailor's household (Acts, 16:25-40). It is only necessary to quote one brief passage. After the jailor was baptized he took "them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house." When the members of an entire household believe, you have authority from heaven to baptize them all, from the least up to the greatest. It is not size or age that separates us on this point, but faith. (3). The household of Stephanas (I. Cor., 16; 15). The members of the household "addicted" themselves to the ministry of the saints. Infants could not do this. Hence, there were no infants in this family. Again, every example given in the book of Acts, if taken into consideration with all the attendant circumstances, tends to the conclusion that only believers were baptized in the days of Peter and Paul. I am curious to know why you persist in this practice. You have neither Divine command nor apostolic precedent for its continuation. Whoever baptizes a babe does so without the shadow of Divine authority. Do you not tremble when you think of your responsibility? You presume to do for the helpless child what it should by all means do for itself when it reaches the years of intelligent and accountable action. You obstruct personal obedience by doing for them what every believer is commanded to do personally. I emphasize the great fundamental truth that every man must obey the Lord for himself. You take a child through what you are pleased to term baptism, bind him to a system of which he knows nothing, and by the force of early training and environments make it next to impossible for him to ever investigate,

decide or act for himself. Your theory has a tendency to destroy free agency. Is the child a sinner? If yes, what becomes of those who die without baptism? If no, why baptize them?—baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts, 2:38)! The next time you perform this act ask yourself the question, "Who hath required this at my hands?" I want you to adopt a new motto: "From this day forward I will not do anything in the name of Jesus unless I can find a plain command or an apostolic precedent to sustain me in it." This will forever suspend the baptism of infants.

What is baptism—what action did Jesus place in this word? What does the word baptize mean? How may I know that I have been baptized, and thereby set my conscience forever at rest? You are liberal in your definition of the word, and I must say, entirely too liberal to be consistent with learning and common sense. You declare that the word, original or anglicized, means sprinkle, or pour, You admit that it also means immerse, and give the latter the endorsement of your creed. Sprinkle, pour, immerse--here are three words with three meanings, bearing absolutely no relation to each other. Sprinkling is one action, pouring is another, and immersion is another, and they are apparently without relationship. Yet they all, according to your definition, grow out of one word. This is an anomaly in language, if it is correct. But is it correct? I think not, for it is a law of language as well as of vegetation, that everything is to reproduce its kind and only its kind. I present you with an acorn and request you to plant it in good ground, which you do. After waiting ten years your tree blooms, and upon inspection, when the fruit comes to maturity, you find on one limb fully matured ears of corn, on another you find beautiful red cherries, on another you find large yellow apples. What do you think of such a tree?

It is clearly an impossibility, for God laid the principle deep down in the constitution of things that everything must produce its kind. Christ gave the word baptize to the world through His apostles. They planted it in the soil of the human heart, it grew, and lo! in this year of our Lord the tree bears fruit. Let us examine the fruit. On one limb there is sprinkling. On another there is pouring. On another there is immersion. What do you think of this tree and its fruit? Do you think the original seed could bring three kinds of fruit so diverse? Is it not a fact that some grafting has been done? I challenge you, and through you the scholars of the Methodist Church, and the Presbyterian Church, and the Lutheran Church, and the Episcopal Church, to find another word in any language that has as many and as diverse meanings. My readings have been quite extensive, I have searched for the truth for its own sake, and I am confident that there is not such a word in any language, living or dead. If such a word can be found, it will go a long way to establish your definition of baptism. Remember in your searching, you must find a word with three absolutely distinct and dissimilar meanings. I am willing to stake everything on the statement that the word baptize as Jesus gave it, or as it occurs in the New Testament, has but one meaning. It either means sprinkle, pour, immerse, or something else. It never did and never will mean all these things. It is a philological impossibility. If it means sprinkle, all should sprinkle and they should do nothing else. If it means pour, all should pour and do nothing else. If it means immerse, all should immerse and do nothing else. If it means something else, we all should find out what it is, agree upon it and do it. Open your Bible and find an account of the baptism of Jesus. Observe the place occupied by the word. Study its relations. The

word baptize has in it an action. Now turn to your dictionary and read the definition of the words, sprinkle, pour and immerse. What is the meaning of the word sprinkle? Answer: "To scatter in small drops or particles." What is the meaning of the word pour? "To cause to flow in a stream into or out of a vessel." What is the meaning of the word immerse? Answer: "To plunge into a fluid." There can be no doubt as to the difference in these words. Now, if the words sprinkle, pour and immerse all really grow out of the word baptize, you can use either one in any passage where the word occurs, and the sense will not be changed. If you can not do this it is evident that the words did not grow out of the original word. Take a few examples: "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)." "And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galileo, and was baptized of John in Jordan, and straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him (Mark, 1:9, 10)." Who was baptized? Careful, here! Jesus was baptized. Of whom is the action asserted? Of Jesus. I say, without the fear of even an effort to contradict, that the word baptize does not and can not mean sprinkle or pour. The action is asserted of Jesus and not of the element in which He was baptized. You can not sprinkle a man, for his body can not be separated into small particles without taking his life. You can not pour a man, for only liquids can be caused to flow in a stream. You can immerse a body, small or great. You can immerse a pencil, or a pen, or a book, or a brick, or a man. You can sprinkle or pour liquids of all kinds, but you can not pour or sprinkle bodies—men.

While at the proper place, I wish to look a little further into the baptism of Jesus. I have heard you admit that He came to the river, and that He went down into the water and came straightway out of it, but you profess to be ignorant of what occurred while He was in the water. You say He might have been sprinkled, He might have been poured, and He might have been immersed; that you do not know which and that you do not particularly care. There is one thing that is unquestionably settled. He was not poured or sprinkled, for that was, and is, a physical impossibility. He was "baptized of John in Jordan." If He came to the water, if He went into it, if He were baptized in the Jordan and if He came up out of the water, and I do not see how you can deny it, sprinkling and pouring are entirely out of the question. You profess to follow Jesus and teach others to do likewise. Are you really doing it? You profess also to be in doubt as to how John baptized others. You seem to think it probable that he took a bunch of hyssop, and standing in the water, sprinkled the people by wholesale while they were standing along the shore. Then Mark, 1:5, should read: "Then went out unto him all the land of Judea and they of Jerusalem, and were baptized of him in the river Jordan, standing on the shore, with a bunch of hyssop!" I hold you to the definition of the word—the people were baptized. Let us test this matter further: "And John also was baptizing in Enon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized (John, 3:23)." Try sprinkle, pour and immerse, or their definitions, in this passage, and see if they will make sense: "And John also was scattering in small drops in Enon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came and were scattered in small drops." Try

pour: "And John also was turning people out in a stream In Enon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came and were turned out in a stream." Try immerse: "And John also was immersing in Enon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came and were immersed." Take the commission: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, scattering them in small drops in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Try pour: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, causing them to flow in a stream in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Try immerse: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, immersing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Again: "Therefore we are buried with him by sprinkling--being scattered in small drops—into death." Try pour: "Therefore we are buried with him—turned out in a stream —by pouring into his death. Try immerse: "Therefore we are buried with him by immersion into death (Rom., 6:4)." Truth is always harmonious and consistent, and nothing shows this with greater plainness than this line of argument. You can sprinkle water on people, but you can not sprinkle the people. You can pour water on the people, but you can not pour the people. You can baptize people, immerse them, but you can not do anything else unless you can change the record in such a way as to make it read that the element is used, and that the action does not involve the man. The word means immerse and nothing else. I proceed with the proof: (1). In the early ages baptisms were performed in rivers, or where there was much water, and they occurred in the water. John baptized Jesus and the inhabitants of Judea and Jerusalem in the river Jordan (Matt., 3:16, 17; Mark, 1:3-5). Do you baptize in rivers? John baptized in Enon near to Salim, because there was

much water (John, 3:23). Do you baptize where there is much water? Of course you do not. A pint of water would probably answer your purpose for a lifetime, and you might have some—a few drops—left over for some one else. The baptism of the Ethiopian officer forcibly illustrates the point (Acts, 8:26-40). They—preacher and hearer—came to a certain water, that is, water in its natural place. They—both the preacher and convert—went down into the water. He, Philip, baptized him—the convert. They—both preacher and convert—came up out of the water. Do you go with your converts to the water? You do not. Do you go with your converts down into the water? You do not, you put your fingers into the water. Do you and your converts come up out of the water? You do not, you simply take your fingers out of the water. Do you baptize? You do not. You simply put a few drops of water on the forehead of your converts, yet you pronounce the sublime formula given in the Great, the last Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ! (2). The sufferings of Christ (Matt. 20:22, 23; Luke, 12:50). Was He sprinkled with suffering? No. Was He poured with suffering? No, a thousand times no. Was He immersed in, or overwhelmed with suffering? Most assuredly. (3). The baptism of the Holy Spirit. You claim to have received this baptism. Was it a sprinkling, a pouring, or an overwhelming? Undoubtedly an overwhelming. So it was on Pentecost. So it was at the house of Cornelius. So it would be to-day if it were to occur. Your theory of the baptism of the Holy Spirit completely overturns your sprinkling as a substitute for baptism. (4). Apostolic allusions to baptism. Hear Paul: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us

as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? 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, for if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection (Rom., 6:1-5)." Can you explain these statements on the ground that sprinkling is authorized? Buried or planted with Him! Read this quotation over again. Notice Paul's arguments: Jesus died, He was buried in a grave, He arose again from the dead and entered upon a new life. We are crucified with Him, we die to the love of sin, we are buried with Him—planted in the likeness of His death—by baptism, we are raised up to walk in a newness of life. This is clearly Paul's meaning and this is manifestly the lesson he desires to teach. Can you explain it on the sprinkling or pouring hypothesis? You know it is impossible. You will probably say that baptism in water is not meant in this connection. If not, why is the word used? Baptism is in this passage. You can accept it or let it alone but it will remain in its place in any event. Again: "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)." Burial and resurrection— can a man be buried and raised out of a few—alas! how few! —drops of water? It is a loss of time to argue this matter further. You can not avoid seeing unless you close your eyes. (5). Birth of water and spirit (John, 3:1-5). It is a physical and moral impossibility for a man—mark you I say a man—to be born of a few drops of water, and a baby does not need to be born again. (6). Washing. There are allusions in the apostolic writings to washings that are very strong evidences against your assumption that sprinkling

may be substituted for baptism. Paul says: "Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing—no sprinkling here—of water by the word (Eph., 5:25, 26)." Again: "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled—this is the place for sprinkling—from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water (Heb., 10:22)." I unhesitatingly confess that to see the "washing of the body" in the application of a few damp fingers, or at best a few drops of water to the forehead requires a stretch of the imagination of which I am wholly incapable. Do you see or do you just "try" to see it? What is the meaning of the word wash in Scriptural usage? Read the fifth chapter of II. Kings. Naaman the Syrian captain went to the prophet Elisha in order to be cured of his leprosy. The Lord's prophet told him to go and wash in Jordan seven times. He at first turned away in a rage, but upon being persuaded went and dipped himself in Jordan seven times! You dip your fingers in the water and put them on the convert's, or the baby's head! This reminds me of a story. A little girl who had been accustomed to see baptism performed as it was done in New Testament times was visiting a little friend who knew nothing but sprinkling. The little visitor was informed that the little brother of her friend was to be "baptized" the next day. In due time the congregation assembled and the appointed hour arrived. The child was present with gravity. The preacher took a glass of water in his hand and solemnly pronounced the formula. At this juncture the little visitor who could restrain her feeling no longer whispered to her companion, "Indeed I do not see how they can put that baby into that glass of water!" You make certain objections to immersion and as they are liable to lead

thoughtless people astray I will examine them with care and I trust you will read with care as a scholar: (1). "Immersion is not once named in the New Testament." I reply, neither is the word sprinkle used in any connection or place where baptism is meant. We have the equivalent of immerse in our version in such words as "buried," "washed," "washing." What is the meaning of the word baptize as it occurs in the English Testament? It means immerse and its equivalents and nothing else. "Baptize" was never translated. It was simply transferred from the original Greek into English. There is not a scholar, a real scholar, on earth who would translate it, using sprinkle or pour. Why was the word transferred? Simply because those who had the translation in hand knew that the proper translation of the word would put sprinkling and pouring to death, and it was impossible to translate it by the use of a word meaning immerse, sprinkle and pour for the good and sufficient reason that there is no such a word in the English language, or any other language. Every standard Greek lexicon in existence defines the word as immerse, dip, plunge, submerge. Every reformer of any distinction, including John Wesley, says that originally immersion was required and practiced. (2). You refer to the Old Testament as proof of sprinkling—baptism is a New Testament ordinance. Baptism has no equivalent under the Law of Moses. However I will examine your proofs: (a). "So shall he sprinkle many nations (Isa., 52:15)." This proves nothing, for sprinkle means to scatter—"So shall he scatter many nations." Do you see any water here? The Revised Version made by unbiased scholars—if sectarians can be unbiased—puts in the margin the word "startle"—"So shall he startle many nations." (b). "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthi-

ness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you; a new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh; and I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them; and ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God (Ezek., 36:25-28)." The merest tyro in Biblical knowledge ought to know—and you do know!—that this refers to the gathering of the Jews out of the Babylonish captivity and their re-establishment in the land of promise, and that it has not the slightest reference to New Testament times. Suppose God did sprinkle clean water upon the Jews, His own dear people, when He brought them out from the country of the heathen; where has He authorized you to sprinkle water upon any man, woman or child in His name? Granting, for argument's sake, that this passage does refer to baptism, it completely nullifies your position, for you say that the one thing needed is the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and that water baptism is unimportant. This sprinkling was for a purpose: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." If it proves or establishes sprinkling as baptism, it also establishes, beyond a doubt, that "water baptism" is essential to salvation. You certainly see that it proves entirely too much for your position. (3). "With water." Whenever "sorely pressed" by the truth you fall back on the statement that John baptized "with water," but you know the original words means "in," and it is so recognized in the Revised Testament. You know also, that it is plainly stated by Mark that John baptized in the river Jordan (Mark, 1:3-5). This is a miserable subterfuge, and you and your brethren ought to be ashamed of it. (4). Modes

of Baptism. You admit that there is one baptism, but claim that there are different modes of performing it. This is purely imaginary. There are no modes of doing God's will. He has revealed it plainly and specifically. You can do it or you can let it alone, but when you substitute anything else for it, you not only fail to obey Him, but you add presumption to the sin of omission. It is simply obedience or disobedience, you can take your choice. (5). "No water in the commission." If not, why do you bring it in? I freely admit that there is no water in the phrase, "baptizing them," and from your standpoint you can not go after it or send for it. Let me submit a proposition. When God commands a man to be baptized—immersed—the command presupposes that the persons to whom it is given will seek and find the proper element in which to obey it, and this the apostles did. In order to maintain sprinkling you will have to change the commission altogether and make it read: "sprinkling water upon them!" (6). "Nothing in the word baptize, if it means to immerse, to authorize us to raise a man out of the water." If not, why do you do it when you immerse those who will not have water sprinkled upon them? You raise this objection when you get to a point where you can not do anything else. It is presumed that every man who goes out to preach has common sense enough not to drown his converts. In addition to this, Paul clearly anticipating your objection, teaches that men who are baptized are also raised up (Rom., 6:1-4; Col., 3:1). I should like very much to see you raise up one of your converts when you sprinkle water upon him. (7). "It was impossible to baptize three thousand on Pentecost, because there was not enough water in Jerusalem, and the apostles could not have done it in the allotted time." In answer to the first, I suggest that a city the size of Jerusa-

lem required a regular water supply for ordinary purposes, and the pools about the city afforded "much water" and this was enough. As to the second, I suggest that as Luke says it was done, it is well to let his statement stand. But a little calculating will exhibit the fallacy of your objection. The preaching began at 9 o'clock in the morning and probably continued one hour. If the baptizing began at 10 o'clock and lasted until six in the evening each man had only two hundred and fifty to baptize, and his average per hour was only about thirty-one. I am sure I could not measure arms with those strong fishermen of the Galilee, but I am certain I could immerse that number in that time. (8). "There was no water on the road where the eunuch was baptized." Then Luke stands convicted of falsification, for he plainly states that they came "into a certain water," and went down into it and finally came up out of it (Acts, 8:36). (9). "Baptism—immersion—is indecent." Is it? You and your Master for it—shame on you! I confess that it is humiliating to human pride, and that is what human pride needs. There is nothing but real death—immersion symbolizes it—that brings a man so low. He trusts his life in the hands of another, the yielding waves close over him, he is raised out of the grave to "walk in newness of life," thus proclaiming to the world and the church that his old man is crucified and dead, and that he has forever turned his back upon the past. (*id*). "The pouring out of the Holy Spirit did not symbolize immersion (Joel, 2:28, 29)." Who said it did? It was not the pouring out, but the effect upon the people that we are interested in, and that was clearly an immersion or an overwhelming (Acts, 2:1-4). (11). "Paul arose and was baptized, and this proves that he was not immersed." Does it? Let us see. Paul is a good witness and he says he was

"buried" in baptism. See Horn., 6:1-6. Do you "bury" men when you sprinkle or pour water on them? If you can "bury" a man with four "damp" fingers I will give it up. (12). "The Philippian jailor was baptized in jail, and there was not sufficient water in the building to immerse him." This looks startling, for if you can find one clear example of sprinkling in the New Testament, the question is settled beyond controversy—there is only one baptism (Eph., 4:1-5). But your proposition is unqualifiedly false in every respect—the jailor was not baptized in the jail, and even if he had been he would have been immersed, for that is the meaning of the word baptize. Read the sixteenth chapter of Acts. Paul and Silas were in the prison, secured in the stocks. Now if you will follow Luke you will see that you have been laboring under a grave mistake: (a) The earthquake came and shook the foundation of the prison, "and every one's bonds were loosed"—this certainly let them out of the stocks, (b) The keeper of the prison attempted to kill himself, but upon the assurance of Paul that the prisoners had not departed—another proof that they were out of the stocks and at liberty to depart—he called for a light and came in and fell down before Paul and Silas, and "brought them out"—of the prison without a doubt— and asked what to do to be saved, (c) They spoke unto him and all who were in "his house" the word of the Lord, and "he took them" and washed—no sprinkling here—their lacerated backs, and he and his believing family were baptized, (d) After this he brought them into his house again, and set meat before them and rejoiced with his obedient household. Query; Where was the jailor baptized? Answer: Where there was water enough to "plant" and "raise" him—not the water—in the likeness of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. (13). "Water baptism"—I do not

like the phrase—"is of little consequence if a man has been baptized with the Holy Ghost." In this you make two mistakes. You have never been baptized with the Holy Spirit and never will be, and baptism is of consequence if obeying the plain command of Jesus is of consequence. Let us examine this objection with calmness. If you have been baptized with the Holy Spirit you would be able to speak with tongues and preach the gospel and answer inquiries just as Peter did at the beginning, but as you do neither I conclude that you are a pretender. Again: Baptism is a command to be obeyed (Acts, 10:48). This you can not deny. Men can obey commands. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was a promise (Matt., 3:11; John, 14:26; 16:7-11; Acts, 1:5). It is impossible to obey a promise, and as there is, according to Paul, but one baptism in the regular administration of the affairs of the Kingdom of God, it is evident that the baptism of the Holy Spirit has filled its place in the design of God and passed into history. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was not a condition of salvation even when it prevailed. There are three incontestable proofs of this: (a) On His first outpouring at Pentecost only the apostles of the Lord were baptized—not one alien was included (Acts, 2:1-4). (b) Sometimes the baptism occurred after men were saved. When the evangelist Philip introduced the gospel in Samaria it is said that "When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women (Acts, 8:12)." According to the promise of Jesus—"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"—they were saved from all their past sins (Mark, 16:15, 16). Nevertheless they did not receive the baptism or miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit until Peter and John came and laid their hands on them (Acts, 8:14-

1,7) (c) Cornelius was to be saved by the words—all the word? were necessary, for God does not deal in non-essentials—of Peter (Acts, 11:14), and yet the Holy Spirit fell on the household of Cornelius as Peter "began to speak" which proves that they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit before they were saved—before they had obeyed the gospel as outlined in the Great Commission (Matt., 28:18-20; Acts, 10:34-48). Take all of this together and the irresistible conclusion is that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was irregular, miraculous, and belonged to the apostolic age alone. Again: The apostles were commanded to baptize (Mark, 16:15, 16) and they did it (Acts, 8:1-42) and they could not baptize in the Holy Spirit, for Jesus never committed that power to mortal man (Acts, 1:5). Finally, those who received this miraculous "gift" were baptized in obedience to the "command" of Jesus Christ; this you will not deny. Conclusion: Whoever hangs his salvation upon the supposition that he has been baptized in the Holy Spirit, to the neglect of the requirements of the gospel, depends upon that which is sure to fail him in the hour of need. (14). "At the house of Cornelius Peter called for water." Certainly, and this goes to prove your theory of the baptism of the Holy Spirit false and delusive. I have no objection to bringing the water in if the quantity is sufficient to "bury" the converts. Peter on this occasion emphasizes the fact that men are to be baptized "in water," and you have no good ground on which to deny it. It is safe to do what Jesus did and commanded. Nothing else is safe.

Looking over this argument I summarize it as follows: Baptism—immersion—requires "much water," that both the preacher and convert go down into the water and come up out of it, a birth of water, a burial, a washing of the body, a "raising up." Sprinkling and pouring require water—

and precious little of it! Conclusion: Whoever sprinkles water upon anyone in the name of Christ does so without even the shade of a shadow of Divine authority. Will you persist in trampling the commands of Jesus under foot.

Why must men be baptized or what is baptism for? Everything in nature and redemption is for something and baptism is no exception to the rule. Baptism has no abstract efficacy. It derives its potency alone from the authority of Jesus Christ who gave the command. It is a fact that it is beneficial only when it occupies its place in the Gospel. Is it essential to salvation? I answer, undoubtedly, if doing the commands of Jesus is essential. Do you admit this? In the Great Commission He said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved (Mark, 16:15, 16)." Notice where He places the promise of salvation. In some passages it seems that everything depends upon faith; in others it seems that everything depends on repentance; in others it seems that everything depends on baptism; in others it seems that everything depends on works; in others it seems that everything depends on Jesus; in others it seems that everything depends on man. This is easily accounted for on the ground that everything in its place is emphatic and imperative. Hence, when a summary is given as in this passage it is dangerous to conclude that salvation is promised or suspended upon fewer conditions than therein enumerated. There is no law of language that makes one condition more important than another when a thing is promised on conditions and no qualification to either. After all, salvation depends on doing what Jesus commands, and these commands are only a means to an end—they bring us to Christ in order that we may be delivered from our sins, and it is very hazardous to take single passages and build our hope of salvation upon them—every statement in the

word of God should be contemplated as part of the whole and not as a final statement cut off from other truths. I have said much in these letters relative to Pentecost. I am not done with it. Read the second chapter of Acts again. When under the power of the gospel heard and believed thousands asked what to do—if your doctrine of justification by faith alone is true they had nothing further to do as they had already heard the Gospel and believed—Peter gave them an answer that was plain, sufficient and conclusive. Every answer in apostolic times, circumstances considered, is in perfect harmony with this. It could not be otherwise, for Peter's sermon and answer were bound or ratified in heaven. It was therefore good for Pentecost and the immediately succeeding ages, and it would be good for your mourners. Let us study it: "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 Spirit." What is the full sense of this passage? I answer: "Change your minds and be immersed every one—not if it suits you best, but every one of you!— by the authority of Jesus Christ in order to the remission or blotting out of your past sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Looking at this answer from the standpoint of those who propounded the question there were two distinct and clearly defined objects in view. What were they? They were, (a) the remission of sins; (b) the gift of the Holy Spirit. Look from these objects backward. Look closely. What do you see? Plainly that if it had not been for the preaching of the apostles and the resultant faith of the people in it, they would not have known or cared anything about remission of sins or the gift of the Holy Spirit. Looking from their condition of mind when the preaching began to these two objects, we can see

clearly that the gospel had revolutionized their hearts. Coming down a step forward let us look toward these objects from their standpoint when they asked what to do. What did they want? Peter's answer reveals it. Why did they want it? Peter's sermon answers fully. It is evident that at the moment they cried out they were believers, otherwise they would not have cried out; but they needed and desired something else. Peter told them how to reach it. Study his answer. They had already complied with the two first provisions of the commission. They had heard and believed the gospel, but this only put them in a condition to realize their danger. Peter submitted two more conditions. What were they? Repentance and baptism. One is just as important as the other; they bear the same relation to the end in view. It is your custom to use your theological dissecting knife and sever these two conditions and hang the issues of eternal life and death upon repentance, and treat baptism as unimportant and non-essential. Is this right? Is it consistent? Is it treating Jesus and the Holy Spirit and Peter with due respect? I think not. Why then do it? That is a hard question, is it not? Again: Ananias in telling Saul of Tarsus what to do 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)." Saul was a penitent believer. He had been calling on the name of the Lord for three days. Ananias did not tell him, like you tell your mourners, to "pray on," neither did he tell him to stop praying but rather to arise and finish his obedience to the commands of the risen Lord, still calling on His name. This passage clears up the question of remission, it takes place in the mind of God when men comply with the conditions on which it is promised. I am sure you will resist this argument with all your strength and skill, but if baptism is for

the remission of sins, and Peter declares that it is, you can not overthrow it. In a recent sermon you delivered yourself of a number of objections to this favorite doctrine of Peter, and as he is not here to defend himself I gladly appear as his champion. I will answer these objections one by one: (1). "Baptismal regeneration." Do you know what regeneration is when contemplated from the New Testament standpoint? I will endeavor to tell you. The word is found only twice in the New Testament. In the first instance (Matt., 19:27, 28) it undoubtedly refers to the whole plan of salvation inaugurated by Jesus Christ, and emphasizes the fact that the apostles were to receive authority to expound the principles of the reign of Heaven. Regeneration covers the whole plan and process of turning to God. Contemplated from this point of view baptism occupies a place in "the regeneration" just like faith and repentance occupy places. Hence, in the second instance (Titus, 3:5) baptism is referred to as the washing or "bath of regeneration." No respectable scholar, known to me, denies this. "Baptismal regeneration" originated, not in the gospel, but in the minds of corrupt men who gave baptism an abstract efficacy. Your infant baptism grew out of this misconception, and your own dear creed approaches dangerously near this ground in your ceremonies in connection with the sprinkling of infants. Regeneration is a big word. It takes in all the facts, commands and promises of the Gospel. Those who baptize persons who do not yield to the command of God intelligently, and attach to the act extraordinary efficacy may be successfully accused of believing, teaching and depending on baptism for regeneration. If depending on the promise of Jesus and doing what He says for salvation, constitutes what you stigmatize "baptismal regeneration," I see no serious objection to it. Do you?

(2). "Water salvation." Who put water into the plan of salvation? Jesus Christ and the apostles. Peter says in reference to the salvation of Noah and his family, "Eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (I. Pet., 3:20, 21)." (3). "It makes salvation dependent on another." You argue that if baptism, preceded by faith and repentance, is for the remission of sins a man's salvation depends on whether or not he can get some one to baptize him. Granted. How much of an improvement is your mourners' bench system on this? You make his salvation dependent on prayer—suppose he can not get any one to pray for him, who is to blame if he is damned? (4). "It is out of harmony with justification by faith alone." Certainly, and it ought to be, but it is not out of harmony with justification by faith. You misunderstand the doctrine of justification by faith. I lay down a proposition and challenge your attention: Men have been justified by faith—the only change has been in the basis of faith—from the transgression forward, but in no case have they been pronounced justified until faith has manifested itself in overt acts—in obedience to the commands of God. Faith has been made perfect by works (Jas., 2:22). A few examples will enforce this thought. By faith Abel "offered" his sacrifice and obtained the witness that he was righteous (Heb., 11:4). By faith Abraham "offered" his son Isaac and was justified (Heb., 11:17; Jas., 2:21-23). By faith Moses "forsook" Egypt (Heb., 11:27). These illustrations can be multiplied greatly, but I think it unnecessary. Bring it down to the gospel. Baptism is an act of faith—that is, it grows out of faith. Jesus promised us salvation on certain conditions, and we comply with the conditions, trusting Him—not the conditions—for the fulfillment of His promise. Instead of

vitiating the doctrine of justification by faith, it establishes and perpetuates it. The doctrine of justification to Abraham was substantially: "Arise and take Isaac to the mountain I will show you, and present him to me as a burnt sacrifice, and depend upon God for the fulfillment of His promise to you." The doctrine of justification by faith as developed by the apostles, is substantially: "God has sent His only Son into the world to save sinners He has revealed the way and suspended salvation on obedience to His commands; if you believe Him, forsake your sins, be baptized and trust Him to do what He has repeatedly promised." It is certain that a man can not be justified by faith if he keeps his faith to himself, refusing or neglecting to obey the Lord. (5) "It unduly exalts an ordinance." Perhaps it does exalt it. Who did it? Baptism for the remission of sins only seems unreasonable when cut loose from the conditions which precede it, and its importance seems extraordinary because it is the sinner's final step, and you lose, for a moment, sight of everything else. Take a sober second thought, and you will see that it is only a condition along with other conditions, (6). "Water does not save—the blood of Christ cleanses from sin." Certainly. Nevertheless Jesus, who shed His blood in order to the remission of our sins, had a right to dictate the terms on which we may appropriate its blessings: "And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one (I. John, 5:8)." (7). "It makes salvation impossible without baptism." You look at the wrong side. It makes salvation possible with or by baptism. It makes salvation possible to those who obey. In other words, the promise is to those who obey. Jesus said to Nicodemus: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom

of God (John, 3:5)." (8). "If baptism is for the remission of sins, why did Jesus not put it in the sentence of condemnation in the commission (Mark, 16:15, 16)?" Simply because unbelief, and it alone, will damn a man, while it takes both faith and obedience to save him. It is easier to be damned than it is to be saved. (9). "Suppose a man dies on the road to the water to be baptized, will he be lost?" Please turn to the chapter and verse where any primitive Christian ever propounded such a question and I will feel more like answering it—the question shows disrespect for the commandment of the Lord Jesus. You could ask the same question, substantially, about faith or repentance or any other obligation of the gospel. I would say in answer to the question, that it matters not when or where a man dies, if he has never been baptized, he goes hence without having obeyed one of the plain commands of the gospel, and the promise attached to that command he can not claim—but "in the world to come" Jesus is the Judge and He judges in righteousness. However, it is safer—safer for time and safer for eternity—to do what the Lord commands at the first opportunity and take no chances on the uncertainties of life. (10). "There is no efficacy in water." If not, why do you drink it? If not, why do you make such an ado over putting a few drops upon the head of an inoffensive and defenseless child? Water is merely incidental. Obeying the command of Jesus is the important thing. He put the water in—you have taken it all out but a few drops! (11). "It nullifies the doctrine of salvation by grace." Not by any means. Salvation is the gift of God, and the conditions upon which it is given do not destroy "the grace of giving." Noah was saved by grace (Gen., 6:8), but he had to build an ark and do many other things in order to appropriate the grace to himself (Heb., 11:7). (12). "There are

many passages that seem to teach that men are saved without baptism." Yes, and there are others that seem to teach that men are saved without faith. Because a thing is not specifically stated in every verse does not by any means imply that it is not there or that it is to be disregarded. It is best to take it all. No man will ever regret, in time or eternity, that he made the best and most energetic effort of which he was capable to find out and do the whole will of God. (13). "It makes baptism a saving ordinance." Not any more than faith and repentance. They are all tied together in the Commission and in Acts of the Apostles. Strictly speaking, there are no saving ordinances. Jesus alone is Savior. Ordinances are designed to bring us to Him, to His blood, to His saving power—to the place in relation to His government where salvation flows as freely as His blood flowed on Calvary. (14). "It makes it appear that baptism brings us into Christ." Unquestionably, and in doing so it exhibits the truth without qualification, but baptism alone does not introduce us into Christ, for previous to baptism faith and repentance must prepare us in heart and mind for this exalted position. Christians are recognized as being "in Christ," in His body, in His kingdom. Take your Bible and read the Epistles slowly and carefully and mark these and similar expressions, I will note as you read: (a) "Salute Adronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who were also in Christ before me (Rom., 16:7)." Read this passage again slowly and thoughtfully. Paul's kinsmen were not only "in Christ," but they had entered upon this state or relationship before Paul, (b) Paul addressed the Corinthians as the sanctified "in Christ Jesus," assuring them that they had been called to be saints (I. Cor., 1:1, 2). I wonder if there are any sanctified out of Christ!

If you know of any, please tell me who they are and where to find them, (c) He declares to the Galatians that Jews, Greeks, bond, free, male and female, are "one in Christ (Gal., 3:28)." (d) He declared to the Ephesians that they were framed together "in" Christ, having been built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone (Eph., 2:19-22). (e) He addressed the Philippians as "the saints in Christ," and pronounced a benediction upon them (Phil., 1:1, 2). (f) He addressed the Colossians as "faithful brethren in Christ," and pronounced upon them a benediction (Col., 1: I, 2). (g) He addressed the Thessalonians as "in" God the Father and Jesus Christ (I. Thess., 1:1, 2). This is significant. What is the meaning of the phrase "in Christ?" It evidently signifies a state or position opposed to, and in contrast to the world. In Christ is in His Church or in His kingdom. Here is a notable fact, particularly when contrasted with present-day theology: In apostolic times all the followers of Christ were in His Church or kingdom—none followed on the outside! How were men brought into Christ? Let Paul answer: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son: in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins (Col., 1:13, 14)." We are "translated" into the kingdom of God's Son and "in" Christ—not out!—we have the forgiveness of sins. You see from this that there are great blessings "in Christ." Hear Paul again: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new (II. Cor., 5:17)." "New creatures" in Christ! How true it is that His kingdom is not of this world. How do we get into Christ? Paul will answer for me: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were bap-

tized into His death (Rom., 6:3)?" In His death He shed His blood—in His blood we find remission of sins. Again: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ (Gal., 3:27)." Finally: "For by one Spirit—the direction and guidance of one Spirit—are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit (I. Cor., 12:13)" I want you to tell me plainly at what point, according to the mourner's bench plan of salvation, a man is brought "into Christ." Can you give an answer that will satisfy your conscience and the demands of the truth?

Why is so much importance attached to baptism? Because it is the consummating act, so far as the sinner is concerned, in his return to God. It is the solemn moment when, following the guidance of his faith, having abandoned the world, he is delivered fully into the mould of teaching—the apostolic unfolding of the commission—delivered or freed from sin, and introduced "into" the sublime trinity of names, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I emphasize the fact that in no other place do these sublime names come together, and in no other place or way is the returning sinner introduced fully into their combined benedictions. This alone makes baptism important—entirely too important to be neglected and re-emphasizes the great truth that having taken upon us the Divine name we should humbly wear it to the exclusion of all other names. I have answered your questions. Only penitent believers may be baptized, according to the word of God. Baptism is a burial in water and a resurrection from it. To the penitent believer, but to no one else, it is for, or in order to the remission of sins,

I now bring this letter to a close with Paul's great ascription of honor to God and great summary of the gospel:

"Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: to God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen (Rom., 16:25-27)."

Affectionately yours,

J.

LETTER No. XI.—A COMMON SENSE VIEW OF THE PLAN OF SALVATION.

My Dear Theophilus:—We have about gone over the Scriptural grounds of the Great Redemption which is in Jesus the Christ, but I am not fully satisfied, for I want to leave you without excuse or reason for continuing in your present position. I therefore cordially invite you to the investigation of another phase of the subject, or in other words, from another standpoint. There is such an air of mysticism about your ideas and methods that I think it will be profitable to you and your people to assist me in finding an answer to this all-important question: Does the plan of salvation made known in the Bible, particularly in the New Testament, and more particularly in the Book of Acts, commend itself to one's common sense? Does it appeal to the sober judgment of a thinking man? Does it take hold of the senses and faculties like any other important thing or problem? In the name of lost and dying humanity everywhere—on your circuit!—I demand an answer. If you answer in the affirmative your theology will receive its death-blow. If you answer in the negative your common sense will receive it. But you can and must answer. My answer is that it depends entirely on whether or not you have a concise, consistent and comprehensive knowledge of what the plan of salvation as made known in the New Testament embraces. Judging from your practices and from some of your recent utterances on the subject, I fear you are far out at sea. There are two things involved. First, the Divine wisdom which conceived the plan and published it

to the world through men, and second, the terms or conditions on which men may become partakers of its benefits. I fear you err in reference to both. This is amazing. A man of your education, discernment and zeal, it seems to me, could not avoid the conclusions to which I have endeavored to bring you in this series of letters. But you do not see. I have not a single doubt of your honesty, hence my persistence. Let me suppose a case. However, it does not really belong to the realm of supposition, for it might occur any day in the year; indeed I doubt not that there are a thousand men and women on your circuit who would be glad to ask you the question and receive your answer. The people need light, and they realize their need, but they want something on which their souls may rest in absolute security. Here is the case: An intelligent man, who reaches his conclusions by cautious and deliberate thought, comes to you and informs you that he is deeply concerned about his soul's eternal welfare, and asks you to open your Bible and read in the exact words of Scripture what a man in his condition must do in order to get rid of his past sins and become a child of God, expressing a desire for an answer that will at once harmonize with common sense, reason and all other Scripture, what would you read? Wait a moment. Let us look deeper, surface views are dangerous. Note that he wishes you to find the answer in the Book and read it. That is certainly a reasonable request to make of a preacher, and you ought to be, yea, you must be able to answer as he desires. Also note that he desires an answer in the exact words of Scripture which will harmonize with all other Scripture. I wish I could emphasize this proposition until it would appear as important to you as it does to me, and as important as it really is. I go on record as deliberately saying, with a full understanding and appreciation of

my accountability, that this proposition, if understood by you and your brethren in the ministry, from the lordly bishop down to the humblest local preacher, would in a day change the current of history in the Methodist Church, and in many other churches. Your inquirer can not and will not be satisfied with one-sided or superficial views of things. You may say this is difficult, but you are a preacher and leader and example of men, and you must answer—there is, there can be, no way of honorable escape. Further, he wants an answer that will commend itself to his good sober judgment; in other words, he wants an answer that will fit his condition, mentally, morally, spiritually. I am sure you are puzzled, for two reasons. One is your ideas of the fundamental truths of the revelation are neither distinct nor systematic. The other is that never in your life have you undertaken such a thing, and you know that your creed and customs bind you until you can never do it and maintain your present position! Let me help you out. Turn to Matt, 11:28-30, and read: "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest; take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls: for my yoke is easy and my burden is light." But would this satisfy him? Does it satisfy you? There is nothing sweeter in all revelation, but does it tell the inquirer "how" to come? This is what he wants to know and must know. Does it explain the "yoke" or inform him "how" to take it on him self? You certainly know it does not. Try again; turn to Matt., 16:24: "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me." Would this answer the inquirer? Does it specifically state what he must do? You know it does not. You further know that this is a general state-

ment, and that as Jesus is gone from earth it is impossible for any one to literally follow Him. Try again; turn to John, 3:16, 17: "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." Is this specific? You know it is a generalization in which "love" is made the ground or spring of action from the Divine side, and "believing" the ground or spring of action from the human side. If it comprehends the plan of salvation specifically, there is certainly much unnecessary Scripture. When will you and your associates learn that a general statement like this is intended to embrace the conditions of pardon which grow out of it, and that in every case where the terms are specifically laid down they derive their strength, vitality and saving power because they are parts of a stupendous whole? Man makes many mistakes, and this is certainly one of his gravest. The fact that God's love is the moving cause does not exclude anything else; it rather emphasizes it. Love is all-prevailing and all-comprehensive. The fact that believing is the moving cause does not vitiate or invalidate anything else; it rather emphasizes everything which grows out of it. Belief is all-prevailing and all-comprehensive. I call your attention to the fact that it was not God's love simply, but that which grew out of it which brings us salvation. God "loved" and "gave!" I also call your attention to the fact that it is not faith simply, but that which grows out of it, which brings us into the enjoyment of salvation. Love inert is nothing, love in action is everything. Belief inert is nothing, belief in action is everything. Try again, one of your favorite passages; turn to Rom., 5:1: "Therefore

being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Do you think this would satisfy and help the inquirer? Suppose he should declare that he had faith and demand of you "how" he could be justified by faith, what would you do or say? Who is the author of this statement? Paul? What object had he in view in making it? You know, if you are competent to preach at all, that it is part of a long argument in which he proves conclusively that under the gospel the ground of justification is not the works of the law of Moses, but faith in Jesus the Christ, God's only Son. But when the law was in force before the death of Christ, the temporary relief it afforded was only enjoyed by those who obeyed it: "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; a blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day; and a curse if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the Way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known (Deut, 11:26-28)." This is certainly conclusive. Now let me thunder it into your ears that while faith is the moving cause of our justification, it is not faith alone, or faith disconnected from everything else, but faith in action, leading us along the pathway of humble obedience that justifies us in God's sight: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him (Heb., 5:8, 9)." Try again, turn to Eph., 2:8: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." Would this satisfy him? Certainly not. He desires to know what he must do! There is no "do" in this passage. What is grace? Simply favor. Do you propose to teach that we are saved by favor without any co-operation

on our part? Suppose your inquirer would accept this and then turn to Titus, 2:11: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" and accuse you of teaching universalism. What would you say in reply? You would simply be dumb. This is another general statement in which the dispensation of grace is contrasted with the dispensation of works—the law of Moses. The merest tyro in Biblical learning ought to know this.

Before advancing to the plain issue allow me to say that it took the All-wise Father ages and ages to reveal His plan of saving men and bring it to that perfection that enables the preacher who understands it to turn and read to his inquirer an answer that harmonizes with common sense and all other Scripture. It is like this: A man may travel toward a certain city all day and just as the sunset gilds the hills the whole thing bursts on his sight! In reading the Bible, beginning with Genesis, one must travel over many a buried age before he comes to the gate that opens into the remission of sins over whose portals plain directions are given in few words. The prophet Isaiah looked forward to this time when he said: "For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him (Isa., 64:4)." This, in general terms, refers to the gospel of Christ. Paul quotes it and adds this significant statement, which you will do well to ponder: "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God (I. Cor., 2:9,10)." If God's will concerning us is revealed and recorded it will be easy for you to tell what the record says. Things were dawning on men during the earth-life of Jesus, but according to Paul they were fully revealed by the Spirit and He was not given before Jesus was glorified (Jno., 7:

38,39)." I want you to keep this in mind, for I shall return to it at the proper time, when I think you will be able to see its full force. Jesus having in mind Isaiah and other good men, spoke to His disciples: "But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear; for verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear and have not heard them (Matt, 13:16, 17)." I am sure you can not overturn this conclusion either by logic or Scripture: Every statement relative to man's salvation, from the transgression to the descent of the Holy Spirit, while in many instances the whole scheme of redemption is comprehended in a single phrase, sentence or passage, was in an important sense incomplete and that what a sinner must do specifically was never fully, completely, comprehensively made known until the Holy Spirit descended from the glorified Christ upon His twelve apostles on the day of Pentecost (Acts, 2:1-42). Previous to that time everything seemed to be in an embryotic state; after that everything was settled, specific, irresistible. Please allow me to read you a few passages: "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: to God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen. (Rom., 16:25-27)." Surely this is distinct and unequivocal. Bear in mind that this glorious proclamation, world-wide in its comprehensiveness, was made after the exact terms of pardon had been made known by the Holy Spirit through

the apostles. Again: "The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth (I. Jno., 2:8)." When was it dark? In all the ages previous to Christ, yes previous to His death, ascension and glorification! See and read I. Cor., 15:1-5. Finally: "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life (I. Jno., 5:20)." Here is another conclusion with which I want you to wrestle: The light is come, the terms of pardon have been made known specifically, and if you cannot tell an inquirer what to do in the exact words of Scripture it is because you, although a preacher, do not know! It is certainly time for you to begin to learn.

We are agreed that God has revealed His will to man, and that man's will is free to accept or reject Christ who is the only Savior. I insist that he is just as free to reject the terms on which the only Savior proposes to save. There are many who profess to accept Him as their Savior who at the same time neglect or utterly repudiate His requirements. Who is to blame for this state of affairs? I know not unless it be the leaders and preachers. In New Testament times the acceptance of Jesus as God's only Son and man's only Savior involved also the absolute and unconditional surrender of the will and life to His authority. You endorse the modern revivalism, indeed you practice it in a limited way, in which men publicly agree to take Christ the best they can, and that is the end of it. With all due respect permit me to say that the greatest need of the churches everywhere is for the preachers to give their days and nights to the study of Acts. You, my young friend, are no exception to the rule. There you will find that the mere acceptance, so-called, of Christ counts for nothing. There you

will find that accepting Him was only a start heavenward. You will find also just what men who accepted Him had to do. I say had to do, deliberately. They had no volition in the matter, for the act of committing oneself to Christ involved the prompt and unreserved acceptance of the conditions of discipleship laid down by Him, There are too many so-called Christians out of Christ and too many unmarked sheep outside of the fold!! This is utterly out of all harmony with the teachings of the apostles. You can not name one, in the days of those who were witnesses of Christ's resurrection and to whom He gave His commission, who took Christ as his Savior who did not immediately obey Him. I can name twenty who did this during your last revival. You made a magnificent show of liberality in telling your converts to join whichever Church they liked best, and they interpreted your advice to mean that it was a matter of the calmest indifference whether they joined any, and they stayed precisely where you left them. Let me give you a pointer: If you had a plan that would by one process make a man a Christian and make him also a Methodist, you would save much vocal power and nerve force. Such a thing is in the nature of things impossible. Why? Because the New Testament plan was ordained to make Christians, and nothing else. You take a man through a process unknown to the apostles—your anxious-seat process—in order to make him a child of God, and take him through a new and distinct process in order to make him a Methodist! This is true, you being the witness, and I do not believe you will deny it. I want you to think this matter over calmly and deliberately. Answer a question for me: Do you think such procedures really appeal to the common sense, the sober judgment of the thinking man? If not, there must be something wrong about it, for humanity

and Christianity come from the same source and must be adapted to each other. A common sense view of these things would, I doubt not, deliver you from many of your inconsistencies and contradictions.

I must again call your attention to the fact that there is one book in the New Testament written for the specific purpose of telling inquirers what to do. I raise another question for you to answer: Where in the Book of Acts can the answer be found, and will that answer harmonize with all other Scripture and commend itself to one's common sense? I answer for you: The question is answered as I showed you in a previous letter, in a number of places, but one precaution is necessary: Find out the condition of your inquirer's mind and then read the example of conversion which fits his case. If he has never heard the gospel, read to him the sixteenth chapter of Acts and teach him to promptly accept Christ as his Redeemer, and do what He says. If he has heard the gospel and believed it already, read to him the second chapter of Acts and urge him to repent and be baptized at once. If he has heard, believed and repented already, read to him the ninth chapter of Acts and urge him to arise and be baptized at once. The correct answer in each case involves simply and only the terms on which Jesus our glorified Lord has proposed by the Holy Spirit through the apostles to deliver us from our past sins and make us His disciples. It is no dishonor to Him to say that during His earth-life He did not make His will fully known. Men were not prepared to understand Him or to receive His full-orbed revelation. Hear Matthew concerning His method: "All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I

will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world (Matt., 13:35)." If this does not mean that Jesus intentionally and deliberately veiled much of the meaning of His words to the multitude, language can not mean anything. Again, and this concerns His most intimate friends, Peter, James and John, who were present with Him on the holy mount and heard the "voice to him from the excellent glory (II. Pet., 1:16-18)," as He came down from the mount He cautioned them not to make known what they had witnessed Until after His resurrection: "And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean (Mark, 9:10)." It is remarkable that parables and general statements prevail in the first four books of the New Testament and that many general statements are also found in the Epistles. The first is accounted for, as already intimated, on the ground that the truth was not perfected until Jesus arose again, and that prior to this event men were not ready to receive the full-orbed gospel. The latter is accounted for on the ground that the Epistles were largely written to correct errors in teaching and life resulting from the labors of certain Judaizing teachers who did not clearly perceive that the gospel of Christ had entirely superseded the law of Moses. When Paul declares that men are justified by the blood of Christ (Rom., 5:9) he makes a statement the acceptance of which forever puts to silence the claims of some like yourself who taught that keeping the law of Moses is yet necessary to salvation (Acts, 15th chap.). None of Paul's contemporaries ever tried to make it appear that he taught or thought for a moment that men are justified by the blood of Christ without anything else. That blunder was reserved for some of our modern theologians! In Acts there is very little generalizing. The preachers proclaimed

the death, burial, resurrection and glorification of Christ Those who accepted their preaching were told what to do, and the answer always harmonized with all other Scriptures and appealed to every man's common sense and sober judgment: "And the word of God increased: and the number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith (Acts, 6:7)."

Like results are bound to follow whenever and wherever the word of God is faithfully, fully and persistently proclaimed.

Affectionately yours,

J.

LETTER No. XII.—WHAT NAME SHALL WE WEAR?

My Dear Theophilus:—Having brought you to the proper place, Acts of the Apostles, to find out what a man must do in order to be saved from his past sins, and thus become a member of the body of Christ, I think it proper to assist you in finding a Scriptural answer to this important question. I call it important for a number of reasons. The first is this: I notice that your revivals are more productive of "converts" than Church members, and this unfortunately is the result of nearly all the modern revivals. I am curious to know at just what point in the procedure men become Christians, and then at just what point they become Methodists, Baptists, Episcopalians, Lutherans or Presbyterians. In other words, when does the convert become entitled to the name Christian, and what advantage accrues to him when he assumes a denominational name? Inasmuch "< you are interested in making as many of your converts to Christianity into Methodists as possible, I would like to have you tell me what you give them in the second process that is not already theirs by birthright, provided in the first place they were really converted to Christ. It is a fact which you will not undertake to contradict that the process—"form of doctrine"—through men passed in apostolic times made them Christians. If your process is the same, and I challenge you to deny it, they are Christians before they are Methodists, and independent of Methodism! Would it not be wise and practicable for you to imitate the apostles and leave a man just where the gospel of Christ leaves him? You

preach that there is nothing in a name and yet you exercise great care to induce your converts to Christ to assume at once the sectarian name Methodist. Your zeal frequently over-runs your judgment and the Scriptures of eternal truth as well. Further, if the converts at your next revival should number forty, you would call it a successful effort. Let us see; forty what? You are bound by inexorable fate to say Christians. For argument's sake I will admit it although there is much for such converts to do according to the word of God. Now on whose authority do you propose to make them more than Christians? Note the division: You "take in" twenty and they take the name, Methodist-Christians, or Christian-Methodists. Three "join" the Baptists and take the name Baptist-Christians or Christian-Baptists Four "unite" with the Presbyterians and take the name Presbyterian-Christians or Christian-Presbyterians. Two "connect" themselves with the Episcopalians and take the name Episcopal-Christians or Christian-Episcopalians. One "chooses" the Lutherans and takes the name Lutheran-Christian or Christian-Lutheran. The remainder decline to "join any church" and thus remain, according to your teaching, simply Christians! Taking you on your own grounds, I think you put yourself to an immense amount of trouble in order to fence a few Methodists off from the balance of mankind. I return to your process of making men Christians and I am compelled to condemn it. You cannot find anything like it in the New Testament. If you will preach the word as the apostles preached it, and instruct them as the apostles instructed them, and lead them to obedience as the apostles led them, and thus make men Christians as the apostles made them, and be satisfied with this, Methodism, Baptistism, Presbyterianism and all other "isms" will depart from the earth and be known no more.

It is a fact that the name Methodist stands for an addition to pure Christianity, and for that reason it can be dispensed with without in any way interfering with the progress of Christianity, for after your Methodism is dispensed with your Christianity will shine with renewed and glorious resplendence. This statement is just as true with reference to Baptistism, Presbyterianism, Episcopalianism or Lutheranism. Each order in the name it bears emphasizes some doctrinal or historical peculiarity that makes it different from the others. The name Methodist emphasizes "method." The name Baptist emphasizes the "ordinance of baptism." The name Presbyterian emphasizes the "presbytery." The name Episcopalian emphasizes the "episcopacy." The name Lutheran emphasizes the glory of Luther. There is something in a name after all. Indeed there is a tangibly narrow party spirit in all these names. I assure you that I admire and revere your Christianity and your godly men and women, but my dear friend and brother, you deny me a place in your fellowship or a voice in your business unless I accept what you have invented and added to Christianity. This I cannot do and maintain my self-respect as one of Christ's freemen—and you built the fence! My judgment is that the acceptance and continuance of these party names keeps alive the party spirit, and in the presence of the adversaries of the Cross there should be neither party name, nor party spirit, nor party effort among those who fight the battles of the Lord. I know your reply to this. You will assert that in the things essential all the parties are one. I admit that this is partly so, and so in many important truths. If from your standpoint they are only divided on the non-essentials I suggest that for the sake of united effort the non-essentials can be put away, and they would be but the ever-present party spirit and party zeal keep back the needed

reformation. Perhaps you make a defense and say the things each name emphasizes ought to be emphasized. That depends. If it is a part of Christianity I admit it, but you have no right to fence it off and do all the emphasizing. Rather take down your Methodistic fence and give us all a chance to do some emphasizing! Right here is another danger: A truth of Christianity may be emphasized until it becomes sectarianized. Do you ask for proof? Well, here it is: justification by faith is the fundamental principle of Christianity in its application to sinners, but you have emphasized it until in your eyes it has become "justification by faith only" and thus you have changed the truth into error and Christianity into sectarianism. Of course if you must and will put your "method" of doing Christian work above Christianity itself, the name Methodist will suit your convenience better than any other name known to me, but is it wise to do that? If the Baptists consider "baptism" of more significance than the name of Jesus, it is perfectly natural for them to wear that name rather than His name. If the Presbyterians think the "presbytery" of more importance than the name of Christ, they will persist in calling themselves Presbyterians. If the Episcopalians regard the "episcopacy" as of more importance than the name of Jesus, they will always wear the name. If the Lutherans regard the name of Luther greater than the name of Jesus, they will honor Luther and disregard Him.

Let us endeavor to analyze these names. You take special pride in calling yourself a Methodist, and your party spirit is evinced by all you do. In your estimation there is dignity and honor in the name. Humanly speaking I do not blame you, for the name stands in the estimation of men for much that is good and glorious. I freely concede this. But do you not think that the things for which the name stands

would be infinitely more glorious if you would give all honor to Him who deserves all honor, Jesus Christ our Lord? You will probably say you do give Him the honor. I admit it, but why obscure His honors by calling yourself a Methodist when there is no reason under the sun which you could give your Lord and Master why you should not call yourself a Christian, and nothing else. See that Baptist. He is utterly unlike any one else. The very air with which he surrounds himself proclaims him a partisan. He thinks he has some little element of Christianity "cornered" or patented, and therefore Methodists and others must never walk with him. He walks the earth with the dignity of one who knows that his partizan fences are so high that "other sheep" can never scale them and partake of his sectarian pasture. All of this grows out of the name Baptist, which is a Scriptural name sectarianized by undue emphasis and misapplication. He glories in the name and thus loses sight of the name of the Master. You can continue and complete the analysis for yourself, and when you shall have finished your work I think you will be ready to join me in the following conclusion, which to me seems both natural and irresistible: The secret, the partizanship of sectarians centers in the name, and each sect glories in the name itself as much as it glories in that which it represents. Methodism is narrow, so is Baptistism, so is Presbyterianism, so is Episcopalianism, and so is Lutheranism, and that which narrows each little crowd down to party limits is the name it bears. Methodism may be a great name, but has not been, is not now, neither shall it ever be, large enough to cover a single Baptist! Christianity is larger, and greater than the confines of any sect. You, with all your zeal, do not claim that Methodism is broad enough to include all who love Christ and serve Him. I would be willing to devote my whole

time to it if at last I could get the professed followers of Christ everywhere to see that the Author of life never intended that there should be one way to make a man a child of God and another to make him a church member. You can not take the New Testament solely and exclusively and make one Methodist between now and the end of time. Such a thing as Methodism never for a moment entered the mind of Peter, Paul or Timothy. It is strictly modern in its origin and existence. Suppose that while all people who wear man-made and man-given names should, while asleep to-night, by a touch of the Divine hand, forget their sectarian names, what do you think would be the result? Let me tell you: Having lost their denominational designations they would naturally flock together. You would be just as much of a Christian to-morrow as you are to-night, and you would be a much freer man! This you are bound to admit. Then why not throw aside your partizan badge and be what you really profess to be—a Christian? Further, if I should declare that you are a good Methodist but a poor Christian it would hurt you, which shows that in spite of yourself you cling to the name that came from Jesus Christ. I sum up by way of emphasis: In New Testament times there were no sects and no party names, and if the New Testament, as illustrated in the first ages of Christianity, is a perfect guide in things pertaining to the kingdom of God, there should not be either parties or party names now.

Names are important for two reasons. First, knowledge is impossible without them, and the second is like unto the first; it is impossible to identify anything without naming it in harmony with its nature. What is an International Dictionary but the sum total of the names of the things known by its compilers? We learn from the first dawn of

rational existence, by finding out the names of things and remembering them. By naming things we greatly simplify our knowledge. Take an elephant for illustration. Suppose that every time you wish to speak of it you had to begin with its history, and follow this with a minute description of his size, habits and uses; you would find life a burden. In the present classified condition of knowledge, the simple mention of the name is enough; it embraces at once the origin, history, appearance, habits, and uses of the animal. In the study of arithmetic the four names, addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, constitute the key to the whole thing. In the study of grammar the names given to the parts of speech—noun, pronoun, adjective, and so on—are indispensable, indeed without these names there is, there can be, no grammar. As men advance in knowledge they always name their discoveries, for knowledge can not be passed on until it is named. Think of the vast array of new names of things that have come into use since electricity became the obedient servant of man. Blot these names from the mind of men and every telegraph wire and telephone wire, and every electrical machine, would at once become useless. I have seemingly wandered from my subject, but I want to appeal to your good common sense. You say there is nothing in a name. Yet you cling to the name Methodist with great tenacity. You say that there is nothing in a name and yet all you know is the names of things and that which these names imply. You could not even be a Methodist without the name! A rose by any other name might smell just as sweetly, but it certainly would not be a rose I! Every science, every philosophy, has its own peculiar nomenclature; indeed a science could not be a science, or a philosophy could not be a philosophy, without it. Christianity is no excep-

tion to the general rule. The whole system centers in a Person—not simply a doctrine—Jesus Christ, God's only Son. In the aggregate various designations are used, and this is also true with reference to individuals. This is not remarkable when we reflect that the New Testament writers viewed the truth from every possible point of vision, and here let me say that it is appropriate to use any New Testament designation providing it is not capitalized and emphasized until it becomes also sectarianized, and this is the mistake that many are making. I will give a few illustrations of the designations used to describe the church in the aggregate. It is called a fold (Jno., 10:16). It is called the temple of God (I. Cor., 3:16). It is called the body (Eph., 5:23;. It is called the household of faith (Gal., 6:10). It is called the church of Christ (Rom., 16:16). It is called the church of God (I. Cor., 1:2). It is called simply the church, literally the assembly, frequently (Acts, 8:1; Eph., 3:21; Col., 1:18). As individuals without special reference to the assemblage they are called sheep (Jno., 16:16), friends (Jno., 15:14), disciples (Acts, 6:7), saints (Rom., 1:7), children of God (Rom., 9:26), brethren (Rom., 10:1), lively stones (I. Pet., 2:5), sons of God (I. Jno. 3:2), Christians (Acts, ii:26) and by many other names equally appropriate in their respective places (I. Pet., 2:9). It is proper for any child of God to call himself by any one of these names providing he does not appropriate and use it in an exclusive sense, for if one is a child of God he sustains many relationships, and each name emphasizes some particular phase of his calling. Is there a name in this list that comprehends all the others and fully presents the individual child of God in all of his numerous relations? Undoubtedly, and that name is Christian. It is the only one in the list that I have written with a capital, and it is the only one in the New Testa-

ment that begins with a capital. Why is this? It is a fact that all these designations are given by the authority of Christ and are therefore binding on us, but the name Christian is the only one which is derived from the name Christ. This is very significant. The name Christian occurs only three times in the New Testament. I will read the passages. First: "Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch, and it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the Church, and taught much people, and the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch (Acts, 11:25, 26)." You teach that this name was given in derision, but you offer no proof. I am not in the least surprised at this, for the proof all favors the contrary hypothesis. Study the circumstances under which the name was given. You will note that for a whole year Paul and his distinguished helper had met with the disciples and taught. It does not require any great stretch of the imagination to connect the giving of the new name with the teaching and work of the preachers. Again, long before the coming of Jesus, Isaiah predicted: "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)." The giving of the name Christian at Antioch was subsequent to the conversion of the Gentiles. Read the tenth chapter of Acts. If the name Christian given at Antioch is not the name involved in Isaiah's prophecy *I* do not think the prediction has ever been fulfilled. There are other weighty considerations tending to confirm my conclusion. All power or authority in heaven and earth is given into His hands (Matt., 28:18), and Peter makes it clear what this means when he says of Him: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given.

among men, whereby we must be saved (Acts, 4:12)." Again: "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth shall receive the remission of sins (Acts, 10:43)." Let me again remind you that Paul and Barnabas were the preachers in the Church at Antioch during the time that the disciples were called Christians first. Please open your Bible at Acts, 15:25,26, and note what they thought of the name of Jesus as proven by what they voluntarily suffered for it: "It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." In addition to this, to return to the giving or assuming of the name, you must confess that apart from every other consideration that it is a brief transition from the name Christ to the name Christian, and when we reflect that from Pentecost forward everything was done in the name of Christ, and that everywhere the name of Christ was on the lips of men, it is hard for us to account for the fact that the disciples were not called Christians before the name was given at Antioch, except on the ground that, according to Isaiah's prophecy the time had been set and that Providence prevented it until after Gentiles had received the truth. Now we are ready for the second passage in which the name Christian occurs: "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian (Acts, 26:28)." Some have tried to make it appear that Agrippa was making light of Paul's message, but there is no proof of this. Paul was preaching most earnestly, and declared that he knew Agrippa was a believer in the prophets, and then follows the king's expression. Paul's answer proves that he regarded Agrippa as sincere, and at the same time shows that he recognized, wore and

honored the name: "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds (Acts, 26:29)." But take the other view of it if you wish, and what is the result? The name Christian was recognized by the people outside of the Church as the appropriate and accepted name of its members. Here is the other passage: "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified, but let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters: yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf," or in this name (I. Pet., 4:14-16). Comment is unnecessary.

You speak of the dignity of the name Methodist, because of its origin and work. To members of other denominations their names carry as much dignity as yours does to you. Let us reflect on the dignity of worthily wearing the name of Jesus. It emphasizes our kinship to Him who in His transcendent and indescribable glory reigns over heaven and earth. A few comparatively bow to and honor the name Methodist; a few will bow in deepest respect to the name Baptist and other denominational names, but the name of Jesus is, and shall be, all-comprehensive, all-prevailing and all-glorious: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil, 2:9-11)."

"Therefore let no man glory in men, for all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world,

or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's (I. Cor., 3:21-23)."

Affectionately yours,

J.

LETTER No. XIII.—PRAYER AND ITS LIMITATIONS.

My Dear Theophilus:—I feel sure you will agree with me when I say that from every standpoint this is a surpassingly interesting and important subject. Let us enter upon its investigation with submissive hearts and unprejudiced minds. It is a fact that we are agreed touching the importance and necessity of prayer, but we differ radically as to its limitations. What is prayer? I answer, prayer is the sincere desire of the heart—any heart. It may be uttered; it may be unexpressed. Prayer is the voice of the troubled heart rising like incense sweet to Him whose voice speaks peace to the weary sons and daughters of men. Prayer is the voice of helplessness arising to Him who is ready and willing to help in time of need. Prayer is the voice of penitence arising out of the sinner's broken heart to Him who is willing and "mighty to save." On all this we are agreed. Then why proceed? Let me tell you. In a recent sermon on this very subject, as reported in the Pleasureville Record, which is before me you made use of the following language: "Prayer is the one voice of the universal human heart and the one universal and unalterable condition of salvation. Do you want salvation? Pray for it. Do you want the baptism of the Holy Ghost? Pray for it. Do you want sanctification? Pray for it. Are you on your death-bed, passing out into the great unfathomable unknown without previous preparation? Turn your dying eyes, like the thief of old, and ask for pardon and you shall have it instantly, abundantly and overwhelmingly. Ask! Ask!! Ask!!! and you shall have. This is your privilege, in life or in

death." This reads well and sounds well, but will it bear dissection? Will it bear the searching light of common sense? Will it bear the burning light of Divine revelation? To each question I am forced to give a negative answer and give it with ascending emphasis. What are my objections? In the first place, it is a repetition of the old farce of emphasizing one demand, command or privilege of the gospel until it is no longer gospel, or akin to it. In the second place, it is equivalent to the abolishment of the Church, the gospel, the preacher, and making everything in this life and the next depend on simply asking for it. In the third place, neither salvation, sanctification, nor the baptism of the Holy Spirit is promised on the one condition—prayer—and you ought to know it. Since beginning this letter I have reread your sermon, and to my astonishment you did not quote a single passage of Scripture save your text, and the sermon and the text are, to make the most of it, only very distant and cold-hearted relations! You say that it is certain that prayer opens the storehouses of God in every nation and in every age. You submitted this proof of the proposition: "God's mercy is unlimited. Giving does not impoverish Him and withholding does not enrich Him. Giving liberally and unconditionally is most pleasing to Him. Man's needs are unlimited and prayer is the universal cry of the human heart. Therefore the simple cry from the needy opens the storehouse of plenty." I say to you premeditatedly and in cold blood that this whole statement, while true upon its face, is fallacious, misleading and dangerous in the extreme. God's mercy is great. Man's needs are great, but you, in making prayer the one condition of salvation from sin, dig the whole foundation from the remedial scheme, Your sermon makes it appear that prayer has no limitations, and therefore conditions are out of the

question. Will you after reflection stand by your sermon? Will you seriously and deliberately declare that prayer has neither limitations nor conditions? If you answer in the affirmative, you abolish faith, repentance, yea, the Mediatorial Throne itself. If you answer in the negative, your sermon and the doctrine of Methodism will need immediate and careful revision. I hear you say: "I object to your interpretation of my sermon." I reply that I do not interpret your sermon. I take it just as it reads, word for word and letter for letter. I hold you to your statement: "Prayer is the one voice of the universal human heart, and the one universal and unalterable condition of salvation." What part does faith play in this? What part does repentance play in it? What part does obedience play in it? What part do holiness, righteousness and sobriety play in it? None, absolutely none. If men pray naturally, and if prayer is the only condition of pardon, you might as well give up the ministry, and turn your attention to something else for a living. I am not done with your argument yet. I ask you to look at it squarely. Does not such doctrine encourage rascality and encourage men to put off repentance to the hour of death? Most men, and women too, calculate to live to a ripe old age. Sin has many allurements. Folly has many voices. Procrastination has many opiates for the conscience Hope, that sly and deceptive enchantress, always paints a gorgeous sunset. This world is real, and it urges its votaries to drink at its fountains, eat of its fruits and enjoy its music, and put off the great decision until to-morrow. Granting these things, and you can not avoid it, the sinner, the libertine, the embezzler, by every consideration of logic and every dictation of the flesh, will put off his return to God until the last moment, for did not the preacher at Pleasureville, in the year of our Lord 1897, declare that I could

ask and receive pardon even in the moment of death? My young friend, I fear you shall fall a victim to your own theorizing and temporizing, and at last find that in the end of your life it shall appear that you have done more harm than good, that while you have called a few sinners to repentance you have deceived many with the delusive hope of death-bed repentance, and the Church has been robbed of their service, and that sudden death and the deceitfulness of sin have combined to carry them into eternity without any preparation whatever. I assure you that I would not in the least detract from the mercy of God, but in my judgment the simple asking for salvation in the hour of death, while God might hear and answer, would not prepare the sinner for heaven and the society of the redeemed. I dismiss for a moment all idea of conditional salvation, and launch out with you on your semi-universalism, "Ask! Ask! Ask!!!" and demand of you a solution of the problem of preparation. For argument's sake I grant all you claim, and ring in your ears the fact, the cold and unrelenting fact, that the man whose heart has been the dwelling place of all that is unrighteous, unclean, and ungodly for a lifetime is not fit to go to heaven even if God in His mercy should grant his request and admit him in his expiring moment How would the infidel feel in the company of Abraham, who became the friend of God because he always believed and obeyed Him? How would the gambler and drunkard feel in the presence of John the Immerser? How would the embezzler, the profane swearer, and the blasphemer feel in the presence of the angels of God? What would these quickly-made saints have to talk about? Could they tell of great enterprises inaugurated for the extension of Christ's Kingdom? Could they put on the garments of white, symbolic of the righteousness of the saints (Rev., 7:13,14)? Could they join in

the new song (Rev., 14:3)? What could they do? I want you to tell. Be specific and generous. I should think they would, if they have any memory of the days spent on earth, feel like they were in the wrong place. Yet following your doctrine out to its natural conclusion, keeping in mind the fact that procrastination is peculiar to the whole race, heaven's population will be chiefly composed of those whose only preparation for its joys and songs is a simple prayer breathed out as the frail bark of human kind is launched out into the great beyond. I endorse the statement of the old-time preacher, who, with a voice that almost awoke the sleepers in the congregation, screamed: "Fellow travelers, if you wish to get into heaven by and by, get heaven into your souls now!" Theophilus, your doctrine will not stand the test. I advise you to revise it at once. I would not have you say less about the mercy of God, but I would have you say more about His judgments and the awful danger of robbing Him. of the service that legitimately belongs to Him, and which He emphatically and repeatedly demands. Prayer is all right in its place. Mark the words "in its place." Mark them again. You make it take the place of everything. I pray you, do this no more. Before dismissing this phase of the subject I want to call in question your statement concerning the dying thief on the cross. Why do you continuously harp on this one string? Why not hunt for proof of your favorite doctrine in the book of Acts? Your allusion to the thief on the cross reminds me of a story that to my mind fully illustrates the folly of your course. A theological monstrosity known as a "Christian outside of the Church" was descanting upon his exalted attainment, when a man who was more matter-of-fact than fanciful inquired: "Are you a member of the Church?"

Answer: "I am not. The thief on the cross was not a Church member."

"I presume you read the Bible and pray in your family?"

Answer: "I do not. The thief on the cross did not read the Bible or pray in his family."

"Surely you give liberally of your money to the propagation and defense of the gospel?"

Answer: "I do not. The thief on the cross did not give any money to the promulgation .of the gospel."

"Well, my friend, I must say that you strikingly resemble the thief on the cross. Indeed the only difference I see is, he is a dead thief and you are a live one!"

"Will a man rob God?" Certainly, and I do not hesitate to say that your preaching, especially at funerals, puts many a man on the way to do this. You must plead guilty to this charge. Whenever the deceased. shows the least sign of penitence or regret on his death-bed you assure his friends that he has gone to rest, and they wipe away their tears and return to their homes and follow in his wicked steps! But let us return to the thief on the cross. Admitting for the sake of argument all you claim, I want to submit in all seriousness a plain, pointed question. Do you think the thief's conversion in all respects a model for us? Again: Do you thing it a model for us in any respect? Would you want to take your chances for heaven on such a conversion as his? Would you be willing for your brother to take his chances on such a conversion as his? If not, you should not preach it, especially as, so far as the record shows, neither Peter, James, John, Paul nor any other inspired man ever referred to it after the ascension of Jesus. Do you agree with me that, putting the most charitable interpretation upon his acts, that he burned his candle out in the service of the devil and gave the last flickering flame to his Maker? This is just what you would not do for any consideration. Why? Because it would not be safe for you.

Yet you preach it and hold it up for others! I suggest that you let the thief rest and quit talking so much about "Pentecostal showers," and "Pentecostal fire," and give your people the Pentecostal gospel preached by Peter and his coadjutors on that memorable day. Suppose the Lord—the Testator as long as he lives, can make gifts on conditions, or without them (Heb., 9:15-17)—did reward his last and dying petition He did not authorize the apostles to go out and proclaim it as a model for us, and they did not do it. Has prayer any limitations? One would think not judging from your extravagant declarations. This is a serious question. Will you answer? You cannot do it unless you are willing to abandon the fundamental propositions on which your theological fabric rests. I will answer it for you: First, prayer is limited by the promises of God. Second, prayer is limited by the unknown or unrevealed will of God concerning the application of the promises to individual cases. By the first I mean that every Christian has a right to pray for what is promised him in the word of God, either specifically or by implication. By the second I mean that when we ask for what is promised we must bear in mind that our Father, All-wise and good, will give or withhold with supreme reference to the present and eternal good of the individual who in faith cries to Him. Now I think we have a clear-cut issue before us, and I earnestly solicit your attention. I proceed by propounding another question, What part does prayer play in the conversion of the sinner to Christ? Your answer would doubtless be that it plays every part. But is this correct? Is the sinner anywhere commanded to pray? Did Peter command the Pentecostans to pray? Did Philip command the Samaritans or the eunuch to pray? Did Ananias command Saul to pray? Did Paul and Silas command the jailor to pray? You are forced to

answer, No. Did anyone, from Pentecost to the death of the last apostle, ever proclaim such a command? Again, you are forced to answer, No. I pause long enough to say that you must see, in spite of yourself, that prayer plays a part in your revivals that it did not play in the days of Peter and Paul. Does not this startle you? If not you certainly do not very greatly venerate these distinguished apostles. Another question. Take prayer and singing out of your revivals, and what would remain? What could you do? You must answer, Nothing, and yet prayer is not mentioned in connection with any "revival" of which we have record in the Book of Acts—except in the case of Saul of Tarsus. My friend, this is astonishing. You can not deny it. But to return to the sinner, from your standpoint for what, specifically, must he pray? That narrows the issue most certainly. Must he pray for the gospel? By no means, for that is already in his heart and mouth if you have done your duty as a preacher (Rom., 10:5-10). Must he pray for faith? Unquestionably not, for faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom., 10:17). Must he pray for repentance? Certainly not, for repentance is an act of his own mind—a turning of his mind to God (II. Cor., 7:10). Must he pray for confession? Undeniably not, for he must confess the Christ with his own mouth (Rom., 10:10; I. Tim., 6:12, 13). Must he pray for the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Far from it, for the baptism of the Spirit was peculiar to the apostolic age (Acts, 2:1-4) and the gift of the Holy Spirit was and is promised to those who obey (Acts, 5:32). Must he pray for the remission of sins? Of course not, for remission of sins is promised on the condition of obedience (Acts, 2:38). Now I hear you say that I have taken prayer out of the plan of salvation altogether. But wait, have I done it? I have fol-

lowed the record, and claim no responsibility for what it contains. Indeed I disclaim all responsibility; you must present your bill of exceptions to those who wrote it, and the authority behind them. Please do not hasten to conclusions. Let us cut deeper. There are three important points which I desire to emphasize in passing: First, every awakened sinner will pray. Prayer is the voice of the penitent or broken heart. It is natural in hours of distress to call on the Higher Power, the Creator, Preserver and Redeemer, for help. I doubt not that this is pleasing to Him, and if He heard and answered the prayers of that good man Cornelius, and answered them fully when the Centurion obeyed Him in His own appointments (Acts, 10:1-48) I doubt not that He will hear the cry of every penitent sinner who returning cries to Him, when he obeys Him as did Cornelius. This is fully illustrated in the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. He was not commanded to pray and yet he prayed and fasted too (Acts, 9:1-31). Why did he pray? Simply because he could not help it. Second, prayer was not only the voice of penitence, it was also the voice of the condemned sinner asking what to do. I do not object to the sinner's praying, but I do most strenuously object to your effort to make him believe that prayer alone will avail. Prayer goes hand in, hand with obedience. Joel (Joel, 2:32), Peter (Acts, 2:21) and Paul (Rom., 10:13) unite in declaring that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved or delivered. I believe this without hesitancy, but I believe also that the praying heart must also be an obeying heart, and, in the words of Ananias, I say to every penitent praying sinner who has previously been instructed as to his duty: "And now why tarrlest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away they sins, calling on the name of the Lord (Acts, 22:16)." Why did the preacher not tell Saul to "pray on?" I am sure

if you had been there that would have been the answer. Now I do not think Ananias objected to the praying. He rather told him to "go on" praying and obeying. When you get the penitents to the anxious seat you forget the "obeying" and leave it out altogether. Woe unto you! Third, even the apostle Paul felt the need of the prayers of the Christians in order that he might speak with power: "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; withal praying for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds; that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak (Col., 4:1-4)." This is a remarkable statement, particularly so in the light of Methodist doctrine and practice. You pray for power "or fire" and expect it to come directly from heaven. In apostolic times they prayed for the preacher! How do you explain this? A serious attempt to account for it will overturn your theory of conversion and you know it. I force the issue, and put you on the defensive. Why did Paul desire the prayers of the Colossians? The above quotation answers fully and clearly. Here is another quotation from Paul along the same line: "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified, even as it is with you (II. Thess., 3:1)." There is no profound mystery in this when we reflect that the apostles were charged with the responsibility of preaching the gospel to every creature (Matt., 28:16-20). Indeed they are called the ambassadors of Christ (II. Cor., 5:17-21). Permit me to quote two important passages. First, from Peter: "And when there had been much disputing, Peter arose up, and said unto them, men and brethren, ye know that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel and believe (Acts, 15:7)." Now

hear Paul; "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus have I begotten you through the gospel (I. Cor., 4:15)." Mark you, this was in the day of inspired men. Allow me to summarize: Converting power was placed in the gospel--it was pregnant, yea, bursting with the power to turn men from sin to God, and it was committed to men, and instead of praying for direct converting power as you do, the primitive churches or congregations prayed for the preacher that he might open his mouth boldly and successfully proclaim the word of life! Do not be frightened, Theophilus, for there are stranger things in your theology than you have yet dreamed of, and as I turn on the searchlight of everlasting truth I trust you shall be able to see it. What objection have you to this summary? Oh, you think it was peculiar to apostolic times do you? This cannot be, for two reasons: First, the apostles were selected as witnesses of Jesus and their "fruit" was to remain (Jno., 15:16), and second, Paul plainly teaches, teaches specifically, that this order, so far as the power of the truth was concerned, was to be made perpetual: "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ (II. Tim., 2:1-3)." To whom was this addressed? To Timothy, a young preacher, Paul's son in the gospel, and a young man who had to give himself wholly to study and preaching in order to make full proof of his ministry (I. Tim., 4:13-16; II. Tim., 2:15). Question: If the inspired apostle Paul needed the prayers of the churches that the word might have "free course and be glorified," how much more did Timothy the student need it, and how much more do we

need it? Not only this but it is Scriptural, in view of the great ripe and ripening harvest, to pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth more laborers into the harvest (Matt., 9:37, 38). It is our duty when He sends them to back them with our prayers. This argument places you in a critical position. I am curious to see how you will get out. I doubt, however, if you try. It is a fact that sometimes silence is the better part of valor. Will you join me in the following prayer: "Almighty God, Lord of the harvest, we beseech Thee in view of the perishing millions on earth today that Thou wilt send forth speedily more laborers into Thy harvest, and grant that these laborers may preach the word in its purity, that the word proclaimed may produce results to Thy glory and the salvation of men, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." You can, I am sure, join me in this prayer, but you do not believe that these laborers carry any converting power with them, for as they preach you pray for converting power to come in another way. I challenge your contradiction of the following statement: God sent His Son Jesus into the world as the Savior of men. He in turn commissioned men to go out and make this great salvation known, and when they did this men were converted by hearing, believing and obeying the truth, and all the world needs to-day is men of faith who will unselfishly and aggressively proclaim that which is written and trust results to God who giveth the increase. Prayer is needed, but after all the saving of the wasting harvest depends largely on the faithfulness of the reapers. Let us pray for the preachers!

With this brief view of prayer I invite you to open your Bible and follow me while I point out to you some of the conditions, limitations and possibilities of believing prayer:

I. We must recognize the fact that "Our Father" is really

concerned about us, and ready and willing and able to help us: "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him (Matt., 6:8)." Again: "If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things (Rom., 8:31, 32)?" Again: "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ (Eph., 4:7)," Again: "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints and do minister (Heb., 6:10)."

II. We must come before God with pure hearts: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully; he shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation (Ps., 24:3-5)." Again: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me (Ps., 66:18)." Again: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God (Matt., 5:8)." Again: "I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting (I. Tim., 2:8)."

III. We must come before God in penitence, confessing our sins: "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit (Ps., 34:18)." Again: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise (Ps., 51:17)." Again: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (I. Jno., 1:9)."

IV. We must come before God in truth, doing His holy will: "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth; He will fulfill the desire of

them that fear him; he also will hear their cry, and save them (Ps., 145:18,19)." Again: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination (Prov., 28:9)." Again: "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth (Jno., 9:31)." Again: "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight (I. Jno., 3:22)."

V. We must come before God in deepest humility, realizing our own littleness and His greatness: "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? 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 (Mic., 6:6-8)." Again: "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased, and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted (Matt., 23:12)." Again: "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble; submit yourselves therefore to God (Jas., 4:6, 7)." Again: "Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble; humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time, casting all your care on him, for he careth for you (I. Pet., 5:5-7)."

VI. We must come before God in secret and make our requests known when no other eye can see, when no other ear can hear: "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father

which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth thee in secret shall reward thee openly (Matt., 6:6)."

VII. We must come before God in the name of Jesus Christ, His own, His only Son: "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son; if ye ask anything in my name, I will do it (Jno., 14:13, 14)."

VIII. We must come before God abiding Immovably in the teaching and love of His Son: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you: herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples (Jno., 15:7, 8)." Again: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord (I. Cor., 15:38)."

IX. We must come before God attempting great things for Him and expecting Him to do great things for us: "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters (Jno., 7:38)." Again: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father (Jno., 14:12)" Again: "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen (Eph., 3:20, 21)."

X. We must come before God with believing hearts relying on His exceeding great and precious promises: "As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee (Matt., 8:13)." Again: "Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God (Jno., 11:40)?" Again:

"Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full (Jno., 16:24)." Again: "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them (Mark, 11:24)." Again: "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 (II. Cor., 7:1).. Again: "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)." 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 (II. Pet., 1:3, 4)."

XI. We must come before God with fervency of spirit: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much (Jas., 5:16)."

XII. We must come before God perseveringly, persistently, unceasingly and make up our minds never to yield to discouragements: "And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I can not rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth (Luke, 11:5-8)." Again: "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; saying, There was in a city

a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: and there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary, and he would not for a while, but afterwards he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith, and shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily (Luke, 18:1-8)." Again: "Continuing instant (persevering) in prayer (Rom., 12:12)." Again: "Pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ concerning you (I. Thess., 5:17, 18)."

XIII. We must come before God with unselfish hearts: "And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth (Luke, 12:15)." Again: "From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not; ye kill, and desire to have, and can not obtain; ye fight and war, yet ye have not; because ye ask not; ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts (Jas., 4:1-3)."

XIV. We must come before God asking for what is in harmony with His holy will: "Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done (Luke, 22:42)." Again: "Then said I, Lo, I come, (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God (Heb., 10:7)." Again: "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him (I. John, 5:14, 15)."

XV. We must come before God, not with cringing timidity, but with confidence and boldness, realizing that through Jesus we have access unto things invisible, heavenly and eternal; "By whom (Jesus) also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of glory of God (Rom., 5:2)." Again: "For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father (Eph., 2:18)." Again: "In whom we have boldness, and access with confidence by the faith of him (Eph., 3:1-2)." Again: "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession: for we have not an high priest which can not be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin: let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need (Heb., 4:14-16)."

XVI. We must come before God, doubting not, and set our hearts on Him and His Son Jesus Christ our Lord: "And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots; and Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away, and Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God (literally, Have the faith of God), for verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith (Mark, 12:20-23)." Again: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him, but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven by the wind and tossed; for let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the

Lord: a double minded man is unstable in all his ways (Jas., 1:5-8)."

XVII. We must come before God giving ourselves and our earnings unto Him—putting His service, honor and kingdom first: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding: in all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. * * * * Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine (Prov., 3:5, 6, 9, 10)." Again: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you (Matt., 6:33)." Again: "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully (II. Cor., 9:6)."

XVIII. We must come before God relying on the Holy Spirit to teach us how to pray, and also for His intercessions, and also we must launch out into the love and promises of our great High Priest: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercessions for us with groanings which cannot be uttered, and he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercessions for the saints according to the will of God (Rom., 8:26, 27)." Again: "Wherefore In all things it behoved 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)." Again: "But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood: wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing

he ever liveth to make intercessions for them, for such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens (Heb., 7:25, 26)." Again: "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world (I. Jno., 2:1, 2)."

For what shall we pray? I answer, that, subject to the conditions laid down in the Book of truth, it is our privilege to pray for whatever we desire. The Master's words are appropriate here: "I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit unto them that ask him (Luke, 11:9-11)." Surely this is plain enough. We should ask for what is promised in the Bible. God's promises are still good. Study the conditions on which God's promises are made and be sure that you comply with the conditions promptly. Study the word of God. Search out the promises. Put them to the test. Launch out upon them. Pray habitually, anxiously, persistently, and you will not be disappointed.

"Lord, teach us to pray (Luke, 11:1)!"

Affectionately yours,

J.

LETTER No. XIV.—SANCTIFICATION.

My Dear Theophilus:—In a recent sermon on sanctification you approached dangerously near the theory of "sinless perfection." I agree with you that Christians are sanctified, body, soul and spirit, but the extreme interpretation of this, involving the conclusion that it is possible to live without sin in this world of temptation, is at variance with the word of God and the experience of the best men who have ever lived on earth. The Bible is both full and explicit on this point, but knows nothing whatever about instantaneous sanctification, or the so-called "second blessing," or the wild and incoherent exclamations of those who profess to have received it. Neither does it make it appear that men were converted and yet not sanctified, for the words "sanctification" and "conversion" describe the same process, and those who are converted are sanctified and those who are sanctified are converted. Before proceeding to combat the conclusion to which you have apparently been moving of late, and to which not a few of your brethren have already arrived, I desire to present a few passages bearing in a general way upon the subject. I do this in order to show that the Bible, particularly the New Testament, is very explicit on this subject, and that the professed believers in absolute sanctification—in the modern meaning of the word—have no Scriptural foundation whatever. Jesus, shortly before He left the earth, prayed to the Father for the apostles: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth (John, 17:17)." This emphasizes the instrument by which

sanctification is begun and carried forward—the truth. Paul makes it clear that all the primitive Christians were sanctified (Acts, 20:32). He is also very clear in the statement that the Holy Spirit and the truth work together harmoniously in the sanctification of men: "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 the belief of the truth: whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ (II. Thess., 2:13, 14)." Whoever eliminates the truth, the facts, commands and promises of the gospel from the Divine process of sanctification, completely nullifies it and relieves the Lord of the responsibility of "keeping his covenant," so far as the theorist is concerned. You came near doing this in your sermon, and those who go one step beyond you completely overturn the gospel plan of salvation and make sanctification a miracle. There are grades of modern sanctificationists, and I am glad to say that you belong to the more moderate class, but this does not hinder me from saying that the theory is fundamentally wrong—indeed, I consider it nothing short of delusion. Let us test it. I proceed upon the ground that you and others, some moderate, some intense, believe that sanctification is instantaneous, and that instead of being progressive, the subject's mind is not particularly consulted, but the work is done "from on high." While you do not come out plainly and strongly in favor of the "second blessing," your "mourner's bench process" practically amounts to the same thing—so far as it goes! I am inclined to believe that the theory of absolute, miraculous and instantaneous sanctification is the legitimate and certain offspring of your theory of conversion. If God sends the Holy Spirit in answer to prayer and converts men

outside of the gospel, why not go a little further and say He also completely sanctifies? It would only be one step— one very short step. You are not prepared to take this step, because the majority of those with whom you labor are "frail and ready to fall," and you can not say that they are not trying to learn God's will and to do it. I affirm that the doctrine of sinless perfection is not taught in the Bible. Here we have an issue, full and specific. Now to the proof: (1). If sanctification means sinless perfection and those who attain it are in a position where they "do no wrong," we have no example, save Jesus Christ, Enoch and Elijah, in the Bible, worthy of an imitation. Noah was a good man. He believed and obeyed God when all the world was against him, and yet he drank to intoxication and shamefully exposed his person (Gen., 9:21, 22). Abraham was a good man and he obeyed God, even when the whole world had gone astray, until he was thought worthy to be called the friend of God and the father of the faithful (James, 2:21, 23), and yet he deceived Pharaoh (Gen., 12:1-18) and Abimelech (Gen., 20:1-18), and took a wife contrary to the law of God (Gen., 2:24; 16:1-3). Jacob was a man of God (Gen., 28:10-14), and yet he shamefully defrauded his brother (Gen., 27:1-29). Moses stands almost alone in the annals of time as a heroic servant of God, and yet he killed and hid an Egyptian (Ex., 1:11-14), The Hebrews were all sanctified (Ex., 19:14), and yet a more ungrateful, wicked and rebellious nation never existed on earth. Aaron was the assistant of Moses in the great work of emancipation, and yet he, yielding to the voice of the rabble, made a golden calf in defiance of the law of God (Ex., 32:1-35), and came near involving the whole nation in ruin. David was a distinguished servant of God, a man after His own heart (I. Sam., 13:14; Acts, 13:22), and yet he committed one of

the blackest crimes recorded in the Hebrew history (II. Sam., 11:1-27). Peter was a disciple of the Lord, earnest, impetuous, uncompromising, and yet he denied his Master at the critical moment and swore that he never knew Him (Matt., 26:69-75). Paul, the apostle, stands unapproached and irreproachable in earnestness, in zeal, in self-sacrifice, in the world's history as a worker for God and man, and yet he expressed the fear that he might, on account of the influence of the flesh, be cast away at last (I. Cor., 9:27). On what ground do men claim to be better than the saints of old? Has God made a new revelation of His power? If not, is it not quite certain that some one is mistaken in the interpretation of what is recorded? (2). If sanctification means sinless perfection and those who attain it can not be tempted or further tried, it follows that they are in a position not even enjoyed by Jesus Christ, for while in the flesh He was constantly tempted in order that He might know our trials and help us in the hour of need (Heb., 2:18). This of itself kills, uproots and annihilates the doctrine. (3). If sanctification means sinless perfection and those who attain it do not go astray, growth in grace to them is impossible— we can not grow beyond perfection (II. Pet., 3:18). (4). If sanctification means sinless perfection, then those who attain it have experiences that emphatically contradict the Apostle John. He says: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us (I. John, 1:8)." I consider that these four arguments are unanswerable from the standpoint of the "modern sanctificationists." The fact is that the whole thing has no foundation in the word of God, reason or the experiences of the vast majority of the men of God of every age, and is nothing more nor less than exuberant fancy, ungoverned emotion and wild fanaticism. What is sanctification? This is the important question. If

it is not sinlessness, what is it? Let us see. It is the setting apart of any thing or person to a particular use—particularly to the service of God. Paul addressed the Corinthians as the sanctified in Christ Jesus (I. Cor., 1: I, 2), and yet accused them of allowing a man to live with his father's wife (I. Cor., 5:1-7); of going to law among themselves (I. Cor., 6:1-8); of corrupting the Lord's supper (I. Cor., 11:1-34); and of denying the resurrection of the dead (L Cor., 15:1-19). "What does this prove? Undoubtedly that a man may be sanctified in the Scriptural sense and still be tempted into sin; that while in the flesh men are dangerously prone to go astray in spite of the restraining influences of the gospel of God's grace. The word sanctify is applied to many different things. The seventh day was sanctified— set apart—at the creation (Gen., 3:1-3), and at Mt. Sinai (Ex., 20:8-11). All the first born of man and beast were sanctified by the Law of Moses (Ex., 13:1, 22). The priests who had previously been sanctified with the people at Sinai (Ex., 19:10-22) were again set apart or sanctified when they entered upon their priestly duties (Lev., 8:1-36). Note here that a day, a man, a nation, a priest or an ass might be sanctified under the Law—that is set apart for a certain purpose or to do a certain work. God sanctified His Son Jesus the Christ (John, 10:36). What does this mean? That God sent His Son into the world—set him apart as the world's last hope and only Savior. Again: The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the faithful wife and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the faithful husband (I. Cor., 7:14). Paul presents the whole thing with great force in one passage: "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use (II. Tim., 2:21)." Men are sanctified to God, of this there is no doubt. You are correct

when you say men must be sanctified, but wrong in your interpretation of it. The claim is anti-Scriptural and extravagant. My objection is as strong against the theory of how it is obtained as it is against the thing itself. Whenever you claim the necessity of a miracle in anything you nullify the conditions of the gospel. There is no escape from this. With you, conversion or sanctification is a miracle—the sanctificationists go only one step further and say that men are not only delivered from past sins but saved from the possibility of ever sinning again. The difference is in degree, not in kind. You all belong to the same family and must therefore acknowledge the same paternity—the anxious seat! The miraculous element in religion is all on the Divine side—in the revelation and proclamation of the conditions of remission of sins. There is no miracle on our side. We learn, believe and obey just as it is written, and just as we learn, believe and do anything else. The gospel is for men as they are. God demands their service. His cause needs their liberality. Persuade them to turn to him. Do not set up false standards. Do not exhort to impossibilities. Exhort to holiness. Urge men to be sober. Teach them self-denial. Beseech them to abound in the work of God, but do not as you value your own soul and theirs, promise them what is not promised in the word of God, and what has never been obtained by mortal man, save by Enoch and Elijah, who upon attaining it by faith and good work and not by miraculous power, immediately left this earth. Affectionately yours, J.

LETTER No. XV.—CHRISTIAN UNION.

My Dear Theophilus:—I now proceed to the discussion of a subject in which every Christian is personally concerned, and remotely every alien is also concerned. By the phrase Christian Union I mean the union of all Christians. I do not mean the confederation of denominations on the ground of mutual toleration, with a flag of true unfurled over denominational distinction and contradictions as they now exist. I mean the union of real Christians, so that the Lord's sheep will commingle; eat and drink together without molestation from ecclesiastical councils, great or small. I have no doubt you will say that Christians are practically united now. In a sense, all real Christians are one—their aims, purposes and hopes are one; but man-made creeds and sectarian walls keep them from being one in the important sense of doctrine and co-operation, in the spread of the gospel and in every other good work. Do you remember the statement you made in a recent sermon: "Each denomination was established under the providence of God to do an important work that could not otherwise be done; I thank God that all the denominations exist and prosper; I thank God that each man can take his choice; if he desires to join my branch of the Church I will gladly welcome him, and so will all my brethren; but if he prefers to join some other branch of the Church, we will bid him God-speed; again I thank God that denominations are plentiful, and if none of those in existence suit you, it is your privilege to start another—every man must be without excuse." At

first glance this appears to be an exhibition of unparalleled liberality, but upon closer examination I condemn it on the ground that it is fallacious and absurd in the extreme. I have no doubt, however, that you made the statement in sincerity, but while I concede this I can not conceal the fact that I am surprised that a man of your intelligence should entangle himself in such a labyrinth of inconsistencies. In the first place, I unhesitatingly deny the truthfulness of the statement that sects were set up under God's providence to emphasize a special truth or do a special work. What use had God for them when they began, that He did not have for them in the days of the apostles? It is an undisputed fact that there were no denominations in the early ages of the Church. Why not? They were not needed. Why were they not needed? The Church of Christ, one and undivided, was sufficient to do the work God designed to have done. I can not see how you can maintain your well known character for integrity and veracity, and deny it. If you grant it, please tell me what contingency has arisen that justifies the existence of sects now? If God had any hand in setting up denominations, there is certainly no Bible proof of it. Further, if it were His work, how do you account for the contradictions that exist among the different orders? The moment the differences cease to exist, denominationalism will collapse, and the moment denominationalism collapses, the Church of Christ will emerge from the ruins thereof. You said that each denomination was raised up to do a work that could not otherwise be done. Please mention the work. Surely it could not be preaching, baptizing, and training the young converts for usefulness. If you meant some sectarian work, I will not discuss the question further, for it is yet to be proven that sectarian work is, was, or ever will be needed. You thanked God that denomina-

tions exist, in the face of the prayer of Jesus that all His people might be one (John, 17:20, 21). You must have been in a strange condition of mind, or you may have overlooked the prayer of Jesus. You also thanked God that each man can take his choice. But you failed to observe that many of them fail to do it! It is not a matter of choice between denominations, but it is a matter of choice between the Church of Christ and the world. It is a matter of choice between the service of God and the service of the devil. It is a matter of choice between the strait gate and the narrow way and life, and the wide gate, the broad way and destruction. Imagine Peter giving the Pentecostans choice between a few hundred denominations. Imagine Paul, on Mars' Hill, exhorting the cultured Greeks to "join some denomination," and suggesting that if they did not like "his denomination" to join some other or start one to please their fancy. Nothing could be more absurd. Imagine Timothy telling the brethren in his evangelistic tours, if they were not pleased with "the Christian denomination" to join some other. Will you affirm that there is any ground for supposing that such thoughts ever entered the minds of these ancient servants of God? We are not supposed to please ourselves. We are called unto the service of God. We belong to Him. We can not choose to serve Him in our ways; we must serve Him in His own way and that way is not left to us—it is revealed in the Scriptures. Yet you rejoice that every man can take his choice! You are quite ingenious, full of resources; when Scriptural proof fails you, you draw on your imagination—and what an imagination! You call the denomination to which you belong "a branch of the Church." This is puzzling, for the Church set up by Jesus was without branches in the denominational sense. Stop and think. Admitting that all modern denominations

are "branches of the one true Church of Jesus Christ," where is the Church itself? It can not be made up of all these sects, for they are "branches," and these branches must derive strength and life from something else. Let us examine this denominational vine, proceeding upon the hypothesis that the Church established by Jesus Christ through His apostles is the trunk, and that all these "branches" grew out of it. The lion, impossibility, confronts us as soon as we take the first step forward. The Church of Christ was originally "one," and like begets like. Hence all these sects did, not and could not grow out of it, but granting for a moment that they did, it follows without a doubt that they would be precisely like the original, for the same life-blood that permeates the trunk of a vine reaches the end of the highest branch. Let us look at this tree from your standpoint. Please describe it for me: "Jesus planted the Church, and for hundreds of years it grew solid, straight and substantial and without division. After awhile a small branch grew out of one side, and it grew and it grew and men called it the Baptist Church. This Church grew on and finally put out branches, and as they grew one became the Primitive Baptist Church, and another the Missionary Baptist Church, and another the Six-Principle Baptist Church, and another the Seventh-Day Baptist Church, and another the Free-Will Baptist Church, and many other little branches not worth naming. Another branch grew out in another place and prospered; finally it "branched"; one part grew away toward heaven, straight and unyielding; the other grew but was not so "high." Men called this branch the Protestant Episcopal Church—"high Church and low Church!" Out of this branch grew another small branch, and for a long time it grew very close to the parent branch, but as it grew men called it the Methodist Church and it

put out branches; one became the Methodist Episcopal Church; another the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; another the Protestant Methodist Church; another the Wesleyan Methodist Church, and many other little branches not worth naming. Another branch grew out in another place and men called it the Presbyterian Church and it grew and put out branches; one became the American Presbyterian Church, another the English Presbyterian Church, another the Scotch Presbyterian Church and many other branches not worth naming—and one new "high" branch grew out of it and on its very top Dr. Briggs and Dr. Smith wave the banner of "higher criticism" over the wreck of Presbyterian creeds and the crash of sectarian worlds! Another branch grew out in another place and men called it the Lutheran Church and it grew and branched like all the rest. Another branch grew out in another place and men called it the Congregational Church. Another branch grew out in another place and men called it the Universalist Church. Another branch grew out in another place and men called it the Roman Catholic Church. Another branch grew out in another place and men called it the Unitarian Church. Indeed, I think that branches have started out until the vine is sadly in need of pruning! Your idea of "branches of the Church" grows out of a misconception of the parable of the vine. Read the fifteenth chapter of John. A careful reading of the chapter makes it clear that Jesus is the true vine and each individual disciple is a whole branch. There is no excuse for the existence of denominations. If you will reflect that the Church did not "branch" while the apostles of Jesus were here, I feel sure that you will never preach your sermon on the parable of the vine again unless you revise it. What reason did *God* have for the establishment of the Church in the world? Evidently

that it might be the pillar and support of the truth, and that through the members of the Church He might successfully carry on the work of bringing men back to purity of character and right doing. The mission of the Church was glorious, but it carried the weight of an immense responsibility. Is it not reasonable to suppose that it can accomplish its work more successfully by working in harmony? If not, why? Suppose, on the verge of a great battle, where thousands of men are involved on both sides, the soldiers of one army, when given the word to charge, should begin to fight among themselves, what would be the result? Defeat, without question. Yet you preach and teach that this is a good thing in the Church of the living God. I think you will say that while you believe in denominationalism, you do not believe in "fighting." Here is where you miss the mark. As long as denominations exist, there will be strife—it is inevitable. In the prayer of Jesus, He makes the conversion of the world dependent on the unity of His people (John, 17:20, 21). It seems to me that this should be conclusive, but with you and many others it is not. I give you another argument. If the Church can do more in a divided state, why did not each apostle set up for himself on the day of Pentecost? Why did they agree? If, united, they could make three thousand converts in a single day, from your standpoint they could have made twelve times three thousand! What consummate foolishness! You believe in union in everything but in Christianity, when its importance outweighs every earthly consideration. It would be a good thing for all American citizens to unitedly repel the attacks of a common foe. It is a good thing for the Methodist Church at Pleasantville to unitedly and aggressively push the work, but for the Methodist Church and the Baptist Church and the Presbyterian Church to unite on the name

of Jesus and the Bible alone, and harmoniously push the work, is altogether out of the question! The three churches named, in the village, have an aggregate membership of one hundred and eighty-nine, and you have three bar-rooms with a patronage of a thousand, at least! You can not fight sin, because you are too far apart. The original Church as Jesus started it in the world, was one—you can not successfully contradict this. Well, this ought to satisfy you that the Lord has given us the model, and that we will not be guiltless if we substitute anything else for it. Let us work and pray for the union of all Christians on the Bible and it alone.

Affectionately yours,

J.

LETTER No. XVI.—THE LORD'S SUPPER.

My Dear Theophilus:—I trust you have followed me honestly and patiently in this series of long letters, and that you have received much benefit from them. Perhaps you are surprised at my earnestness in contending for a complete restoration of the ancient gospel, in fact, in command, in blessing, but as you grow in years and wisdom I confidently predict that you will see that I have not labored in vain. I sum up the foregoing letters in three propositions: (1). We should all preach the same gospel without addition or subtraction. (2). We should obey the same commands and do it precisely in the same way. (3). Each church should wear the same name and conduct its work in the same manner, so that a Christian may be admitted into full fellowship wherever his lot happens to be cast. The central or fundamental truth of the gospel is that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of the only true God, and the only Savior of men. Hence, my desire in closing this series of letters, to exalt that ordinance by which He hoped to be remembered to the end of time. I wish to impress upon you its solemn significance. I imagine that I hear you say that this is not at all necessary in view of the fact that you do not neglect it when you have an opportunity to observe it. I dismiss this, but will call it up again. The Savior of the world desired to be remembered. How sad it is to be forgotten! Our dear Redeemer felt this, and for this very reason instituted what we call "the Lord's supper." It was on the night of His betrayal. It was in full view of the cross.

The weight of the world's redemption was even then pressing upon His great and loving heart. The damp, dark and dreary grave was just before Him. He was in an upper chamber in the city of Jerusalem. The Passover—in memory of the great national deliverance—had been eaten. The holy city was going to sleep. The sacred streets that had echoed the footsteps of David, Solomon, Josiah, Hezekiah, and a long line of illustrious prophets and servants of God, were growing quiet. The stars of heaven were watching along the skies. The distant mountains, piled almost to the throne of God, stood like grim and gray sentinels to antagonize approaching foes. The Jordan, celebrated in history and song, rolled like a silver thread through the hills and valleys of the land of promise. Go with me, in imagination, across seas and continents—here is the city and here the place, up this flight of stairs! Here is the door. Tread lightly. Listen! What a sweet and tender voice! It is the Man of Galilee. He rears His monument, even before His death. It is not a statue of bronze or brass; it is not a towering granite shaft; it is a simple memorial, locked in the hearts of the disciples whom He loved. Note that He set this memorial up in the hearts of Peter, James, John and the other disciples, and entrusted them with the responsibility of setting it up in the hearts of their contemporaries, and through them and others to the remotest year of the world's history (Read Matt., 26:26-30; I. Cor., 11:17-34). The Lord Jesus set this memorial up in the hearts of His disciples. Of this there can be no doubt. The bread symbolizes His broken body. The wine symbolizes the shedding of His blood for the remission of our sins. Here is a truth of far-reaching application and power: He desired them to celebrate His death. This proves His divinity. We celebrate great events, or the anniversaries of the births of

the world's mighty men, but Jesus of Nazareth desired to be remembered, not in His birth, not in His life, but in His death. Why? Because this is the greatest fact in history — "He died for our sins according to the Scriptures." Paul declares that in keeping this feast we proclaim His death— "till He come." How silent, yet how eloquent, the proclamation; how gentle, yet how certain the effects. The Lord's supper is both a memorial and a communion. It is a memorial of Him—of His death. We eat the bread and drink the wine and think of Him. We do not think of His doctrine, particularly, but of Him as He dies on the cross. This keeps His death continually before the minds of men. This silently, yet powerfully and irresistibly, proclaims His death, His burial, and His triumphant resurrection. It is a communion with Him. I do not commune with you. You do not commune with me. We commune with our risen and exalted Lord. The question of so-called open and close communion plays no part in the New Testament, and the restoration of primitive Christianity, in doctrine and practice, will forever banish these unscriptural phrases from existence. In apostolic times, all Christians were in the Church. You can not name a single exception, and all members of the Church were taught and expected to remember Jesus and proclaim His death to the world. The great apostacy raises many vexatious questions, but a return to the gospel as the apostles preached it and to the Church as they set it up, will relieve us of the necessity of ever answering them.

How often should we partake of the Lord's supper? This is a very important question to every child of God. Let us seek an answer with care and deliberation. How often, if you were called away from earth, would you wish your friends to think of you—to remember you! Once a quar-

ter, once in six months, once a year? The very thought is repulsive. You are bound to confess that it is one of the objects of your life "to live in the hearts of those you leave behind." To be continually remembered by our friends, is not death. Yet you are perfectly satisfied to take the loaf and cup, in memory of the world's Redeemer, a few times each year! If the death of Jesus is the greatest fact in history, and you unhesitatingly affirm that it is, how often should it be celebrated by his loving and loyal disciples? Your practice says, occasionally; but down deep in your heart, with the New Testament open before your eyes, you personally feel the need of doing it oftener, but you are bound down to a system that forever prevents you from doing this without the co-operation of your ecclesiastical superiors. Your system makes you a slave; a slave to your creed, a slave to your traditions, a slave to your superiors in power. Suppose, at your next visit to Pleasantville, you should conclude to "break bread" upon the first day of the week, as the ancient disciples did, what would be the result? You hesitate to answer. I answer for you: The result would be a church scandal and an ecclesiastical court! It pains me to say this, but it is incontrovertible. It is another unanswerable argument in favor of the restoration of primitive Christianity. How often did the ancient disciples break bread? I answer, Upon the first day of every week (Acts, 20:7). It is unnecessary to argue this, for in making the statement I place myself in the company of John Wesley, from whose teaching you have shamefully apostasized, and all the great reformers and scholars. How appropriate the day! How sweet the remembrance of the risen Lord! We are exhorted to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (II. Peter, 3:18). How can we do this? By keeping constantly in memory Jesus

and His suffering; by following closely where He leads. This is what the Church needs. This is what every individual disciple needs. Let us have less speculation, less tradition, less strife, and more gospel—more of the life and power of Jesus as exhibited in His resurrection from the dead. I am certain that weekly communion will tend to the uniting of the contending factions of the professing people of God. Whatever exalts Jesus will destroy the party spirit. Whatever destroys the party spirit will bring the people of God closer together. Whatever brings the people of God closer together will hasten the evangelization of the world. Whatever hastens the evangelization of the world will bring us nearer the coming of the Lord from heaven. Your supposition that the frequency of the celebration will detract from its solemnity has no foundation whatever in fact. If it is good, if it brings us nearer the cross, we should follow in the steps of the first church and proclaim our respect and love for Jesus every week. You can not do this and remain in the Methodist Church. What a pity! We hear much of "Christian duty." The first great duty laid upon every Christian is to exalt Jesus Christ and keep His memory forever fresh—to remind all men everywhere that He lives, and that He will surely come again. To this end let us plan, labor and pray. May God bless, sustain and help you "alway, even unto the end. Amen." Farewell!

Affectionately yours,

J.