

[\(Click here for Table of Contents\)](#)

*"Preach the Word"*

# "Preach the Word"

by

FRED E. DENNIS *Evangelist and Writer*  
For Twenty Years a Writer for the *Christian Leader*,  
Cincinnati, Ohio

Staff Writer, *Gospel Advocate*, Nashville, Tenn., Since 1939

Gospel Preacher for a Third of a Century

Volume Three

FIRST EDITION

WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING COMPANY

Grand Rapids 1952 Michigan

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

## **Preface**

My first volume of "Fifty Short Sermons" was published in 1942. That book ran two editions of one thousand volumes in each. The next year I brought out another book of fifty short sermons. It has run three editions. In all six thousand copies of it have been printed. Many brethren, especially young preachers, have urged a third volume. This explains this third volume, "Preach the Word." May the dear Father of us all use this book to the salvation of precious souls.

Fred E. Dennis,  
514 Cutler St.,  
Marietta, Ohio

Sept. 1, 1952

## **Introduction**

WHEN a man devotes the greater part of his human life to the proclamation of the gospel of the Son of God and his work has proven beneficial to thousands of individuals and to the church in general, it is most fitting that loving recognition should be accorded him.

The words of Bro. Fred E. Dennis, both by tongue and pen, have instructed, edified, warned, rebuked, reproved, and comforted thousands of persons. From out of that multitude he has gained admiration, thanks, and unadulterated Christian love. The cords of brotherly love have bound his heart to the hearts of many whose lives have been enriched by the noble Christian that he is and for his earnest labors.

My words are not the flight of fancy. I have known Bro. Fred E. Dennis over a long period of years. Upon my first visit to Marietta, Ohio, (Bro. Fred was considered a young preacher) I became acquainted with Bro. Fred's father, then the senior elder of the congregation, I met his mother also. I was deeply impressed by their piety and humility, both of which are reflected in the life of their well known son. The path of humble, useful service is the path that leads to greatness in the kingdom of Christ. This is the path Bro. Fred travels.

The work of Bro. Dennis has been very much, localized because of the constant demands upon his time and labors in the area that has known him all his life. There is nothing that commends the character of the man and the quality of his work more than to be in demand by those who know him best. The "Ohio Valley" knows, loves, and appreciates Bro. Fred Dennis for his sterling Christian character; for his earnest proclamation of the truth; for his stinging rebuke of sin; for his instructive reproof of error; and for his appealing exhortation that edifies believers and leads aliens into the fold of Christ.

Bro. Dennis' field of service was extended when for twenty years he was a regular writer for the Christian Leader. I recall that Bro. Fred L. Rowe told me that more people subscribed for the Christian Leader through the influence of Bro. Fred Dennis than that of any other person then connected with the Leader.

An extensive field of service was opened to him when in 1939 he became a member of the staff of the Gospel Advocate which he now so ably fills.

It is a valuable contribution to our store of instructive, edifying Christian literature to have Bro. Fred E. Dennis preserve in book form some of the product of his ardent labors.

Let me commend this third volume of Short Sermons to the reading public and especially to those of the church who will be strengthened by its messages. It will be a valuable storehouse for young preachers.

With Christian love to both author and readers,

I am yours in Christ,

Ben F. Taylor.

[\(Click lesson title for text\)](#)

## Contents

1. A Bible Report of a Revival .....	13
2. "And They Stoned Stephen" .....	16
3. Brotherly Love .....	20
4. "Children, Obey Your Parents" .....	23
5. "Come Thou with Us" .....	26
6. Congregational Autonomy .....	30
7. "Concerning Them Which Are Asleep" .....	34
8. Divine Healing .....	37
9. Elders — When? Why? Who? How? .....	41
10. Entertaining the Preacher .....	44
11. "Except" .....	49
12. Husbands and Wives .....	52
13. "I Am Ready to Preach the Gospel" .....	56
14. John Wesley, The Methodists, And The Bible .....	60
15. Life's Voyage .....	64
16. Marrying Out of the Lord .....	68
17. Meetings .....	73
18. Men and Missions .....	77
19. No Room for Christ .....	80
20. No Room for the Widow and Orphan .....	84
21. Paul .....	87
22. Persecution .....	91
23. "Preach the Word" .....	94
24. Safety First .....	98
25. Sin to Sin .....	102
26. Some Men Who Should Not Preach .....	106

27. Sound Doctrine	109
28. Seven Blunders of the World	113
29. "Tell Us Plainly"	117
30. "Thou Art the Man"	121
31. The Glorious Church	125
32. The Sisters Should	129
33. "They Continued Stedfastly"	132
34. The Unpardonable Sin	136
35. The Coming Judgment	139
36. The Christian and the World	143
37. The Way of Cain	148
38. "The Body, The Church"	151
39. Three Prayers	155
40. The Works of the Flesh	159
41. "Well Reported of by the Brethren"	162
42. Widows Indeed	166
43. Why Are You Not a Christian?	169
44. "What Lack I Yet?"	173
45. "Who Then Can Be Saved?"	177
46. Why I Want to Go to Heaven	180
47. What Is a Christian?	183
48. Who Controls the Money?	187
49. "Whatsoever He Saith"	190
50. Zacchaeus	194



**"Preach the Word"**

## **A Bible Report of a Revival**

**W**E are always interested in the reports which preachers make of their meetings. I am sure that the "field reports" are read by more readers than any other section of our religious papers. In Acts 19 we have a rather detailed report of one of Paul's meetings. I believe it will be profitable for us to study that report some.

This revival took place in the city of Ephesus. When Paul came to town, he found certain disciples. He made some inquiry about their faith, and found that their "baptism" was not valid. They had been baptized "unto John's baptism" after that baptism ceased to be valid. About all I can see wrong with their "baptism" is that at the time they were baptized they had the wrong faith. Under John's baptism folks were taught that "they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." If Paul had not made some inquiry and had not done some teaching, these folks might have been "satisfied" with their former baptism; but when they would have come up in the judgment, the Lord might not have been satisfied with their baptism. If we have made a mistake, now is the time to learn about it. It will be too late to correct our mistakes at the judgment bar of God. I am afraid that some of us preachers are just a little too easily satisfied about some "baptisms" of our day. We had better do some pretty plain preaching, and maybe when we do this, many will do as these twelve did. "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

And then Paul went into the synagogue. No, he did not go in there to engage in that worship. We are not left in the dark

about what he did in there. "And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God." It would not be wrong for us to go into many different places for the same purpose. We could go into the meetinghouse of our sectarian friends, but not to engage in worship with them; but it might afford us an opportunity to "dispute and persuade" concerning the kingdom of God. And then some "softie" would be sure to rise up and say that we should not dispute and persuade! But Paul has left us this example, and I am sure we make no mistake when we follow in his steps. Folks are not going to be jarred loose from false religious positions unless there is some disputing and persuading done.

But "divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude." My, that does not look well in a report of a revival! We have some preachers so "sweet-spirited" that the sectarians will close their places of worship to hear "our" preacher. No, no, Paul was not trying to see how many he could insult; but he was set for the defense of the gospel, and his uncompromising position caused some to speak evil of the way before the multitude. And they will still do the same thing when we preach the same gospel that Paul preached. They will not all believe, but some will be hardened and believe not, and, of course, will speak evil of the way.

But because of this Paul did not close the revival. "He departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus." He just got him another hall for the meeting, paid the rent, and went right on "disputing daily." "And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." That was a long meeting. If we do not turn the world upside down in about two weeks, we quit. If we would go into a city and dispute daily for two years, maybe more would hear "the word of the Lord Jesus." It takes a long time to uproot error and plant the truth in the hearts of a perishing people.

Paul performed some miracles here. "Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded." The devil is going to get out when we get after him with divine weapons. "And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds." This was indeed a revival. They confessed their evil deeds, and repented sincerely. They did not get the idea that they could go into the church and still carry on their nefarious practices. They knew that the church was a clean place.

"Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver." There was no doubt about the genuineness of these conversions. They did not sell their books of magic, so that others could practice this deception. They sold not, but burned them. They did not have this bonfire in some back alley or away up at the head of the "crick"! It was a public fire. The ones which used these curious arts had repented, and they wanted everybody to know that they were turning from their evil ways. It is easy to understand the next verse: "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." If we had more genuine conversions, the word of God would grow and prevail. There is not enough preaching to cause men and women to see that to be a Christian means that we actually give up the sinful things of the world.

And then there was another "riot"! There was another businessman in town who was about to be ruined! He was a silversmith, who made silver shrines for Diana. His name was

Demetrius. This business brought no small gains to the craftsmen. Demetrius saw that the gospel of Christ would break up that business of making gods. What did he do? "Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: so that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth."

Demetrius was a shrewd businessman, but he could not stop Paul's mouth nor the power of the gospel. He could stir up a mob to cry out for two hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," but he could not stop the power of the gospel over the hearts of the simple. Ephesus became a radiating center for the gospel of Christ. In time it became a powerful New Testament congregation. Lord, give us more revivals like the one at Ephesus in the long ago. May our hearts be set on fire with the zeal that characterized that great soldier of Jesus Christ, Saul of Tarsus. And how this old sin-cursed world needs such preaching and such revivals!

## **"And They Stoned Stephen"**

**A** strict adherence to the gospel of Christ has always been the cause of more or less stoning. Even in our day when we stand uncompromisingly and unflinchingly for the gospel of Christ, some pebbles will be cast our way. Stephen had attacked the religion of the fathers of his auditors. He had shown them that their fathers had persecuted the true men of

God of their day. They had slain those who had pointed out the truth to them. "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it." (Acts 7:51-53.)

When a preacher preaches this way, the stones will begin to fly. This preacher thought that when folks were "stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears," it was all right to say so. Of course he had not taken a course in the proper approach to such evil situations! To be "stiffnecked" is to be stubborn and obstinate. These Jews to whom Stephen was preaching were just that. And they have not improved much since. There are many others besides the Jews who are stubborn and obstinate. I have heard that a few of them are even members of the church.

Stephen said these folks always resisted the Holy Ghost. We have those resisters with us yet. What do they care what the Holy Ghost says through the inspired writers? They would not give what they "feel" for all the Bibles in the world. They think more of what Dr. So and So said than what God says. The Bible says to be "buried by baptism," but their preacher says it is not absolutely necessary. They always resist the Holy Ghost.

The fathers of these Jews had persecuted the true prophets of God. True prophets have always been persecuted and always will be. And the Jews of Stephen's day had become the betrayers and murderers of the Just One. Stephen did not hesitate to point out this sin. He told them, in unmistakably plain language that they were murderers. That has the ring of a true preacher of the gospel. That sounds like Peter on the birthday of the church. Hear Peter: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." (Acts 2:36.) The gospel has about the same sound when

preached by humble and fearless men of God. It took more than stoning to scare these preachers off the truth. It takes more than stoning in our day to scare real servants of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth." (Acts 7:54.) Such preaching is meant to cut to the heart. When sinners can sit under a sermon without being cut to the heart, there is something wrong with the preaching. When these sinners are thus cut to the heart, they will do one of two things: they will humble themselves under the mighty hand of God and obey the truth, or they gnash with their teeth on the man that has done the preaching. He must be prepared for either or both reactions. When he sees smitten sinners humbly obeying the gospel, he thanks God and takes courage. When they gnash on him with their teeth, he has a season of prayer with God and spends more time with the old Book, and away he goes to preach the word.

"But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." (Acts 7:55, 56.) We cannot be full of the Holy Ghost in the same sense in which Stephen was, but we need to allow the Spirit to dwell in us. We need to be guided by the words of the Spirit. Yes, and we need to do more looking into and toward heaven. When we are going to move to a new location here on this old earth, we think much about the new home. We have no abiding place here. We are looking for a city whose builder and maker is God. While Stephen was being stoned, Christ was standing. How interested he was in the death of the first Christian martyr! True soldiers have the consolation of knowing that their Captain is always interested. He knows every trial they have, every pain, every disappointment, every tear.

"Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of

the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul." (Acts 7:57, 58.)

How sad it is when dying men will act like madmen! They stopped their ears. So many will do that. They will not listen. They want to do all the talking. There are many in our day who will not learn because they will not listen. They are dull of hearing. Their ears are stopped.

"And the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul." This is our first introduction to Saul. And what an introduction! There he is guarding the clothes of the ones who are killing Stephen. Undoubtedly Paul thought of this incident many times in after life when he was being persecuted so severely for the same cause for which Stephen was dying. The Lord showed him how great things he had to suffer for his name. Yes, brother, you have to suffer for the cause of Christ. The crown comes after the cross; and if there be no cross, I am sure there will be no crown.

"And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep." (Acts 7:59, 60.)

The mad mob stoned Stephen to death. He was praying while they were stoning. He would even kneel down in the face of that screaming and howling mob. He would even pray for his enemies. He had the spirit of Christ. This is the way the Master died. We know that they did not know what they were doing. Saul did not know. He did it ignorantly in unbelief. However, that did not lessen the enormity of the crime. They must repent of their sins. They must be baptized to wash away their sins. Saul later did that. And every other one who was saved had to do the same thing. It is a great privilege to preach the gospel to lost sinners. Some will obey. Others will not, but we can pray for them. Maybe they will come to their senses before they perish in eternal hell. At any rate, we can save our souls if we are true to our



profession. While we are busy saving our own souls, we shall save the souls of some others.

And Stephen fell asleep! Yes, he fell asleep in Jesus. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." (Rev. 14:13.) Kind reader, you cannot die in the Lord unless you live in the Lord. You cannot live in the Lord until you get into him. You cannot get into him until you are baptized into him. (Rom. 6:3-5; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; Gal. 3:26-27.)

---

3

## **Brotherly Love**

"LET brotherly love continue." (Heb. 13:1.) I heard of one preacher who took this for his text, and sermon after sermon preached on it. The brethren became anxious to know when he was going to change his subject and his sermon. The preacher replied by telling them when they learned this lesson and applied it he would preach on something else. In many places the text would not be changed for some time if the preacher waited for the brethren to practice this one.

There are very few things troubling the church that brotherly love would not take care of. In fact, many of the things that have happened to mar the peace and happiness of the church would not have happened had the brethren had genuine love in their hearts. You know the "Golden Rule" is still in the book. It means now what it has always meant. We should treat others as we would have them treat us. This is simply brotherly love.

True disciples have brotherly love. Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John 13:35.) The world will soon note this

brotherly love. Yes, and they will soon note a lack of brotherly love. When brethren love as they should it is not even necessary that they express this love. No, it is not wrong to express it, but it shows without verbal expression.

There is too much hypocrisy connected with so-called love of the brethren. Some will profess to love the brethren, and then at every opportunity "knock" on them, or speak evil of them. "Let love be without dissimulation." (Rom. 12:9.) Love must be genuine and sincere.

Christians are kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love. In honor they prefer one another. (Rom. 12:10.) It takes true love to be able to do this. So many are green-eyed with envy and jealousy. Love of the brethren is the only cure for this. If there is honor to be had prefer that your brother get the honor. It is not possible to build yourself up by trying to tear down others. God has a way of humbling all such. They may seem to prosper temporarily in this world, but sooner or later God will humble such to the dust. We need a good dose of true humility. Too many are proud of their humility!

Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Rom. 13:10.) Love is always seeking an opportunity to help and to bless. Love would not stoop to ill. "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you." (2 Cor. 2:4.) How could brethren withstand such love?

"But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another." (1 Thess. 4:9.) In our day it seems very necessary that we write and preach on brotherly love. There is not a superabundance of it among us. This direful lack of love causes much unnecessary friction.

We ought to provoke one to love and good works. (Heb 10:24.) I am fearfully afraid that we often provoke one another, but it is not unto love and good works. Maybe we

are too easily provoked in the wrong direction, and not easily provoked unto love and good works. Brethren, let us do more of this kind of provoking, and less of the other kind.

Peter speaks of unfeigned love of the brethren. (1 Pet. 1:22.) This is genuine love. It is not hypocritical. It is not counterfeit. This kind of love will cause us to love with a pure heart fervently.

It is hard to love those who are so unloveable, but this we must do. We are to love our enemies and pray for them. It is easy to love those who love us and are seeking every possible means to express their love. The sincerity of our conversion is shown by our love of those who do not love us. You know the world loves its own. They don't love us because we are not of the world. We love the people of the world and are constantly seeking their salvation. We love erring brethren and we are busy trying to restore all such in the spirit of meekness. We remember that we are in the flesh. We are liable to err. "To err is human; to forgive divine."

Maybe some of us need to be taught to love. Maybe we don't understand the underlying principles of love. You remember that God says that young women are to be taught to love their husbands. (Titus 2:4.) It would seem natural for a woman to love her husband, but she needs teaching along the line. Men need to be taught to love their wives. Brethren need to be taught to love other brethren.

Some profess how much they love God, but at the same time they don't love the brethren. All such are liars. If we don't love the brethren whom we have seen it is not possible to love God whom we have not seen. (1 John 4:20.) We may profess great loyalty to God and his word, but it is mere pretension if we do not love the brethren.

We need to be knit together in love. Sometimes the more we love others the less we are loved. Paul had this bitter experience. "And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." (2 Cor. 12:15.) No doubt it made lumps come into the throat of the old preacher to see those whom he loved so

dearly to count this love of little importance. It may cause the same thing in us, but we cannot afford to cease to love.

When brethren dwell together in love it is one of the most beautiful things on this earth. Those who are not members of the church will be attracted by such manifestations of brotherly love. This brotherly love is the badge of true discipleship. There is a tie that binds our hearts in Christian love. When this tie is severed we are on dangerous ground. Love will not cause us to say mean and hateful things about the brethren. True love will not cause us to wink at sin, even the sins of the brethren. We who are parents know what true love causeth us to do for our children. When they do right we are happy. When they do wrong we are grieved, and we take care to correct in love.

Our love for the Lord, for the church, and for the brethren will cause us to try to keep the church pure and clean. However, all acts of discipline will be in complete harmony with the law of love. There is no spite in the corrective measure. We are after the souls of men. We want to save the soul of the erring one, and warn others not to follow in the same grievous way. The one who has made a mistake will be overwhelmed by our true love for him. Our arrogance and pride will not drive him deeper into sin. He knows we take no delight in the measures we are now taking. It has become necessary because he has brought himself into reproach with the Lord and the church.

"Let love of the brethren continue."

## **"Children, Obey Your Parents"**

**P**AUL wrote to Timothy, telling him "that in the last days perilous times shall come." (2 Tim. 3:1.) All that we need to do to know these perilous times are here is to read 2 Tim. 3. One of the signs of these perilous times is disobedience to

parents. Surely we see that on every hand today. The obedient child is the exception and not the rule. The children of our Christian parents are not to be excepted. However, there are some noble exceptions among the children. Occasionally one will get into a home where the children have been taught obedience to parents. What a treat and what a relief this is!

Even very young children are disobedient to parents. This disobedience carries over into the church. They have not been caused to respect parental authority, so they even rebel against the authority of God. It is hard to convince a girl or boy in his teens that he ever will be as "dumb" as his father and mother!

Here is sage advice that would help many a child: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." (Eph. 6:1-3.) God says it is right to obey our parents in the Lord. Then to disobey them is wrong and sinful. If our parents are in the Lord, they always have the good of the child at heart. Their commandments are for the good of the child. Children may not be able to see this and appreciate it; but if they love their parents, they will obey because of that parental love.

God have mercy on the child that does not honor the mother and father! That child will come to no good end. There is some connection between obedience to parents and long life. Even with our shortsightedness we can see some connection. The parent is so greatly interested in the good of the child that his commands are for the good of the child in every way. Obedience to parents brings happiness to the hearts of the parents and to the heart of the child. Many a parent has been brought to the grave much sooner than he otherwise would have been because of the worry caused over disobedient children.

All of us gospel preachers have gone into homes where death had taken father or mother. We have heard and seen the wailing of children who did not love and respect their parents

while they were living. Now they are cold in death. And maybe this death was hastened by the children. It is too late to do anything about it. "Of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these: it might have been!" If boys and girls read this sermon whose parents are yet living, let me plead with you to obey your parents. You will never know the sacrifice that they have made in your behalf. This sacrifice has been made gladly. Let them know that you really appreciate it. Show it by your lives, and tell it with your tongues. Let mother know how she is appreciated before she crosses over the cold river of death. Tell her while it will gladden her old heart. Do not bring any extra wrinkles into her face and more gray hairs into her head by your disobedience. Keep her heart young and gay by your goodness and obedience. Let old dad know that the labor he has done in your behalf has been appreciated. You can make his heart merry by your obedience. Bring smiles to his face rather than pain to his heart.

One of the blackest list of sins ever penned is in Rom. 1. One of those sins is disobedience to parents. (Rom. 1:30.) How God must hate this sin! How we ought to hate it! From the time the babe begins to lisp he ought to be taught obedience to parents.

It does seem to this writer that after a child is nearly twenty he ought to have enough of just plain common sense to see that obedience to parents is right. It does seem that love and respect for parents would cause him to obey, even when he can see no reason for the commands or requests. This does not mean that there are no reasons for these demands and requests. Oftentimes children of God are unable to see why the Lord may require certain things at our hands. However, one would be very weak in the faith to doubt the wisdom of God. What God commands is for our good in this time world and in the world to come, even though we may not understand why he makes such demands upon us. So it is with the earthly parent. His commands and requests are not without reason. They are meant for our good in this time world and in the one

to come. Happy is that child that has this attitude. Blessed is the parent who has children with this attitude.

It seems that obedient children make no serious move without first consulting with parents. They respect the wisdom of their parents. They know that father and mother know best.

Jesus has set the example for perfect obedience. He was subject to his parents. One could not imagine the Son of Mary rebelling against her and Joseph. One cannot imagine a Christian child rebelling against Christian parents. Such things are not done. This is sin against God.

Too many parents are too "soft." Some are too "hard." There is a happy medium. Parents should be firm. They should be kind. They should demand obedience. The principle of obedience must be instilled into the very heart of the child. This writer spent several years as a teacher in the public schools. It was easy to pick out the children that came from homes where they had been taught to obey. Those children seldom gave trouble in school. The preacher in the pulpit can pick out the children in the audience that have been taught to obey at home.

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right."

---

5

## "Come Thou With Us"

**T**HIS is one of the grand invitations of the Old Testament. Moses gave it unto Hobab, his father-in-law. Hear it: "We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." (Num. 10:29.)

It seems to me that Christians of our day could use this invitation. We, too, are journeying unto a place the Lord is

going to give us. Surely we want others to go with us. If we are Christians, we will do them good. Christians do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. (Gal. 6:10.) God has spoken good concerning spiritual Israel too.

The Christian religion is good in its very nature. It is right in its practice. Its influence is good, and good only. Christianity makes one pure in every way. The Christian is busy practicing righteousness. There is no real pleasure and dignity outside of the realm of righteousness. The Christian is superbly happy and dignified.

There are so many about us that we can do good to. We have the poor ever with us. Jesus said this would be always. He further said that when we will we can do them good. They need our ministrations. We need these opportunities of doing good. The fatherless and the orphans are around us. How much good we can do to them! We are so thoughtless oftentimes along these lines. The world is teeming with widows. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is to visit them. (James 1:27.) We can do the sick so much good. They need our ministrations in so many different ways.

We are surrounded by those who are in poverty regarding truth. They need to be mentally fed. We have the food, and we ought to know how to feed. The world is poor mentally and morally. We should instruct the hungry minds, feed the starved souls, and diffuse light in dark places. He that winneth souls is wise. The opposite would be that he that does not win souls is foolish. Certainly measured in this way many of us are fools of the rankest kind.

Moses said they were journeying to a place. Certainly we are on the way to a place. Heaven is a place. Jesus said: "I go to prepare a place for you." (John 14:2.) We are on the way to that place. We want others to share the joy of the journey and of the place after while. To get to this place we must crucify the lusts of the flesh. We must follow in the steps of the Master. We must put off the old man with his deeds.



We have put on the new man. We must deny ourselves and take up the cross and follow Christ.

The journey will end at death. Some of us would be surprised if we knew how near the journey's end we are. When that time comes, we shall rest from our labors and our works will follow on. (Rev. 14:13.) We shall enter into rest. Israel was on the way to an earthly Canaan; we are on the way to a heavenly. They had a long and hard journey before they entered into rest. We enter by tribulation and tears. In the wilderness they had toils, fatigue, drought, and enemies. We have many heartaches and disappointments here. These heartaches and disappointments come oftentimes from the least expected sources.

"For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass." (Deut. 8:7-9.)

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." (Rev. 21:4.) "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever." (Rev. 22:5.)

The earthly Canaan was prepared and bestowed upon the posterity of Abraham. We who have the faith of Abraham are the spiritual Israel. Heaven is prepared for such and will be given to such. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:32.) "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." (James 1:12.) "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither

whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." (Rev. 21:27.)

It is the Christian's duty to invite others to go with him on the journey. There are so many who are not on the way. So many are in the broad way that leads to hell and destruction. It is our bounden duty to rescue as many of them as we possibly can. We do not have to travel far to find these lost souls. Many of them are members of our own families. Many of them are our neighbors. Many are our business associates. Christians will work with others day after day and never mention Christ to them.

The way to heaven is narrow. We cannot enter this holy way if we are going to indulge in all manner of sin. It is a way of holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it. "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The Way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men though fools, shall not err therein." (Isa. 35:8.)

However, this is no discouragement for the sincere person. He can get rid of his sins. "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." (Isa. 1:18.) "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." (Isa. 55:1.)

The Lord certainly has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. The Lord wants all the wicked to turn from his wickedness. "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezek. 33:11.) There is no sadder thing under heaven than the death of the wicked.

Christians do not want to go to heaven alone. They want others to go with them. The Christian really appreciates salvation. He knows that others will if he can get them to be

saved. He wants others to share his joy with him. Someone has said that Christians "practically invite them by amiableness and disposition, sweetness of temper, righteousness of life, and thus allure them by the excellencies they manifest, and constrain them to glorify our Father who is in heaven."

In inviting others to be saved the Christian has two good reasons he can give: first, he can tell others how much good other Christians will do them; second, he can tell them that the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel. All of us have the power to do good or evil. How important that we exert that power in the right way! What greater good can we do than to instruct sinners in the right ways of the Lord? And folks need so much encouragement. The spiritual influence of a real Christian is beyond computation.

---

6

## **Congregational Autonomy**

**T**HERE is nothing more plainly taught in the New Testament than congregational autonomy. Each congregation is independent of every other congregation. The word "autonomous" means independent in government; self-government; without outside control. Each congregation governs itself. Of course each congregation and each member of the congregation is under the control of Christ. But they are not governed by outside control. No congregation has control over another congregation.

There is nothing in the New Testament larger than the congregation. There is a growing evil among us. Congregations and elders and preachers are wanting to "rule" other congregations other than their own congregations. Of course, preachers are rulers in no sense of the word, but many of them usurp powers that do not belong to them. A preacher is just another member, working under the direction and supervision of the

elders. Many times the elders are working under the direction and supervision of the preacher! Some preachers are wont to talk about "taking charge" of the church. Such preachers need some one to "take charge" of them.

Some elders do not seemingly know that they are elders over but one congregation. Elders who are that ignorant are not qualified elders. If they know better, but try to rule other congregations, they are autocrats and ought to be deposed. Such arrogant elders will ruin the congregations. God never meant for elders to lord it over his heritage.

We have congregations in our day that think because they sent the preacher to some new field, and that he succeeded in establishing a congregation there, they automatically become the elders and rulers of that congregation. Such is not the case. That is a new congregation. The preacher should teach them and stay with them until they are able to stand by themselves. Of course all congregations and real Christians would stand by to aid in whatsoever capacity they might serve, but not to step in and run that congregation.

Congregations will talk about their "mission points," and these "points" continue to be "mission points" year after year. This is the language of Ashdod. It is not the language of the New Testament. In the early days of the church the brethren established churches, not "mission points." We need to get this lesson, and then go out and establish churches and throw them on their own responsibility. In other words, it seems to this writer that we ought to use more common sense in the work of the Lord. This thing of being taken care of by others is a growing evil in our national government, and it seems to me it is creeping into the church. What right has one congregation to select the preachers and plan the work for another congregation? They have absolutely no scriptural right. Congregations and elders which arrogate to themselves such powers should be set in their right places.

In our family life we do not carry our children about after they have become able to walk. We throw them on their own resources. We allow them to develop some initiative and re-

sponsibility of their own. And when our children are gone out from the old roost and established homes of their own, the wise parent does not try to run that home in addition to his own. To do so is inviting trouble. The loving parent stands by to help. His married children know that the parent is ready and anxious to help in any way that he can. It seems to me that is about the relationship that ought to exist among congregations. The new congregation knows that the old congregation stands by ready to help in an advisory capacity or in any other way that it might be able to serve the new congregation and the cause of Christ.

Paul and other gospel preachers carried the gospel to Europe. The first stop was at Philippi. There a strong congregation was established. In about a dozen years Paul wrote them a letter. How does he begin that letter? Listen: "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are in Phillipi, with the bishops and deacons." (Phil. 1:1.) In a few years this congregation had bishops and deacons. They grew them fast in those days. Now we have congregations that are as old as this congregation was when Paul wrote to it, and they are still "tied to their mother's apron strings." Brethren, there is something wrong. Maybe we start congregations with the impression that they must look to the "mother church" for their directions and sustenance. These are wrong conceptions. These are false impressions. We should teach them along with other things that they are a separate unit of the body of Christ. They are a separate congregation, and that their welfare is very largely in their own hands. Very little real progress will be made until they have this conception clearly established in their own minds. While they look to others for their help, not much real progress can be made.

From Philippi, Paul and his companions went to Thessalonica. There another congregation was established. In just a very little while Paul wrote them a letter. It was just a year or two. How does he address this letter? Hear it: "Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thes-

salonians which is in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thess. 1:1.) Poor Paul! He thought there was a church in Thessalonica. It did not occur to him that this was just a "mission point" of Philippi. Yes, the brethren at Philippi had "sent once and again" unto Paul's necessities while he was at Thessalonica, but the Philippian brethren did not get the idea that was "their church" at Thessalonica, and that they would have to look after it and run their affairs for years afterward. No, it was not done that way in those days, and it should not be done that way in these days. The brethren had no strings on the congregation at Thessalonica just because they had been instrumental in helping Paul preach the gospel there. It was just an opportunity of doing good, and the brethren seized upon it. "Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account." (Phil. 4:15-17.)

Paul was very much concerned about the congregation at Thessalonica. "For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain. But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you: therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith: for now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord." (1 Thess. 3:5-8.) That would comfort a gospel preacher! Then he further warns them: "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love, for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves." (1 Thess. 5:12, 13.)

Brethren, let us forget about our "mission points" and go to work in earnest to establish churches after the New Testa-

ment order. Stand by that preacher whom you send until those babes in Christ are able to stand alone. Let them assume the responsibility that belongs to every congregation of the church. Do not meddle in their congregational affairs. Let them run their own business in the Lord, and you run yours.

---

7

## **"Concerning Them Which Are Asleep"**

"BUT I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." (1 Thess. 4:13-18.)

These are precious words to every true believer. They were written by an inspired Christian; they were written to Christians; and they were written about Christians "which are asleep." The very fact that the Lord would write about our dead as being asleep is very comforting. What is sweeter than to know that our loved ones and friends are asleep in Jesus? We may speak of death in a cold and harsh manner, even when Christians are involved in that death, but the Holy Spirit writes "concerning them which are asleep."

You will remember that when Jesus was talking about the death of one of his dear friends here on this earth he said: "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." (John 11:11.) When our loved ones and friends are taking physical rest in sleep, we can awake them out of sleep. When they are asleep in death, God can awake them out of that sleep. Blessed assurance!

God does not want us to be ignorant concerning them which are asleep. He wants us to know something about them. He does not say for us not to sorrow, but he does say, "Sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." What "others" could there be besides Christians? Of course, the "others" are those who are not Christians. The Christian has a different attitude toward death than those who are not Christians. He has hope even in death. What a terrible thing to die without any hope! My kind reader, that is exactly the condition of those who die out of Christ.

Do you recall the little twelve-year-old daughter of Jairus? She was dead. Jesus went to this home where the dreaded monster, Death, had invaded. He went into the house, taking Peter, James, and John, and the parents of the little girl. They all wept and bewailed her. But what did the Master say? "Weep not; she is not dead, 'but sleepeth.'" Of course, they knew she was still in death. Jesus put all out of the room, and then, taking the dead child by the hand, he said: "Maid, arise." And her spirit came again into her. She arose straightway. That is what death is. When the spirit goes out, we are dead. The Lord does not want us to be ignorant concerning this.

There is a resurrection of the dead. When the Christian dies, the ones who are left have suffered a great loss. Death to the Christian is gain. Jesus wept in sympathy at the grave of Lazarus. Thus do we at the graves of our friends. Heathens and others who know nothing of the resurrection make a great show of sorrow at the death of their friends. Christians have a hope. Those who are not Christians have no hope in the resurrection. They are without God and without hope in the



world. What an awful thing to be living without God and without hope! (Eph. 2:12.)

Every Christian believes that Jesus died and rose again. The fundamental facts of the gospel are that Jesus died for our sins; he was buried; and he arose the third day. (1 Cor. 15:1-4.) Jesus was the first fruits from the dead. This shows the promise of the coming harvest when all Christians shall be raised from the dead.

We shall not all sleep. (1 Cor. 15:51.) There will be Christians on this old earth when Jesus comes again. The ones that are alive will not precede the ones who have fallen asleep. They will not go before the ones who have died. They will not hinder the dead. The dead in Christ will arise before any change takes place in the living Christians. The dead will be raised before the change of the living takes place.

The Lord is now in heaven. When he comes, he will come from heaven. He will come with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. This shout is the shout to Christians. They will come from the tombs when this shout is given. Jesus said: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (John 5:28, 29.)

H. Leo Boles wrote: "The Lord Jesus Christ will utter his voice, will call from above to his sleeping people, and they shall hear and obey the call and come forth in incorruptible and glorious bodies. At his command they shall rise. Round this planet shall that mighty shout ring, penetrating every grave, piercing even the ocean's depth, and it will stir into life and call out into the eternal fellowship of the Lord the whole vast host of the righteous dead."

False teachers have taught much falsehood concerning "the dead in Christ shall rise first." It simply means that the living Christians shall not precede the ones who have fallen asleep in Christ. Then the ones who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air.

You will please note that our meeting the Lord is to be in the air. If Jesus ever walks on this earth again, the Scriptures are silent concerning it. He is not coming to this earth to reign here. Jesus is preparing a place to receive his faithful ones.

"And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and -the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. 15:49-58.)

Are you ready for the change?

---

8

## **Divine Healing**

**I**N our day we hear much about so-called "divine healing." The Lord is not healing miraculously today. Many of our ills are imaginary. People who are of a nervous temperament, and people who are almost totally ignorant of the word of God, make a rich field for the modern fakir who goes under the high-sounding title of a "divine healer." He is not a healer, and he

has nothing akin to divinity. He is a deceiver of the first water. It seems that folks will take to deception more quickly than they will to the truth.

So many miss entirely the purpose of the miraculous as performed by the inspired men. God enabled the apostles and inspired men to perform the miraculous to confirm the word. The word of God has been confirmed, and it needs no further confirmation.

"And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." (Mark 16:17-20.)

It does seem that folks with any powers of discrimination in the use of language would have no trouble with this simple passage. He was talking to the eleven. (Verse 14.) He told them the "signs" would "follow" the ones that believe, and then the inspired record says that "they" went forth and preached, the Lord working with "them," confirming the word with "signs."

We can follow these holy apostles and find them preaching the word, and the Lord confirming their preaching with the "signs." We can turn to the sixteenth chapter of Acts and see Paul casting a devil out of a young woman. Then we follow him to the island of Melita, and a venomous serpent bites him, but no ill effects follow. (Acts 28:1-5.) Then he laid hands on Publius and cured him of fever and a bloody flux. (Acts 28:8.) On Pentecost all the apostles spoke with tongues. (Acts 2:1-4.) It is no wonder we read in Hebrews: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and

gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?" (Heb. 2:3, 4.) Yes, God confirmed his word by enabling the apostles to perform "miracles" and signs. How many times does God have to confirm his word? It is not much wonder that our modern "miracle workers" have such little respect for plain statements in the word of God. This miraculous power was given in a degree to a few of the early Christians on whom Paul and the other apostles laid their hands. (Acts 8:14-17; 19:1-6.) We have no record of this power passing to a third party. These things belong to the early age, the miraculous age, of the church. They were not to continue. They passed away after there was no further reason for the miraculous. The Bible gives no proof that they were to continue until the end of time. The so-called "divine healers" of our day cannot duplicate the miraculous. The fact of the case is these "healers" are grossly and appallingly ignorant of the Bible.

Paul plainly says: "But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." (1 Cor. 13:10.) It does not bother these "healers" to flatly contradict the word of God. However, they will balk at drinking deadly poison!

The apostles healed but few — just enough to confirm the word. One of Paul's friends, Epaphroditus, "was sick nigh unto death." He was sick. (Phil. 2:25-30.) Even the great apostle Paul himself had bodily afflictions. Did the Lord heal him? No! Paul earnestly prayed that his bodily affliction might be removed. Did the Lord remove it? No! (2 Cor. 12:1-10.) These modern "healers" get around the hard cases by saying the afflicted ones lack faith. Do you suppose that was Paul's trouble? Yes, Paul had infirmities, and gloried in them. (2 Cor. 11:30.)

Peter and Paul became old. (John 21:16-19; Phile. verse 9.) Why? Why not continue in the strength of young manhood?

Paul had another very good friend, and he had to leave him at Miletum sick. (2 Tim. 4:20.) Can you imagine one of these modern "healers" doing such a thing as that? Yes, they do do it, but keep that from their dupes. When they get sick, they go to the physicians and the hospitals just like other peo-

ple do. Why? They know that Jesus told the truth when he said: "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." (Matt. 9:12.) While they are "whole" they can go out and fool a lot of sick people, and then when they themselves get sick they will have money to pay the doctor and the hospital bill. When they get better, they can move to another town and fool some more people who ought to know better, and who would know better if they would study the Bible and rightly divide it and rightly apply it. Do not forget that Jesus Christ said that sick people need a physician. He knows more about it than all the fakirs put together.

Job accused his "comforters" as being forgers of lies and physicians of no value, but he did not say that all physicians are of no value. (Job 13:4.) The very fact that he would say these "comforters" were physicians of no value would be saying that some physicians are of value.

Jeremiah talks about good physicians. "Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" (Jer. 8:22.)

One of the outstanding inspired writers of the New Testament was a doctor. Paul called him "the beloved physician." (Col. 4:14.) God had this "beloved physician" to write two books (Acts and Luke) of the New Testament. Our 'modern "healers" do not have much time for "beloved physicians" (except when they get sick!).

One of the most touching lessons in the New Testament is that of the good Samaritan. (Luke 10:25-37.) Do not forget that Jesus is the author of this. He gives his hearty approval to what the Samaritan did. What did he do? He bound up his wounds, poured in the oil and the wine. Yes, he rendered first aid and used medicine. He knew what that man needed. It did good too. When we are really sick, we need the doctor and some medicine that will help nature bring back a normal condition.

Timothy was not very well. He had some stomach ailments. The water in the East was not very good. Paul advised him to take a little wine for his stomach's sake. (1 Tim. 5:23.)

Paul did not miraculously cure him, but told him of some medicine that would do good. Of course, Paul knew that miracles were to confirm the word of God upon special occasions, and not merely for the sake of curing someone of bodily ailments.

It is a sin not to take good care of the body. Many of our illnesses are caused because we violate the rules of health plainly laid down in the Book of God. May God help us to study and rightly apply his word.

## **Elders —When? Why? Who? How?**

**O**NE of the greatest drawbacks to the progress of New Testament Christianity today is the lack of efficient leadership. God placed this leadership in a qualified eldership. Throughout my section of the country half of the congregations are without elders, and about half of the other half are without competent elders. This is a deplorable condition. My brethren, such things ought not so to be.

It ought not to be long after the establishment of a congregation until there would be men who are qualified for elders. In the early days of the church this was so. I see no reason why it should not be so today. When a congregation has no elders, there is something lacking. Paul wrote: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." (Tit. 1:5.) One of the things that was wanting was elders. Evidently Paul thought there would be some there to "ordain." He went right ahead, giving the qualifications of the men who were to be thus "ordained." I suppose it would follow that Titus was to follow these instructions relative to his "ordaining?" I take it that they were given to be followed. But the point I am wanting us to see

is that there were men there qualified to be ordained. I see no reason why that same condition should not obtain among churches today. Maybe we have not been emphasizing the fact that congregations should have elders. Maybe we have not laid enough stress on this. Maybe we do not encourage the brethren sufficiently to qualify for leadership. Maybe we encourage young men to preach the gospel, but do not encourage brethren to fit themselves to become scriptural elders. Maybe too many preachers are usurping the work of elders.

After Paul and Barnabas left Antioch on their first missionary tour, they visited Paphos, Perga, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. Then they turned around and revisited the churches that had been established. In Acts 14:22, 23 we have this very significant language: "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed." The churches at Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium could not have been more than about two years old, and perhaps not more than one year old. But they had men ready and qualified to be ordained to the eldership.

There is one thing that most of us are agreed on, and that is that we need elders. Yes, we need leadership. The elders are the rulers of the congregation. They do not rule more than one congregation. Let us not destroy the autonomy of the congregations. Perhaps we have left wrong impressions in talking about the government of the congregations. The elders are the rulers. The congregation does not rule itself, but it is ruled by the elders (and this does not mean the preachers!) "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." (Heb. 13:17.) "Let

the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine." (1 Tim. 5:17.)

Inspiration was not a qualification of elders. No doubt some of them in the early days of the church were inspired, but not all of them by any means. And when the Holy Spirit gave the qualifications for elders (1 Tim. 3 and Tit. 1), inspiration was not one of the qualifications. About thirty qualifications are given by the Holy Ghost. When we follow these directions in ordaining elders, then we have elders made such by the Holy Spirit. When we ignore these directions, our "elders" have not been made by the Holy Ghost. Men and women are made Christians by obeying the teaching of the Holy Spirit as given in the New Testament. Men are made elders by following the teaching of the Holy Spirit as given in the New Testament governing the qualifications and ordaining of these important officers.

The elders are to be chosen from the older and experienced men of the church. They are family men. With a few exceptions, the qualifications for elders are no higher than the qualifications for being a good Christian man. H. Leo Boles has very aptly said: "Another duty to self is that he must rule well his own house. Elders are chosen from the older men, from men who have families and who have had the experience of training children. If they have trained children to love the Lord, and these children have come into the church through the teachings and training of father, then father is better prepared to train others in the service of God. Truly, 'he; who knows not how to govern his own family cannot govern a people.' The experience of building a home and rearing children in the service of God helps to qualify an elder for the duties of that position. If one has built a home and reared a family in the admonition of the Lord, that one may be better fitted to enter upon the larger field of service by taking the



oversight with others of the church." ("The Eldership of the Churches of Christ," pages 25, 26.)

How are elders appointed? One way not to do it is to vote them in! The New Testament church is not ruled by majority vote. If there is any method given in the New Testament for appointing elders, I have failed to find it. Some things are left to common sense. God tells us to go and preach the gospel to every creature. He did not tell us to go by boat, train, bus, or plane. Had he told us how to go, that would become a part of the command. God tells us to ordain elders in every church. He does not tell us the exact procedure to follow in this ordaining. We read that Paul and Barnabas appointed them elders in every church. Titus was told to ordain elders in every church. It is not revealed just how he did this. Any way or method that would not violate a scriptural principle would fill the bill. It seems to me that among Christians there would be no room for any friction along this or any other scriptural work. We need elders. Let us give the significance to this important work that the New Testament does. There is no grander way of serving God today than to be a scriptural elder. Let preachers and all others encourage godly men to thus qualify themselves for this sacred duty, and then may God help us all to obey them that have the rule over us and submit ourselves to them.

---

10

## Entertaining the Preacher

**F**OR more than thirty years I have been a traveling evangelist. I have never done located work. Much of my time has been spent away from home. With very few exceptions, I have no warmer friends in the brotherhood than those with whom I have made my home during a series of meetings. It seems that one can get closer to brethren when he meets them

in their homes and lives with them. Time after time I have returned to the same home to make my home while in a meeting. I have never stayed in a hotel during a meeting. This seems to indicate that hospitality has not gone from among the brethren.

In my humble judgment, brethren are missing something when they do not open up their homes to the preacher. If he is the kind of man that every gospel preacher ought to be, the association with him intimately in the home will do you and your family good. Your association and hospitality will do the preacher good. There are many homes in the brotherhood in which a gospel preacher has never eaten a meal. These homes are missing something. Too many sisters become unduly alarmed because the preacher is coming. Maybe a few do not become sufficiently "alarmed"! A preacher is simply a Christian man. Most of them come from humble homes and know life from the viewpoint of the common man. They do not expect lavish accommodations. Their needs and wants are simple.

For about twenty years I was on the staff of the old Christian Leader when it was published by the late F. L. Rowe. About twenty years ago I wrote an article for that paper under the above caption. In this sermon I want to reproduce some of those thoughts and add a few others, hoping that all the readers may benefit thereby. It has been my custom through many years to make inquiry of the brethren sometime before my coming for a meeting where I am to make my home while in the meeting. Early in my preaching career I found that to be a good custom. Oftentimes twenty and thirty years ago if this were not done the gospel preacher would arrive and no provision had been made relative to a place for him to make his headquarters while in the meeting. Sometimes this was embarrassing for the preacher and also for the brethren. I believe that we should not be slothful in business. (Rom. 12:11.) Preaching the gospel is the greatest business in the world. Nothing should hinder this business. It is not conducive to the preacher's health and happiness to be shunted from place

to place night after night. How much better to provide a comfortable stopping place for him? What could be possibly wrong with deciding on this even before the preacher comes? What could be wrong in letting him know where this home would be? I know when I leave home I like for my loved ones at home to know how they would be able to reach me. One never knows when an emergency may arise at home. Brethren, do not forget the Golden Rule applies even to preachers.

When Christ sent out the apostles, among other things he said this: "And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence." (Matt. 10:11.) I am sure the Lord has some good reasons for that instruction. That is a good rule yet. That is the way I have been doing for nearly a third of a century. I have been "abiding" until I "went thence."

A few preachers may be unreasonable in their demands. This would be the exception and not the rule. My custom through the years has been to ask the brethren to provide me with a room if possible where I can have some privacy. No preacher can do his best unless he has time and place to read, meditate, rest, study, and pray. This cannot be accomplished to good advantage in the family circle, especially if there should be a household of children. This does not mean that the preacher is selfish and does not want to associate with the family. He will be with them much, but he must attend to his work. He must put the kingdom first. If a preacher is as busy as he ought to be, he will have much work to do. His correspondence is heavy.

However, if all the brethren are poor and cannot give the preacher this kind of home, the gospel preacher will go into the poorest of homes and there adapt himself to his environment. "The poor have the gospel preached to them." Most of my time has been spent with the common people. I have been in all kinds of homes. My experience has not been peculiar to me. It is the common experience of the traveling preacher.

The preacher should be made as comfortable as possible. My preaching has been done mostly in the North. Ordinarily we have cold winters. Many times my work has been crippled because of cold rooms. Oftentimes these conditions are uncalled for. Maybe I "sweat" more than many preachers when I preach; but when one is hot and then goes to a cold room and a cold bed, it is dangerous to health. This body is a precious something. We should take care of it.

Here is a wonderful passage from the Old Testament on "entertaining the preacher"; let me read it: "And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread. And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither. And it fell on a day, that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber, and lay there." (2 Kings 4:8-11.) Now, that was the part of the "great woman." Did the man of God appreciate such hospitality? Listen: "And he said to Gehazi his servant, Call this Shunammite. And when he had called her, she stood before him. And he said unto him, Say now unto her, Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what is to be done for thee? wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? And she answered, I dwell among mine own people." (2 Kings 4:12, 13.)

There it is, both sides! You will please note that God calls this woman a "great woman." Thank God, the world is yet full of just such women. This woman could see what a man of God needed in his travels. It never occurred to her to let the other "sisters" take care of him and feed him. She wanted the blessing that goes with such noble deeds. She wanted to minister to him personally. She constrained him to eat bread. There are some sisters who have never done much of such "constraining." Please note further that this "great woman"

was impressed with the fact that Elisha was "an holy man of God." That is exactly what every true gospel preacher is. He is "an holy man of God." Had Elisha been an unprincipled hypocrite, I have an idea this "great woman" would not have opened up her heart and her home to him. The cause of Christ has been hurt by some ungodly preachers. I am not talking about entertaining them. They are not worthy of such hospitality.

This "great woman" thought it would be nice if they could furnish this man of God a little chamber. You know a gospel preacher is not too big for "a little chamber"!

This little chamber does not have to be luxurious and luxuriously furnished. This "great woman" knew the essentials. She knew he would need a bed. You know a preacher has the most exacting work in the world. He gets mentally and physically tired. How sweet when the strenuous labor of the day and evening are over to lie down upon a comfortable bed! Why the table or stand? The preacher might want to write to his wife! He might want to write out his sermon on entertaining the preacher! Yes, this "great woman" knew he would need a stool and a light.

Thank God for such women. And thank God for preachers who have enough Christianity in their souls to appreciate just such foresight and kindness. I am fearfully afraid that oftentimes we are not as appreciative of acts of kindness and hospitality as we should be.

This writer has been entertained in hundreds of homes. Almost without exception he has been shown every kindness and courtesy. Many will read these lines who have shown me and others hospitality. May God richly bless you. To those who have never entertained preachers and other Christians, may I urge upon you to do so. "Distributing to the necessity of saints, given to hospitality." (Rom. 12:13.) "Use hospitality one to another without grudging." (1 Pet. 4:9.)

11

**"Except"**

**T**HE word "except" occupies a prominent place in God's word. We want to call attention to a few plain passages in which we have the word. In these passages the word means "unless."

Jesus said: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5.) There is just no other way into the kingdom of God. Unless a man is born twice he is not in the kingdom, and furthermore he cannot get into it until he is born again. We are in the human family, and we all entered it by a physical birth. We were first begotten and then brought forth. It would be the height of silliness to talk about becoming members of the human family in any other way. Even preachers don't do that! They know that men get into the human family by a physical birth. They are begotten by father and brought forth of mother.

Jesus used this to teach us a lesson of spiritual significance. We are begotten and then brought forth from the waters of baptism. It is easy to learn how folks are begotten. Just about three simple verses from the word of God make this clear. We read in James 1:18: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures." Here we are told that we are begotten by the word of truth. There is nothing mysterious about this. Then in the next book of the New Testament we have this plain declaration: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." (1 Pet. 1:23.) Here it says we are born by the word of God. Then we go to 1 Cor. 4:15, and here we hear the inspired Paul say: "I have begotten you through the gospel." God's way of begetting us is by having the gospel preached to us. When we receive this message of truth into

good and honest hearts we are being begotten by the gospel. Then when we continue and are buried by baptism and brought forth from the tomb of baptism we have been born again. We have been born of the Spirit and of water.

Here is another "except." Jesus is also the author of this one. "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 5:20.)

We had better look into this "except." Here is something that will keep us out of the kingdom of heaven. Of what did the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees consist? Their righteousness was artificial. It was not real. They pretended to be very righteous, but they were hypocrites. Our righteousness must be real and sincere. Sham righteousness will keep us out of the kingdom of heaven. It must be true righteousness. There is too much formality in the so-called religious world, and it even creeps into the church. You know the Pharisees made long prayers, and then would devour widow's houses. Ours must be genuine and from the heart.

But now for another "except" from the Lord. The disciples were wanting to know who was the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. This has always troubled men. Methinks it still troubles many. They went to Jesus with the problem. He called a little child unto him. He set this child in the midst, and then he said: "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 18:1-4.)

Too many are seeking greatness, but they are not seeking the true greatness of becoming humble as a little child. The lack of this childlike humility will keep many out of the kingdom. A little child is the very personification of humility. He is teachable. It is not hard to teach children. They are ready to listen. They are forgiving. They know not what it means to hold malice and grudges. We must be like children

in the admirable traits. And except we are this way we are just as near the kingdom as we ever shall be.

In John 6:53 we have a much misunderstood "except." Here Jesus says: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." Ever since I can remember I have heard brethren, especially when waiting on the Lord's table, use this verse and make application of it to the bread and cup. The sixty-third verse of this same chapter would show this to be a wrong application. The statement in this verse is: "The flesh profiteth nothing." When we hear the gospel of Christ and obey it we are eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ. Without obedience to him we are not going to benefit by his death and resurrection. We are children of God and heirs of God when we are obedient children. (Rom. 8:16, 17.)

In John 15:4 we have another important "except" from the Son of God. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." We know that when a branch is severed from the vine it withers and dies. No fruit will ever be found on this dead branch. Christians who do not abide in Christ wither and die. They bear no fruit. Christ is the vine, and each Christian is an individual branch. Fruit is found on branches.

Some sectarians would tell us that denominational churches are the "branches." Christ was not talking to denominations nor of denominations. He was teaching his disciples. He says they are the branches. In the sixth verse he says that men are the branches. All the branches that the New Testament church has are the members of the church. They bear fruit.

Jesus gave another "except" in Matt. 19:9. Here he is laying down his law for divorce. He gives us to understand there is no cause for divorce except it be for fornication. He did make this exception. It might be well for us to remember that Matthew wrote his narrative several years after the New Testament church had its beginning. Here the Holy Spirit is bringing to Matthew's remembrance what the Lord had taught on this important question. He was not bringing to



his remembrance what Moses had taught. In fact, this is not the law of Moses on divorce, but it is the law of Christ. You know it is a dangerous thing not to receive what Christ said on any subject. "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." (Acts 3:22, 23.) Now let us hear what that "prophet" said on divorce and remarriage: "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement; but I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery." (Matt. 5:31, 32.) That "prophet" said that one could not put away his wife except for fornication. He further said that when one marries one who has thus been put away he commits adultery. Let us hear him.

---

12

## Husbands and Wives

**W**E are living in an age of much domestic unhappiness. Homes are being broken every day. This is all caused by sin. In this study we want to direct your attention to some things that God has said to husbands and wives, especially to Christian husbands and Christian wives. In Eph. 5 we have the recipe for domestic happiness. Let us read, beginning with verse 22 and read through verse 25: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their

own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."

This language was addressed to Christian men and women. Domestic happiness will never be found in a home where this teaching is ignored by either husband or wife. God says the wife is to submit herself unto her own husband as unto the Lord. Christ is the head of the church, and the husband is the head of the wife. Husbands are to love their wives even as Christ loved the church. Christ gave himself for the church. The devoted husband would give himself for his wife. How can there be friction in such a home?

This tie that exists between husband and wife cannot be broken except by adultery upon the part of one or by death. The Bible recognizes no cause for divorce save one. Let us read the law of Christ on divorce. First we read in Matt. 5:31, 32: "It hath been said; Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: but I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery." This is what Christ said about it. That is all I know about it. Jesus plainly says that one cannot put his wife away except she be guilty of adultery. He does imply that she can be put away for this one cause. If she is put away for this, she is an adulteress; and, of course, if a man were to marry such a woman, he would be committing adultery, and every day that he lives with that woman he is living in a state of open adultery before God.

We want to read another statement from Christ along this line. This is found in Matt. 19:8, 9: "Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." Again, in Mark 10:11, 12 we read: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And

if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery." The Lord gave but one exception to this rule, and that is the sin of adultery. There is no other cause for divorce. The Lord did not say that when one is so unfortunate as to have an adulterer or an adulteress for a companion, he could not put him or her away. But even in this case we would want to be sure that we had not caused that one to be an adulterer or adulteress. The home must be held together unless one has become unfaithful to the marriage vows.

In setting up a home, a Christian man or a Christian woman should seek a Christian for a companion. Much domestic unhappiness is caused by a Christian marrying someone who is not a Christian. This is almost inviting trouble. It is hard enough to live the Christian life when both husband and wife are genuine Christians, and it would take the exceptional Christian to remain such when the one closest companion is not a Christian, and maybe even doing what he can against true Christianity. In the natural course of events, children will be born to Christian parents. If one is not a Christian, it will be hard, and in many cases all but impossible, to rear those children to be Christians. Then the children will be lost in hell, and it was all caused by not having Christian parents. Then subsequent generations will be lost because someone back along the line was not a true Christian. It is an awful chance, and a Christian cannot afford to take it.

One common sin of our day is the disposition of married folks not to keep the place where God puts them. God expects that Christian woman to be a keeper at home, to love her husband, and to love her children. Many women are not willing to be keepers at home and to rear a family of godly children. They leave the sphere in which God expects a Christian woman to function. This is a contributing factor to domestic unhappiness. Happiness is found in keeping the commandments of the Lord our God.

A really happy home is where the husband and wife are simple New Testament Christians, and the children are taught

obedience to parents, obedience to God, obedience to teachers. We read in Eph. 6:1-4: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." No home can be happy with disobedient and rebellious children. God says this is not right. Children must obey their parents. They must honor their father and mother. God says it will not be well with us if we do not do that. The children must be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

It is possible for a Christian woman to win her unbelieving husband to the Lord. Many women seem not to know how to do this. If they were to read the first four verses of the third chapter of First Peter every day for a year, they would learn how it can be done. There will be very few failures when this passage is followed. Let us read it: "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

Wives are to be in subjection to their own husbands. If a woman has an unbelieving husband, he is to be won to the truth by observing the manner of life lived by that humble Christian woman. The conversation will be chaste. The Christian woman will adorn herself, but the adornment will be more of the heart than it will be the body.

The great need of America today is more Christian homes. No country is stronger than its homes. No home can be what it ought to be when God is ignored and his word is not studied. The children need to be taught the Bible at mother's knee. If

this were done, there would be very few broken homes and very few broken hearts. There is nothing sweeter this side of heaven than a Christian home. May God help us to make our homes Christian.

---

13

## **"I Am Ready to Preach the Gospel"**

**O**UR text is found in Rom. 1:14-17, and here it is: "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of 'God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

Paul realized the great obligation that was laid upon him to preach the gospel. He realized that he had a debt to pay, and he was not satisfied unless he was paying on that debt. He did not pick out the "soft" places. He knew that all men had souls to save, and that nothing under heaven will save a man's soul except the gospel of Christ. No man that does not realize and appreciate these solemn facts is fit to preach the gospel of Christ.

The gospel is something God wants preached. Among the very last things that Christ said while upon this earth were these words: "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.) The very salvation of the world hangs upon having the gospel preached. Matthew records it this way: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you:

and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28:19, 20.) Luke records it after this fashion: "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke 24:46, 47.)

From these verses we can see that the gospel is something that God wants preached to all men; and, furthermore, it is something that God expects men to believe after it is preached; and if they refuse to believe it, they will be damned. It is no wonder that the inspired Paul appreciated the great responsibility that was his in preaching the gospel. Would to God that all preachers realized the responsibility that is ours.

We have lots of men who are ready to preach, but not enough men who are ready to preach the gospel of Christ. They are ready to preach another gospel, a perverted gospel. We are warned about the perversion of the gospel in Gal. 1:6-10. We must be sure that we are preaching the same things that Paul and the other inspired preachers preached. If we are not, the very curse of heaven rests upon us. When we hear preachers preach, we ought to measure what they preach by the divine measuring rod. We ought to demand of them that they read to us where Paul preached that or some other inspired preacher preached it. If these inspired preachers preached it, it will be no trouble to find it. If it cannot be found, we may rest assured that it was never preached by any inspired preacher of the gospel of Christ.

There are many things being preached in our day that no inspired gospel preacher ever dreamed of. What is the gospel, anyway? We turn to 1 Cor. 15 and there we are told what it is. In verses 3 and 4 Paul says: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." These are the three fundamental facts of the gospel: first, Christ died for our sins; second, he was buried; third, he rose from the dead the third day. There are no better-attested

facts in history than these. A man is a fool who says George Washington never lived. A man is a bigger fool who will say that Jesus Christ did not live, and that he was not crucified, and that he did not rise from the dead the third day. The evidence is indisputable. Paul preached these things. He calls that preaching the gospel. When we preach these well-established facts, we, too, are preaching the gospel.

There are commands to be obeyed in the gospel. One of these commands is to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. In 1 John 3:23 we have this language: "And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment." When the Philippian jailer asked what he must do to be saved, he was commanded to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. (Acts 16:31.) Of course he could not believe until he had heard, so the gospel was preached so he could believe. You know faith comes by hearing the word. (Rom. 10:17; Acts 15:7.)

Another command of the gospel is to repent of our sins. In Acts 17 we have an account of Paul's preaching in Athens. Among other things he preached: "But now [God] commandeth all men every where to repent." (Verse 30.) On the birthday of the church after the gospel had been preached and believed, these believers asked what they must do to be saved. They were told to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. (Acts 2:37, 38.) God wants all men to come to repentance. (2 Pet. 3:9.)

Another command of the gospel is to be baptized. We must be baptized for the remission of sins. (Acts 2:38.) Baptism is a command of God. (Acts 10:48.) In preaching the gospel, if believers are not told to repent and be buried by baptism, the gospel that Paul preached is not being preached.

There are many promises in the gospel to be enjoyed. In fact, by these promises we are made partakers of the divine nature. (1 Pet. 1:4.) One of the great and precious promises of the gospel is the remission of our sins. We are promised the remission of our sins when we are baptized for the remis-

sion of them. Not only are we promised the remission of sins, but we are promised the gift of the Holy Spirit. This does not mean that we will be given the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit, but it does mean that the Holy Spirit abides in every Christian. We are promised eternal life after while. This life here is short and full of care. The faithful Christian is looking forward to the sweet home of the soul. In 1 John 2:25 we read: "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life."

The church is the only organization under heaven that has any right to preach the gospel. The church is the pillar and support of the truth. (1 Tim. 3:15.) Christians count it a happy privilege to have a part in preaching the gospel. Men who devote their lives to the preaching of the gospel must live of the gospel. Other Christians are helping to preach the gospel when they are helping to support faithful preachers of the gospel. Folks will perish without the gospel. The wicked must be warned and Christians must be admonished. We must all know that we must work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. (Phil. 2:12.)

Another effective way of preaching the gospel is by the printed page. Every child of God should be constantly spreading the gospel by an intelligent use of good gospel literature. Many a dear soul has been saved because someone was sufficiently interested in his soul to send him a good gospel paper. We should keep a good supply of religious tracts on hand and use them constantly. They can be inclosed in the letters we write. They can be handed out at every possible opportunity.

In our day one of the great ways of preaching the gospel is by means of the radio. Here we can go into the homes of honest people with the divine message of salvation. We rejoice that that is so. Many precious souls will owe their salvation to the fact that they first heard the true gospel by means of the radio.

And we must not forget that one of the most powerful means of preaching the gospel is by godly living. It is hard to resist the argument of a Christian life. That is an argument



that all can understand. We must let our light so shine before others that they may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven. (Matt. 5:16.) If every Christian will live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, he will not only save himself, but many others. May God help us every one thus to live.

---

## 14

### **John Wesley, The Methodists, And the Bible**

**J**OHN Wesley founded Methodism in 1738. There are many adherents to this faith who are not acquainted with the views and principles of the founder of their faith. We want to note in this sermon some of the views of Wesley.

#### **Names**

Wesley said: "Would to God that all sectarian names were forgotten, and that we, as humble, loving disciples, might sit down at the Master's feet, read his holy word, imbibe his spirit, and transcribe his life into our own."

The position of all Christians and all gospel preachers could not be better expressed relative to all sectarian names. Well did Wesley know that if we would sit down at the Master's feet, read his holy word, and imbibe his spirit that that would be the end of all sectarian names. Sectarian names are not Bible names. We cannot unite upon any sectarian or denominational name, but we can, and should, unite upon the divine name. We need to be humble and loving disciples of the Master, and then we will not want to wear any other name but his.

"And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." (Acts 11:26.) This is a divine name divinely given to the disciples. "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." (Acts 26:28.) This king knew

that if he obeyed the gospel that Paul preached it would make him a Christian. Obeying the gospel makes Christians only. Obeying the truth of the gospel never made anyone anything but a "humble, loving disciple." Obeying the gospel never made anyone a Methodist or any other kind of a sectarian, and obeying the things that are peculiar to Methodism or any other "ism" never made anyone a Christian. "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf." (1 Pet. 4:16.)

### **Congregational Autonomy**

Wesley said: "On the road to Bristol I read over Lord King's account of the primitive church. In spite of the vehement prejudice of my education, I was ready to believe that was a fair and impartial draught; but, if so, it would follow that bishops and presbyters are (essentially) of one order, and that originally every Christian congregation was a church independent of all others."

If Wesley, "in spite of the vehement prejudice of his education," could see that every primitive "congregation was a church independent of all others," it does seem that in our enlightened day, in spite of "vehement prejudice," all preachers ought to see what Wesley so plainly saw. It does not take a very careful study of the New Testament to learn that there is no bigger organization known therein than a congregation of "humble, loving disciples." The congregation with its plurality of elders and deacons is the only "organization" known to the New Testament.

### **Baptism**

Wesley said in his "Notes on the New Testament," in commenting on Rom. 6:4: "We are buried with him — alluding to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion." No wonder Wesley would say this in commenting on Rom. 6:4. This passage says we are "buried with him by baptism into death." It would be pretty hard to say that this alludes to anything else when it is plainly stated that we "are buried with him by

baptism." Of course, the expression, "baptizing by immersion," is not strictly scriptural. That is the same as saying "baptizing by baptizing," or "immersing by immersing." "Baptize" means to immerse; it does not mean to sprinkle or pour. Wesley saw this. I would think that all other Methodist preachers and all other preachers would see the same thing. How could we "see" something that God did not say? He said we are buried by baptism. This we can and must see. God said the same thing in Col. 2:12: "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." God also said: "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." (Heb. 10:22.) This also alludes "to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion"! It does not allude to either "sprinkling" or "pouring." If you want to allude to them, you will have to get outside of the New Testament. "Sprinkling" and "pouring" as substitutes for baptism were introduced hundreds of years after the New Testament was a closed book.

### **The Lord's Supper**

Wesley said: "I also advise the elders to administer to the Supper of the Lord on every Lord's day." Is that the way Methodist preachers today advise the "elders"? Why would Wesley give this advice? Do you suppose this may have had something to do with it? "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts 2:42.) "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight." (Acts 20:7.) What did these "humble, loving disciples" come together for? Do you not suppose they did what they came together to do? Do Methodist Churches today come together upon the first day of the week to break bread? If you were to meet a good old

Methodist on his way to worship on Sunday morning, would he tell you that he was going "to break bread"? The founder of the Methodist Church advised the elders "to administer to the Supper of the Lord every Lord's day." That is good advice. It is not good because Wesley gave it, but it is good because that is the teaching of the New Testament, and that was the practice of every "primitive congregation." That is also the practice in our day of every true congregation of the church of Christ and of every true Christian. Real Christians do not forsake the assembling of themselves together as the manner of some is. (Heb. 10:25.) Also when they come together "to break bread," they give as they have been prospered. "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him." (1 Cor. 16:1, 2.)

### **Instrumental Music in Worship**

Adam Clarke was perhaps the greatest scholar the Methodist Church ever had. In his comments on Amos 6:5 he said: "The late venerable and most eminent divine, the Rev. John Wesley, who was a lover of music and an elegant poet, when asked his opinion of instruments of music being introduced into chapels of the Methodists, said, in his terse and powerful manner: 'I have no objection to instruments of music in our chapels, provided they are neither heard nor seen.'"

Why would these two great Methodist scholars thus go on record? Do you suppose such language as the following had something to do with it? "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." (1 Cor. 14:15.) "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." (Eph. 5:19.) "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." (Col. 3:16.)

No doubt there are millions of honest members of the Methodist Church and other sectarian bodies who do not know that instrumental music was not used in the worship of the early Christians. No doubt there are millions of them that do not know that instrumental music was not introduced into the worship of Christians until the seventh century. No doubt there are thousands of preachers among them who do not know this, but the well-informed ones and the scholars among them do know it. The two eminent scholars, John Wesley and Adam Clarke, knew it, and they were unalterably opposed to the use of any instrumental music in the worship of Christians.

In our day the "humble and loving disciples" of the Master use no instrumental music in their worship. And every loyal preacher of the gospel is just as much opposed to their introduction into divine worship as John Wesley and Adam Clarke ever were. They are thus opposed, not because Wesley, Clarke, and others were, but because the New Testament does not authorize any such practice. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." (1 Pet. 4:11.)

---

## 15

### **Life's Voyage**

**O**UR life can be likened to an ocean voyage. To make a sea voyage safe we must have a good ship. We must be in the ship. Christ built the church. (Matt. 16:18.) He built just one. We read about the beginning of this church in Acts 2. In the last verse of the chapter we are told that the Lord added to the church daily the ones who were being saved. Of course the ones who were being saved were the ones who were obeying the gospel. Thus it has ever been. To be saved we must get into the church. The Lord has not promised to save

men and women out of the church, but he has promised to save the faithful members of the church. (Eph. 5:23; Rev. 2:10; 22:14.) How thankful we ought to be that this ship has been provided for us in which we can make the voyage of life safe and land on the shores of eternity!

A ship could be ever so seaworthy, but if the pilot knew not how to manage it, disaster would follow. The church has a master Pilot. He knows where the dangers are. He knows how to take us through safely. "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.) There is no danger of being lost so long as we stay in the ship that is being piloted by this master Pilot. "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5:23-27.)

A ship at sea must be directed by a good compass. It cannot be guided just by the feelings of the passengers. There must be something that can be depended upon. One passenger would want to sail in one direction and another in some other direction. This would result in ruin and disaster. The Holy Spirit is our compass. He works through the word of God. On the very birthday of the church the apostles were all filled with the Holy Ghost and spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts. 2:4.) They were guided into proper channels. They were not guided by their physical feelings. They preached the gospel of Christ. Folks were caused to see that Christ is the Son of God. When they made inquiry about what they must do to be saved, they were told to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins.

(Acts 2:37, 38.) When we listen to the teaching of these inspired men, we are being directed by the Holy Spirit. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. 3:16, 17.) We got the Bible by holy men of God speaking as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. (2 Pet. 1:21.) May God help us not to try to take the guiding of the church into our own hands, but to be ever willing to be guided by the Holy Spirit through the word.

When a ship is at sea, charts become very important. And these charts must be absolutely accurate. God be thanked that he has given us a reliable map. "Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Ps. 119:104, 105.) What better map do we need? After Paul had preached in Ephesus for three years, he was talking with the elders of that church. Among other things, he said to them: "And now, brethren, 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 which are sanctified." (Acts 20:32.) Paul knew what "map" to give the elders. We need to chart our course by the same map. Everything is plainly marked on this map. "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue." (2 Pet. 1:3.) "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." (James 1:21.)

There are many hard storms on the sea. The cables must be strong to hold the ship in such distress. We need a strong cable to hold us amid the storms of life. The ship must be securely anchored. Our anchor holds. Our anchor is hope. "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." (Rom. 8:24, 25.) "For whatsoever things were written

aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." (Rom. 15:4.) "For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel." (Col. 1:5.) "Which hope we have . . . both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." (Heb. 6:19.)

Under ordinary circumstances sailors are a happy group. Thus it is with the Christian on the voyage of life. He is indeed happy. "Rejoice with them that do rejoice." (Rom. 12:15.) Christians have much cause for rejoicing. They rejoice with one another. "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye." (1 Pet. 4:14.)

Ships have a time set for sailing. If we are not there at sailing time, we "miss the boat." After it has sailed, it is too late to catch it. In Luke 12:16-21 the Lord gives us a parable concerning a certain rich man. His ground brought forth plentifully. He had so much that he did not know what to do with it. He decided to pull down his barns and build greater. There he would bestow all of his fruits and his goods. Then he thought he could take it easy — eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him: "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" He missed the boat. He was not ready at sailing time. So many in our day are so concerned about the things of this life and are not making the preparation for eternity. Jesus said that he must work while it was day. He knew the night was coming, when no man could work. (John 9:4.) We do not know what a day will bring forth. (James 4:14.) Our days are short. (Ps. 90:10.) Why do you tarry? Why do you not arise and be baptized and wash away your sins? (Acts 22:16.)

When taking a voyage we must pay the fare. We cannot get on the old ship of Zion without paying the fare. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16:16.) There is not a person in the New Testament church but what did that very thing to get in. That command came from the Captain.



It is his "boat." On the birthday of the church the inspired apostles told believers that they would have to repent and be baptized. (Acts 2:37, 38.) To land safely on the other side of the ocean of life the passengers (Christians) must continue to obey the rules and regulations. (2 Pet. 1:3-11; Tit. 2:11-13; Rev. 22:14.) Bon voyage!

---

16

## Marrying Out of the Lord

I may not know much about it, but we shall study the subject carefully. At the outset I will say unhesitatingly that the tenor of the teaching of the New Testament is for a child of God to marry a child of God. However, the Lord recognizes marriage where one is a Christian and the other is not.

"Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear." (1 Pet. 3:1, 2.) Of course this is recognition of a case that already exists. The marriage has been contracted. The wife is a Christian; the husband is not. Here the inspired writer is telling that Christian wife how to behave toward her non-Christian husband.

If the New Testament gives specific directions to a Christian man as to whom he should marry, I have failed to find it. There is a specific commandment regarding a Christian widow: "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord." (1 Cor. 7:39.) Here is the direct prohibition placed upon a Christian widow. She has no liberty to marry out of the Lord. It has always looked to me like it would be more dangerous for a young woman to marry out of the Lord. The widow would be a woman with more ma-

ture years and more experience, but the Lord prohibits her marrying out of the Lord.

I want to give a quotation from "Queries and Answers," by Lipscomb and Shepherd:

"I know of no reason why a widow should be restricted in the matter more than maidens. Perhaps it might be considered better for a man to marry out of Christ than for a woman, since he is supposed not to be so much under her control as she is under his; but under the law of Moses the man was prohibited marrying out of the family of God, save when the woman would identify herself with the people of God. The reason given was: lest they draw them into idolatry. Solomon violated the law, and, despite his wisdom and power, his wives drew him into idolatry. Influence is frequently more potent for good or evil than authority and power. The sons of Elimelech and Naomi, when they went down into the land of Moab, married heathen wives — Ruth and Orpah — and it brought Ruth to the service of God. This marriage was when there were none others to marry. The law of Moses is an earthly type of the law of Christ. The inference would be that the children of God could not marry out of the family of God."

"Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement hath a temple of God with idols? for we are a temple of the living God; even as God said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be to you a Father, and ye shall be to me sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor. 6:14-18.)

When a Christian gets himself into any partnership where his actions are bound by the unbeliever, he is unequally yoked. It could be in marriage. It may be in many other connections. There is no union more close than that that exists between a

man and his wife. Certainly we need all the help and encouragement possible in living the Christian life. It would be doubly hard to live this life if our closest companion on earth were not in sympathy with us in this great undertaking. There is no wonder, then, that the tenor of both the Old Testament and the New Testament is for God's people to marry a child of God. Not many are strong enough to remain faithful to God when the one nearest and dearest is pulling in the other direction. And the children of such a union must be considered. To a very great extent we are responsible for the salvation of our children. Parents must rear their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." This is a fearful responsibility. It takes the best there is in both parents to accomplish that great undertaking. It would be all but impossible to do this as the Lord would have it done if one of the parents were not a Christian.

Here is some more sage advice from the same source, Lipscomb and Shepherd:

"The spirit and teaching of the Bible seem to be against it, and yet there is no direct and specific prohibition of it. God recognizes it as a necessity for some to marry in order to live virtuously. If some cannot marry Christian wives, they will marry those not Christians. Then it is their duty to try to convert them to Christ Jesus."

In 1 Cor. 9:5 Paul says: "Have we no right to lead about a wife that is a believer, even as the rest of the apostles, and the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?" This does sound as if Paul thought that a man's wife should be a believer. So think I.

In the rest of my space I want to give some quotations from one of the most able and most godly preachers among us: these observations were written in a letter to me:

"I fear that sometimes we teach what we want the Bible to say on some subjects rather than teach what it says. The law of marriage cannot be determined by the results of marriage. Over a period of forty-seven years I have seen as you have in yours, marriages where both parties were members of

the church and yet they were wrecked. We have seen mixed marriages that resulted in the unbeliever becoming a Christian. We have seen also such marriages become the wreck and ruin of a disciple of the Lord. The mere fact that both are members of the church does not insure that it is a successful marriage. There is no use of anyone, regardless of the position he may take on the subject, to point to marriages in defense of his position.

"The Old Testament has been called upon as a witness in the case. Let us not lose sight of a fact or two. Jehovah selected Abraham, because of his faith and righteous life, to be the progenitor of the Hebrew race (people.) Through him and his seed all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. Had Israel been allowed to have married of other people than the Hebrew, then the bloodline of Abraham would have been corrupted and the seed lineage of Abraham would have been lost and the blessing could not have come through Abraham.

"On the other hand, if the Hebrew had been allowed to have married out of the nation, then idolatry would have led from Jehovah, as it often did. As a protection of the lineage of Abraham, the law of Moses was given as a wall of partition between the Hebrew people, the Jew, and the rest of mankind. This law made him a separate and a distinct people. Abraham was selected and his posterity chosen for one great purpose, and all that was done was to bring that purpose into realization. That one purpose was to give the Messiah, the Christ, to the world. When that was done, the purpose was fulfilled, and the law became useless, and the Jew became just another family or nation among the other families and nations of the world.

"Do not misunderstand me. I have never, and never shall, as long as I am in my right mind, advise any member of the body of Christ to marry outside of the church. It would be far better if none ever did. As long as I am convinced there is no mandate in the New Testament on the subject, that long I shall continue to regard it as a matter of judgment. I fear, Brother Dennis, that there is a tendency to make mandates out

of matters of judgment, and as a result we are becoming more and more a church of parties and a church where so many lines of disfellowship exist that we are but little from isolationism."

I want to close this sermon with some quotations from one of the most godly men I have ever known; he is an elder in the church:

"In the face of all argument, I am compelled to return to the source of all information that pertains to life and godliness. There has always been that danger present of reaching out for something that is not clearly revealed, and of inferring things that are not implied. Just how far and to what extent a type may be carried out in the antitype is sometimes hard for me to say, but I believe that 'whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning,' and not for us to obey. It cannot be denied that all too often Christians are led astray or caused to neglect their duty by marriage to one out of the church, but with my limited observation I cannot say that this is a prolific cause of backsliding. I believe that teaching should be against these marriages, just as teaching should be as a warning against any other present-day evil. But to take the position that it is a sin, I have not been able to bring myself to that place for two reasons as set forth: First, there is not a single Scripture in the New Testament that forbids such marriage. 1 Cor. 7:39 says, 'only in the Lord,' but this is specifically concerning widows. Certainly we cannot take this Scripture and make a general application, else we would be at liberty to take any Scripture we might choose and make a similar use of it. Second, though great minds have applied 2 Cor. 6:14 to the marriage relation, and I have tried to see their position, yet I have been unable to get the connection. In this chapter Paul was not even writing about marriage. He had already discussed that in the seventh chapter of his first letter. The church at Corinth had become corrupt in many things, and one was they had been serving or worshiping idols and eating meats offered to idols. This is spoken of in detail in the first letter, Chapter 10. Verse 17 is in direct connection with verse 14, and it seems to me that the Spirit is teaching

the Corinthians, as well as Christians of today, to come out from among idol worshipers, vain worshipers, false teachers, be separate from them, and touch not their unclean practices, so that God could be a Father unto them (and us), and that we might be sons and daughters of the Father.

"I have no statistics to prove my point, but I believe it to be a safe assertion that more men and women are led astray simply by their own desires after worldly pleasure than by marriage out of the church. The sin is that the Christian is not strong enough to win, just as it is a sin to fall away for any other cause."

## Meetings

**A**LL Christians are interested in gospel meetings. For a third of a century the writer has been going over this country holding meetings. In these meetings the gospel is preached. Sinners are pointed to the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Christians are built up in the most holy faith.

One sad thing is that millions of people on this old earth never attend one of these gospel meetings. Millions have never had an opportunity to attend. Other millions have no desire to attend. They will offer all kinds of excuses (lies) for not attending. They will say they do not have time. However, they have time to do many other things that take much more time. Some will say there are too many hypocrites in the church. I don't know how many there are. I think there are several. I think I have met several. The failings of others can never save us. The time will come when all of these hypocrites will burn in hell with all those who have refused to obey the gospel of Christ. (2 Thess. 1:7-10.) I am sure it will not lessen the torments of hell to know that there are some "Christians" burning also!

Others will not attend a gospel meeting because they don't like the preacher. He makes the way too hard! Others just never got the good habit of going. They will attend a funeral or something of that kind.

In this sermon I want to call attention to a different kind of meeting. It will be a great audience. All the nations of the earth will be there. "And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." (Matt. 25:32.) What a meeting that will be! Here we have trouble to get people to attend a meeting. We won't have this trouble with this meeting. The Lord will see to it that all attend. Millions would like to be excused from this meeting, but no excuses will be had nor offered.

So many times in our meetings here we have empty seats. There will be no empty seats at this meeting. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. 5:10.) We are all going to appear before the judgment seat of Christ. We are going to be judged by what we did while we were in the body. You won't be judged by what I did while I was in the body, but by what you did.

We can make our lying excuses for not doing our duty here, but there will be none to offer at the judgment. We had better spend our time here working out our own salvation. (Phil. 2:12.) We can help one another, but in the last analysis our salvation depends upon our own selves.

We may not like the preacher here that does the preaching, but there will be no choice at the meeting that we are considering. Jesus will be the "preacher." He is not going to be there as a lamb, but as the great judge. We are going to answer to him for what we have done and been.

Gospel preachers here give out their subjects. They tell us what they are going to consider in the sermon. Publicity is given to this subject. We go out and tell our friends what the

preacher is going to talk about. We know what the "subject" is going to be at the judgment. The "preacher" is going to talk about "Faith and Works." That oftentimes here is not a very popular subject. Many don't like to hear much about faith and works. Many think they can be saved by what they call "faith alone." If that doctrine were true the devils could be saved. They believe and tremble. "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" (James 2:14-20.)

That is in the Book now, and it will read just the same way at this meeting after while. We had better line up with its teaching now while it will avail. It takes more than a mere profession to be saved. Hear Jesus: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 7:21.)

Sinners and ungodly church members are going to have some fearful questions to answer. What will the answer be? "And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Pet. 4:18.)

Christians are going to be asked some questions. What did we do with our talents? Did we use the abilities that we had or did we wrap up the talent in a napkin? "And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability." (Matt. 25:15.) We



may not be responsible for the amount of our talent, but we are responsible to use it to the utmost of our ability.

You know in our services today we have a "dismissal." Some brother will "dismiss" the assembly with a prayer. The "preacher" is going to dismiss that great meeting after while. It will be well to know beforehand about that "dismissal." Let us read a few passages that tell about it, and above everything let us think as we read. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works." (Rev. 20:12, 13.)

"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day." (2 Thess. 1:7-10.)

"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt. 25:41.) "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." (Matt. 25:46.)

We know this meeting is coming up. We know that we are going to be there. Great publicity has been given it. We know what the results are going to be. We know how we can enjoy this meeting. Why not make the needed preparation for the meeting? It will make no particular difference just when the meeting "starts" just so we are ready. Lord, help us all to be prepared to meet thee in peace.

## Men and Missions

**I**N our day we are hearing much about carrying the gospel to "every creature." There seems to be much confusion in the minds of some relative to how this work is to be accomplished. It is my judgment there is nothing more plainly taught in the New Testament than how the church is to function to preach the gospel to all. All Christians are back one hundred per cent of every right effort to carry out the farewell message of the Lord Jesus Christ. Some times if some brother will not fall in line with every proposed plan to do this work he is branded as being against missionary work. Many times nothing could be further from the truth.

Nearly thirty years ago the lamented H. H. Adamson wrote along this line. I take the liberty to quote a few paragraphs from him. It makes good reading in these days. These sane words appeared in the columns of the Christian Leader, August 28, 1923:

"In Mark 16:16 the great mission of twelve new missionaries is set forth. Their mission began at the hub of the earth and extended to the rim of the world. Yea, 'their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.'

"These were 'called and sent' men. A missionary is a simple man who is sent upon a mission. These men stood as peers and were without rivals in this greatest message that was ever entrusted to mortal man. So true were they to their trust, and so thoroughly did they do their work, that Paul said: 'The gospel was preached to every creature under heaven.' (Col. 1:23.)

"But in a word, I only wish to say here that the gospel was preached, churches were founded, and souls were saved. In process of time the apostles all died and left these many congregations to carry on the work of the Lord. That they continued

to carry on this work I do not doubt, for the church itself became God's great missionary, and the world became the great mission field.

"The real question of anything is that part which can be brought right down home and applied to ourselves. Listen! How did the local congregations in New Testament times carry on missionary work?

"I think we will all admit that they did it the right way, and consequently they did it the best way. If we can learn what that way was, we can be sure we are on safe ground when we walk in their steps. This brings us back to our text. Paul said the church must communicate to the worker their good things. (Gal. 6:6.) In Phil. 4:15 Paul says the Philippians communicated once and again to him. But still the question comes up, How did they do it?

"I must be brief here and kindly ask you to read the Scriptures mentioned for yourselves. First — The local congregation, having qualified men, separated, recommended, and then sent them out. (Acts 11:22; 13:1-4; 15:40.)

"Second — The missionaries went, worked, and then returned and reported to the congregation that sent them. (Acts 14:27.)

"Third — The local congregation of which the missionary was a member, and from which he was sent, looked after his moral conduct, and held him to give account. (Acts 11:1-18; 15:1-29.)

"Fourth — The local congregation communicated directly with the missionary. Not only did the congregation to which the missionary belonged, but also other congregations, contributed directly to his support. (Phil. 4:15-18.)

"The New Testament missionaries received support at times from individuals, but especially did they receive help from three sources clear and distinct. First — The church that sent them out. (1 Cor. 9:7, 14.) Second — From the territory where he worked. (1 Cor. 9:11; Acts 28:7-10.) Third — From other congregations. (2 Cor. 11:7-9; Phil. 4:14-18.)

"This plan was a success, as we can see from results already stated. How simple, how plain, and how direct, compared with the complicated machinery of human, handmade societies of the present day.

"In a word, the local congregation, with its bishops and deacons, is the only divine, God-given, heaven authorized missionary society in the world. In and through this divine society God can be glorified, Christ can be honored, the gospel can be preached, and sinners can be saved. What more do we want?

"I stand squarely with both feet upon this divine missionary society, and indorse no other, regardless of its name, its make, its boast, or its brand. With me it is legal tender. With me it is good enough."

These are words of wisdom done up in a small package! The italics in the above quotations are not mine. There is plenty of room on this divine platform for every man who is walking in the old paths "to stand squarely with both feet." Indeed what more do we need than the local congregation with its elders and deacons? This plan was a success. It enabled the church to preach the gospel to the world in thirty years. We could preach the same gospel to the world of our day in less than thirty years if we would all be satisfied with this plan, and then work the plan. There is no complicated machinery in this to have to keep oiled and greased. Maybe in this "mechanical age" in which we are living there is not enough "machinery" about this to appeal to all, but the very simplicity of it appeals to those who want to do Bible things in Bible ways.

Adamson just gave us citations of Scriptures without quoting them. It will help a lot if we turn and read them.

"Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account." (Phil:4:15-17.)

Much of the talk and writing that we read and hear today is "concerning giving and receiving." It appears to me that this one quotation will take care of that. Paul was doing the preaching, and brethren were contributing directly to him. (I used the italics this time!) Of course, Paul was preaching the gospel, starting congregations. He was not even starting "mission points." He was starting churches. Had he wanted to start a lot of other things that are not even mentioned in the Scriptures these contributions sent directly to him might not have been sufficient. Had the machinery been more complicated it might have taken more "oil," but just to get the gospel to the unsaved seemed to be about all that Paul and these churches were interested in. Maybe if we would lower our sights a little we could comprehend this simple plan, and would not need to take up so much space and time trying to defend some other plan and something else. "Preach the word."

## No Room for Christ

**T**HE night Jesus was born there was no room for his mother in the inn. The good places were all taken. He was crowded out. "And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn." (Luke 2:7.) Heaven came close to that inn that night, but the owner missed it. He did not make room for the Christ. Had he known, he would have made room. Heaven comes near to us all today, but so many miss it. They do not have room for the Christ. Other things crowd him out.

Our modern hotels have precious little room for Christ. They have room for about everything else. They can have room for all kinds of conventions, dances, and things of that nature, but not much for Christ.

Christ is about crowded out of our modern cities. God was crowded out of ancient Sodom and Gomorrah. When Christ and God are crowded out of a city, that city is doomed. It is not much wonder that so many cities of our day are in ruins. They have fallen. Christ has been crowded out. Here is what we find in our modern cities: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Gal. 5:19-21.) Our cities are pretty much given over to the works of the flesh. The saloons, dance halls, theatres, skating rinks, pool parlors, etc., are full to running over. And the houses of worship are empty, especially on Sunday nights and prayer-meeting nights. But the show goes on! If you cannot get in for the first performance, maybe you can make it for the second.

And fornication and adultery are running rampant, and the divorce courts are full. Broken homes are common. All kinds of uncleanness run wild. Murders and drunkenness are common. But God's law stands. "They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Will America wake up before it is too late? It may be too late now.

Christ is crowded out of business. The devil has folks believing that the Golden Rule is not a good business rule. It is the best the world has ever known. "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." (Matt. 7:12.) This is the real foundation upon which to build. What a glorious thing it would be if all men would do unto others as they would have others do unto them!

There is so much dishonesty in the business world. Folks are driving a "sharp" deal. "Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men." (2 Cor. 8:21.) We may be dishonest with our fellow man and

he may never be the wiser, but God knows. We should be scrupulously honest in the sight of men and in the sight of God. Do not crowd Christ out of your business transactions. If you have to crowd him out, there is something wrong with the business. "And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing." (1 Thess. 4:11, 12.) It is no shame and disgrace to work with our hands. Jesus did it. He worked at the carpenter's bench. "An honest man's the noblest work of God."

Christ is crowded out of the governments of earth. We are talking and longing for peace. There will be no lasting peace while the world stands unless men return to the Prince of Peace. The governments of earth are looking in the wrong direction for peace. They ought to look to Christ. Peace will not be established among the nations of earth by great navies and armies. Peace will come between and among nations when they are willing to be guided in their relationships one with the other by the principles of Christ. Here is some good reading: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." (Isa. 9:6, 7.) "And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." (Isa. 2:4.)

Brethren, in the mad frenzy of carnal warfare let us not forget that we are serving the Prince of Peace. The nature of the kingdom of heaven is peaceful. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke 2:14.)

It is well to think and talk of peace all the time, and not just the last month of December! "Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." (Matt. 26:52.) Lord, hasten the day when men shall put up the sword. "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." (Matt. 5:9.)

Christ is crowded out of the modern home. How many homes do you know where Bible reading and prayer are regularly practiced? How much do we talk to our children about the Christ and his church? Many children could name a dozen movie stars who could not name the apostles or the books of the New Testament. This will go for their dads and mothers too! And then we wonder why there is war and bloodshed and every evil thing under the sun. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Eph. 6:1-4.) "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Prov. 22:6.)

And Christ is crowded out of our institutions of learning. This begins in the primary schools and goes on through the universities of our land and other lands. No room for Christ! Plenty of room for infidels, atheists, agnostics, higher critics, dancing, card playing, games of all kinds, but no room for Christ. Lord, have mercy on a wicked and adulterous generation.

Christ is crowded out of the so-called "churches." People do not want the real Christ. They do not want him when he says: "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me; but in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Matt. 15:7-9.) Again: "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted



up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." (Matt. 15:13, 14.) I tell you, my friends, these human institutions shall be rooted up. Our Lord so said. "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you." (1 Cor. 11:2.) How jealously we ought to keep the ordinances! We must not change them in the least. God had them delivered just the way he wants us to keep them.

---

20

## No Room for the Widow and Orphan

**T**HE time has come in many quarters when one speaks of preaching the gospel that the minds of many think of a human missionary society. It never occurs to them that the good Lord made ample provision to have the gospel preached to every creature under heaven by the church. "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." (Eph. 3:10.) "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end." (Eph. 3:21.)

Without any denominational machinery to clutter up the work of the church, the church of the first century, even the first generation, preached the gospel to the whole world. About thirty years after the beginning of the church the inspired Paul wrote that the gospel was preached to every creature under heaven. (Col. 1:23.) "But I say, Have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." (Rom. 10:18.)

How did they do it? The divine plan is simplicity itself. Gospel preachers went into all the world. Brethren supported them in this great work of preaching the gospel. Congregations sent once and again unto their needs. They sent direct to the

preacher on the field. "Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account." (Phil. 4:15-17.)

The same plan will work in our day. If we could just get the preachers to go, the congregations will support them. There would be very few congregations but that could send a man to a new field and support him there until the cause is firmly established. This faithful preacher would be teaching the new converts their duty in supporting the gospel in new fields. Then when they were established, they would be ready to send "once and again" to help at some other place. What could be more simple? There would be no salaries for office workers, but every dollar would go to the preaching of the gospel. Maybe the very simplicity of the plan is too simple for some. If the going got a little hard for the preacher, he would not be above working with his own hands to help out. "I coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me." (Acts 20:33, 34.) We should begin to teach the young preachers to go "into all the world." We must teach the congregations to support the gospel in new fields. Qualified elders can feed the flock. This will free more preachers to go into all the world.

And in some quarters when "Christian education" is mentioned, the mind thinks of "our Bible colleges." That is not what we should be thinking of. The church is God's institution to give "Christian education." Had Bible colleges been necessary to do this, the Lord would have told us all about it. He did not do it, but did tell us to teach those who have been discipled. This is Christian education.

I would not be misunderstood. It is not wrong for a Christian to be engaged in any honorable business. I can think of no more honorable business than teaching school. I can think

of no more honorable person than a teacher who is a Christian. Several Christians may band themselves together to teach school or run a nursery. When the owners and managers of a business are Christians, there is going to be some Bible taught. If a Christian owns a farm and has a hired man who is not a Christian, he will use this opportunity to teach his hired man the truth. This does not make his farm a "Bible farm" and give this farmer the right to call on the church to support his farm. He is teaching the Bible as he has opportunity. Any faithful Christian will do that.

When I was a young man, and even before I began to preach, I taught for several years in country and village schools. These schools I taught were attended by children from homes that knew nothing about New Testament Christianity. I used every possible occasion to teach them some Bible. I would even invite some to my home. There I could teach without restriction. In our "opening exercises" of a morning at school I would read some from God's book. That was a "Bible school" that far at least. Had the teacher had a "degree," it might have grown into a Bible college! No, the church is not in the school business, nor the farming business, nor the nursery business.

Now to the heading of this sermon. Every few days now we read that orphans and widows are being turned away because we just do not have room for them in our "homes." In one sense I think that is pre-eminently true. We just do not have room for them in our own homes, and we want to pass this responsibility off by creating another "institution." We are ready to contribute a little each month to the support of some orphan home or widows' home. Why not just open up our own homes and take care of the widows and orphans? That would be a simple way to do it. That would be a cheap way to do it, and the church would not be charged.

You see the members of the church are obligated to take care of their own widows. That is not an obligation of the church. That is an obligation of the individual members. If your parents are not able to take care of themselves, the chances

that you are are pretty good. You are duty bound to do it. "But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first... to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God." (1 Tim. 5:4.) "If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed." (1 Tim. 5:16.)

If our parents or grandparents need a home, open up our home and give them one. Yes, it may cause a little inconvenience in the home; but when we were babies, no doubt we caused a little inconvenience in the home of our parents and grandparents, but they put up with it. Now we are furnished with the opportunity to repay in part the sacrifices that have been made in our behalf. This is our obligation, and we cannot pass it on to the church or to the state.

There will be some widows and old people in the community who are not members of the church who are dependent upon others. What grander work could be done than to open up Christian homes to as many of them as possible? The church (local congregation) could help bear the expense. While we are feeding their bodies and taking care of them, we could teach them the truth of the gospel.

Then we believers may have some orphans. We must take them into our homes and train them. Brethren, let us be careful. Let us not run everything into some other institution. God's institutions, the home and the church, are sufficient.

Now turn and read James 1:27.

---

21

## Paul

**E**XCEPTING the Son of God, no grander character ever trod this earth than Paul. No greater preacher ever walked among men. The Christian era has had no more influential man. But Paul was not always a Christian. The church never had a more consistent persecutor. We are first intro-

duced to him in connection with the death of the martyr, Stephen. "And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul." (Acts 7:58.) The introduction here is "a young man," but after some thirty years have flown into eternity it is "Paul the aged." And what years those were!

Paul consented unto the death of Stephen. His conscience approved his conduct. He thought he ought to do it. Twenty-five years later he could stand before the Jewish council and say: "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." (Acts 23:1.) Our conscience will approve whatever we have been taught, if we live in harmony with it. It may be poles from the truth, but the conscience will approve. However, we have many dear souls in the world who think they are on the way to heaven because their conscience approves their conduct. When Paul was killing Christians, his conscience was as clear as the noonday sun. "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities." (Acts 26:9-11.)

Paul was really mad against the saints. He was no halfway fellow. What he did, he did with all his might. If it were persecuting saints, he really persecuted. "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem." (Acts 9:1, 2.) Damascus was nearly one hundred fifty miles from Jerusalem. In those days that was considerable distance. Distance meant nothing to this young zealot and persecutor of God's people. He will gladly go to any length to carry out his murderous mission. He got the

authority to go. He went. No, he did not bring back any Christians bound to Jerusalem to be punished. He was almost to old Damascus. The Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him. No, no, Jesus did not appear to him to save him. He wanted him for an apostle. A little later the Lord in talking with Ananias about Saul said: "He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." (Acts 9:15.) Ananias said: "The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard." (Acts 22:14, 15.) Jesus said: "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 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 which are sanctified by faith that is in me."

Jesus appeared unto Paul to make him an apostle. I suppose if he needed other apostles he would appear to them likewise. He did not appear to him to tell him what to do to be saved. In fact, he would not tell him this. Yet we have the vaporings of sectarian bigots telling how the Lord appeared to Paul on the Damascus road and spoke peace to his soul. He did nothing of the kind! He did tell him where there was a man who would tell him what he must do to be saved. It would be well for sectarian preachers and all other lost souls to go with Paul until this Christian man contacts him and there find out what they must do to be saved.

"And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." (Acts 9:6.) "And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there

it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do." (Acts 22. 10.)

Paul was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision. The poor fellow was now blind, but he was led by the hand of them that were with him. (Acts 22:11.) He went into Damascus. The Lord appeared in a vision unto Ananias, instructing him to go around on Straight Street to the home of Judas and make enquiry for Saul. Ananias was reluctant to go. "Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name." (Acts 9:13, 14.) Well did Ananias know that Saul had been a dangerous character. He was bent on killing Christians. The Lord assured him that he is not now the old persecutor.

Do not forget that the Lord had told Paul that this man would tell him what he "must" do: "all things which are appointed for thee to do." When Ananias went to Saul, did he tell him to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? Bless your heart, he had been a firm believer for three days. Did he tell him to repent of his sins? If a man ever had repented, Saul had. "And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink." (Acts 9:9.) Did Ananias tell him to confess Christ? He had done that. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" What did Ananias tell him? Hear it: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16.) Do not forget this is what the Lord said he must do. That is what all sinners must do to have their sins washed away. Do not allow some deluded preacher to delude you. "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." (Matt. 15:14.)

Now Paul begins to preach the faith which he once destroyed. He has left the band of persecutors and has joined the ranks of the persecuted. Right in the city where he had come with the intent of getting Christians and taking them to Jerusalem to be punished, he begins to make Christians by preaching the

gospel of Christ. "Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ." (Acts 9:19-22.)

## Persecution

**Y**EA, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Tim. 3:12.)

Here we have the reason why so many members of the church are not persecuted. They are not living godly. This verse does not teach that we "may" suffer persecution; it says that we "shall" if we live godly. If we are not being persecuted, it is cause for alarm. Often-times this persecution comes from those whom we would least expect. Christians do not court persecution, but it comes simply because they live as God directs them to do.

There is just one way to escape persecution. We can go along with the crowd and escape persecution. We can be so much like the world that the world will love us. This is too dear a price to pay to escape the persecutions which the world may heap upon us. We cannot afford to pay the price.

Well can Christians pray the prayer of David: "O Lord my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me." (Ps. 7:1.) God is able and willing to deliver us from the persecutors. He will not deliver us from persecution. We ought to count ourselves happy to suffer persecution for righteousness' sake. "Blessed are they



which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." (Matt. 5:10-12.) We want to be sure we are being persecuted for the sake of righteousness. We want to be sure that the evil that is spoken against us is false. If we are being persecuted because of our humble and firm stand for truth and right, we should be indeed happy. The true prophets before us were persecuted for the same reason.

We ought to pray for our persecutors. This is an acid test of our sincere conversion. Jesus thus taught: "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." (Matt. 5:44.) This all true Christians do. Christ set us the example. We ought to follow in his steps. Too many want to retaliate.

The servant is not greater than his lord. They persecuted Jesus. They will persecute us. (John 15:20.) "Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not." (Rom. 12:14.)

Saul was a great persecutor of the church. Paul persecuted Christians unto death. (Acts 22:4.) He delivered both men and women into prison. What made him do it? He was mad against the church. Many of our day are thus mad. They are mad for the same reason that Paul was mad. They do not understand the position of the church. They do not know what the church really stands for. It is our bounden duty to teach them and show them. When Paul learned that he was wrong, he quit the crowd of persecutors. From then until the close of his life he was bitterly persecuted. He never dreamed of trying to escape persecution by compromising with the powers of evil. Persecution has a tendency to cause the child of God to re-examine his position. Then, realizing the great cause for which he stands, he stands even more firmly than before the persecution. He will die for the faith if need be.

It takes a consecrated soul to write and live this way: "We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; and labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day. I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you." (I Cor. 4:10-14.) Many of our day need this warning. We are at ease in Zion. We know not the meaning of sacrifice and persecution. What do we know about hunger, and thirst, and nakedness? What do we know about being buffeted? What do preachers know about having no certain dwelling place? I am convinced in my own mind that many preachers would benefit greatly by taking a course in "working with their own hands." Many do not know what actual tiredness from physical toil means. They have it too easy. I do not write these things to shame anyone, but I do write them as warnings. We need to be warned.

Sectarian bigots will persecute us if we stand firmly for the truth. They need the truth. There is only one thing under heaven that will save us from sin, and that is the truth. Jesus said we are to know that truth, and it would make us free. (John 8:32.) If we try to soften up the truth to make it popular, we shall lose our own souls and the souls of those whom we should teach. We should be humble in our presentation of the truth, but absolutely fearless in standing for the truth. We must take no liberties with the truth.

Worldly members of the church will persecute those who make a distinction between the church and the world. The line of demarcation is wide and deep between the church and the world. We are in the world, but we are not of the world. The world loves its own. It hates us because we are not of the world. You can get the approval of the world and the smiles of the world by going along with the world. This is not the way you get the approval of God.

It is high time that we awake out of sleep. Our salvation is nearer than when we believed. The world may dance, but Christians refrain from it. The world plays cards, but the Christian is too busy to engage in such sinful practices. The world is interested in the dirty shows, but the Christian has his affections set on things above and not on things on the earth. The world must be in the lodges and suchlike things, but the Christian knows he is complete in Christ. There he has everything that he needs in this world and in the world to come.

The world has gone wild in dress (lack of it). The Christian keeps the even tenor of his way in modest apparel. You do not find Christian women going about almost in the nude. No, Christian men do not do it, either. And because of his firm stand along such lines he is persecuted. So we are now ready to read our "text" again: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Brother, how are you living? Sister, how are you living?

## "Preach the Word"

ONE of the most serious charges ever given to a mortal man is found in 2 Tim. 4:2. This charge was given by one of the greatest preachers of all time, the apostle Paul. It was given by inspiration. It was given to a young gospel preacher by the name of Timothy, and to all subsequent gospel preachers. It is a solemn charge. It was given before God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us hear the charge. Here it is: "Preach the word." The curse of high heaven rests upon the preacher who will not do this.

What does it mean to preach the word? In Act 8:4 we are told about the church in Jerusalem being scattered abroad.

It is said that they went everywhere "preaching the word." In the next verse it says that one of these preachers was a man by the name of Philip. It says that he went to the city of Samaria and preached Christ unto them. They preached the word and they preached Christ. When we preach Christ, we are preaching the word. In Acts 8:35 we are told that Philip opened his mouth and preached Christ.

In this sermon we want to give some substantial reasons for preaching the word. There is never a birth without first a begetting. This is just as true in the spiritual realm as it is in the physical. How is this begetting done in the spiritual realm? In telling about how the brethren in Corinth were begotten, the inspired Paul says: "I have begotten you through the gospel." (I Cor. 4:15.) We see how it was done in that case. Again, in James 1:18 we are told: "Of his own, will begat he us with the word of truth." And then once again, in I Pet. 1:23 we have this: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." Now we can see there would be no spiritual begetting unless the word of God is preached. This is what brings it about. We are not surprised that Paul would say: "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" (I Cor. 9:16.) He had to preach it. In the next verse he says: "For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me."

Another reason for preaching the word is because this is the way faith is produced. Faith is a fundamental. It is impossible to please God without it. (Heb. 11:6.) Many sincere souls have no intelligent comprehension of how faith is brought about. They need to be taught that faith comes by hearing the word of God. This is plainly stated in Rom. 10:17. In the absence of the word of God there can be no faith. How important to know that every act we do and every step we take in matters religious are founded upon a "thus saith the Lord"! If we do something that God has not said one word

about, we do it without faith. In Acts 15 we read about an important meeting of some inspired elders and apostles. They had come together to consider certain matters. Speeches were made. One of them was made by the apostle Peter. He told his listeners how that God had made choice among the apostles that the Gentiles by his mouth should hear the word of the gospel and believe. You see, their faith was to be founded upon hearing the word of the gospel. Acceptable faith comes in no other way. It does not come by hearing the doctrines and commandments of men. There is nothing mysterious about it. The mystery is all cleared up by the simple statements of God's word making it plain how faith is brought about. My friends, may I plead with you to take no step in religion until you are assured by the word of God that he commands you to take it.

We cannot see God with impure hearts. Jesus says that the pure in heart shall see God. (Matt. 5:8.) This purity of heart is brought about by the word of God. Referring once again to Peter's speech in Jerusalem, we hear him saying in Acts 15:9 that the Lord had purified the hearts of the Gentiles by faith. And this same inspired apostle wrote in I Pet. 1:22 that our souls are purified in obeying the truth. Purity of soul is brought about by obedience to the gospel of Christ. Our souls will never be made free from sin until we obey the word of God.

Christians are a sanctified people. Many have strange ideas about sanctification. These strange ideas do not originate in the Bible. They are the figments of the imaginations of men. In John 17:17 Jesus prays that we might be sanctified through the truth, and then hastens to say that the word of God is truth. In John 15:3 Jesus says that we are made clean through the word. Being made free from sin by virtue of our obedience to the word of God is what the Bible means by sanctification. This is sanctification.

We hear much talk about converting power. I wonder what this power is. Let us read Ps. 19:7: "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is

sure, making wise the simple." The word of God is God's converting power. It brings about our salvation. The great apostle Paul wrote: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." (Rom. 1:16.) If we want folks converted to Christ, we must teach them the gospel of Christ. Of course, if we want them converted to something else, it will be necessary to preach something else besides the word of God. To convert people to some peculiar theory or some human religious organization it becomes necessary to preach something besides the word of God. Then we shall have to leave the word of God and begin to preach human doctrines. But if our aim is to save souls by converting them to the Lord, all we need is the word of God. How full of it we should be, and how humbly we should preach it to dying men and women!

The word of God is our guide and light. It is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. (Ps. 119:105.) In the verse before this we are told we get understanding through the word; and when we have this understanding, it causes us to hate every false way. When you see "religious people" who can throw their arms around anything, you may rest assured that they do not know the word of God. It is ignorance of the word that causes people to indorse most anything that men teach. The word of God causes us to hate every false way. It does not cause us to hate people, but it causes us to hate falsehood. How could it be otherwise? The intelligent student of the Bible knows what falsehood will do for the souls of men. Well does he know it will bring those poor souls down to hell. Is it any wonder he would hate the false way and love those who are being deluded by false teachers? Sometimes their love and zeal are misunderstood by the very one whom they seek to help. This is one of Satan's devices to bring about their eternal condemnation in hell. My friends, the only thing in this wide, wide world that will save our souls is obedience to the gospel of Christ. May we preach it in season and out of season.

We must preach the word to our friends and loved ones while they live, and then after they are gone we can continue to preach the word to the ones who are left behind. If the loved ones died in the Lord, we can point the remaining loved ones to the great and exceeding promises found in the word. We can comfort the bereaved with the word of God. Of course, there is no comfort concerning them who die out of the Lord.

We want to make a fit closing to this by reading carefully I Thess. 4:13-18: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

## **Safety First**

**S**OMEONE has said: "When in doubt, don't." That is a good rule to follow in matters religious. There are many things that are being practiced in the religious world that are doubtful — they are even sinful; but in this sermon we have one primary object, and that is to point out the safe way. We are not going to say much about the unsafe ways, but just point out the way that is right and cannot be wrong. We believe there are millions of honest people who will walk in the safe way when it is pointed out to them.

Two of the great evils of modern times are infidelity and atheism. The infidel does not accept Christianity. An atheist denies the existence of God. Does the belief of such things make one a better husband, a better father, a better wife, or a better mother? Do they make better citizens? Of course you know they do not. Even if it were to turn out that Christianity is wrong and there is no God, would not the Christian be as well off as the infidel and atheist? You know he would. But there is a God, and Christianity is right. Now where does the safe course lie? You can see that the humble child of God has everything to gain and nothing to lose. He is happier in this life, and has something to look forward to after this life is over. In the last chapter of God's book we have this significant statement: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." (Rev. 22:14.) Now we see where the safe course lies between infidelity and atheism on the one hand and Christianity on the other. May God help us in being genuine Christians.

And there is the doctrine of Universalism. This doctrine teaches that all men will be eventually saved. If this be true, then of course the Christian will be saved, because he is a part of all men. The Bible teaches that only the obedient will be saved. In Rom. 10:13 we are told that "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Of course to "call upon the name of the Lord" in the true sense is to obey the Lord. The New Testament teaches that if we do not obey the Lord we have no hope. The ones who sleep in Jesus, God will bring with him. It does not take a very smart person to see that the safe course is to learn the will of the Lord and obey it.

Another very popular doctrine is that of foreordination and predestination. Men who espouse this doctrine teach that God has decreed from all eternity some to everlasting happiness and others to everlasting misery. This number cannot be increased nor diminished. If this were true, the Christian would have nothing to lose. He would be no worse off because he believes



there is something he can do about his eternal salvation. He knows that Paul wrote to Christians in Phil. 2:12, telling them to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. Can you imagine an intelligent man thus teaching if there were nothing we could do about our salvation? Let us read what the Lord says about folks that do not believe in God and who will not obey the gospel of Christ: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." (2 Thess. 1:7-9.) What is the safe course?

Men teach that baptism is not essential to salvation. The Bible teaches that we cannot be saved from our sins without being baptized for the remission of those sins. Jesus emphatically states that we must be born of water and of the Spirit. (John 3:3-5.) And then he says in Mark 16:16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." He never hinted that one could be saved without being baptized. Not long after Jesus had given the Great Commission to his apostles we find them in the city of Jerusalem, preaching the gospel of Christ for the first time after the death, the burial, the resurrection, and the ascension of Christ. Men are pricked in the heart by the preaching. They believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. They ask what they must do to be saved, and are told to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. (Acts 2:37, 38.) Three thousand did this, and the Lord added them to the church. What is the safe course about baptism?

Men teach that "sprinkling" and "pouring" are all right. They call these baptism. The Bible says we are buried by baptism. (Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12.) The Bible teaches that the entire body is washed in the waters of baptism. (Heb. 10:22.) We all know that baptism is safe. I mean by baptism exactly what the New Testament means when it says we are buried by baptism. Take the safe course in this.

Men teach that it does not make any difference what creed a person believes and obeys. Christians believe that all human creeds should be thrown away, and that we should follow the Bible alone. They Read II Tim. 3:16, 17: "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, throughly furnished unto all good works." They can see from this that the safe thing is to take the Bible for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction. They know this is inspired of God. They all also know the danger of adding to or taking from the word. They have not forgotten Rev. 22:18, 19, where God has warned if we add anything he will add unto us the plagues that are written in the book; and if we take away he will take our part out of the book of life and out of the holy city.

Some men are trying to make themselves believe that a responsible person can be saved out of church. Of course they know he can be saved in the church, but they are going to take a chance out of the church. What an awful chance that is! There is not an intimation in all of the New Testament that a responsible person can be saved outside of the body of Christ. The body is the church, and in Eph. 5:23 we learn that Jesus is the savior of the body. He is not the savior of those who are not in the body. Take the safe course and be a member of the body of Christ.

Men say that one church is as good as another. If this were true, then most certainly the one that the Lord built, and the one that we read about in the New Testament, would be as good as the ones that men have built. Men say we are all striving for the same place, but they seem to forget 2 Tim. 2:5, which says: "And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully." You see we must strive according to the law of God. The Lord adds the saved to the church. You know, of course, that he would add them to his church. (Acts 2:46, 47.)

Men say it is safe to eat the Lord's Supper occasionally. Well, we know it is safe to eat it on the first day of each week.

We have a divine example for this in Acts 20:7. Here the disciples came together on the first day of the week to break bread. Faithful disciples have always done this. They will allow nothing to interfere with this appointment they have with the Lord on the first day of each week. They know it is more important than an appointment with the dentist!

Men who ought to know better try to persuade themselves and others that it is safe to worship God with instrumental music. We should know there is nothing in the New Testament that even sounds like that. God wants the best. Vocal music is the best. He tells us what to sing and how to sing. (I Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16.) Men who have studied this subject just a little know that no instrumental music was used in the apostolic church. They know that Jesus Christ and his holy apostles left mechanical instruments of music out of the worship. They know that the church was more than six hundred years old before it was added to so-called Christian worship. They know it is from men, and that the only thing is to do what the New Testament teaches.

Men say it is all right to raise money for the church by suppers, fairs, etc. When men build churches of their own, they can run them as they please, but they need not expect the Lord to accept their human arrangements. The Lord tells his people to give as they have been prospered. This is always safe. (I Cor. 16:1, 2; 2 Cor. 8:7; Acts 2:42.) May the good Lord help us to walk in the safe way.

## Sin to Sin

**O**NE sin leads to another. Very few terrible sinners ever meant to be such. They had no such careers in mind. They did not intend to allow sin to get a hold on them. Sin is deceptive. It grows.

David never meant to be a murderer. He looked with lust upon a beautiful woman. This woman was beautiful to look upon. David thought too much about her. This lustful thinking caused David to commit adultery with Bathsheba. She was with child by David. Then David took steps to cover his sin. How many other men and women have tried this! It cannot be done. Sin will out. Your sin will find you out. There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed and hid that shall not be known. (Num. 32:23; Matt. 10:26.)

David commanded that the husband of Bathsheba be put in the hottest part of the battle. Of course, men are killed in battles. Uriah can be slain, and then David can have his wife. But David's sin found him out. It caught up with him. It always does. Sin is a hard master. David mourned over his sins the remainder of his days. It all started over a lustful look. We should run from the very appearance of sin. Sin is too terrible to trifle with. It is a deadly monster. Hell will be full of people who started out with a "little" sin.

Joseph told his brethren about a dream that he had. They did not like this dream. It aroused jealousy in their hearts. Jealousy will cause folks to stop at nothing. They cannot reason correctly because of this condition of mind. They will get rid of this brother, and then he will see what comes of his dreams. They will never bow down to him. That is what they thought! They made their plans and carried them out. They sold their brother into Egyptian slavery. Then they made up a lie to tell to their aged father. One sin causes another one. It is progressive. But their sin caught up with them. They lived to see the fulfillment of Joseph's dream. They did bow down to him.

Herod Antipas had the fearless preacher, John the Baptist, cast into prison. He did not like some things John preached. He determined to get rid of the preacher. It was not that easy. You may not like what the bold preacher says, but the truth of God cannot be overthrown by imprisoning the proclaimer of this truth. You may lie about him and do everything against him that is possible, but the truth stands.

Then there was a birthday party. This party was like many since then. It was not a very innocent affair. They had some dancing. A graceful girl danced in the presence of this wicked and adulterous king. He promised to give the girl almost anything for which she would ask. She consulted with her mother. This wicked mother instructed her daughter to ask for the head of the preacher. Herod was sorry about this, but he had John beheaded. One sin leads to another sin. In this case it ended in murder.

Peter denied his Lord. He did not start out to do this. However, he followed the Lord afar off. This is always dangerous. Too many of our day are entirely too far from the Lord. Peter fell in with the enemies of Jesus Christ. He is going from bad to worse. So many will associate intimately with the enemies of the Lord. They will drink with them. They will play cards with them. They will dance with them. They will go swimming with them. They will attend dirty shows with them. It is no wonder they finally wind up by denying the Lord that bought them. Peter denied with an oath. Fortunately for him and for the world, he repented in sackcloth and ashes. So many do not do that. They play around with sin and sinners until they are engulfed in the very fires of hell.

Perhaps the brethren of nearly a hundred years ago did not mean to depart from the faith. They would just bring the organ into the Sunday school. There is no harm in that, so they "reasoned." But it did not stop there. One departure from the truth leads to another. In this case it has led to human missionary societies to do what the Lord commands the church to do. It led to the introduction of instrumental music in the worship of God. It led to all kinds of suppers, fairs, societies, etc. Yes, it has gone so far as modernists in the pulpit. Sin to sin, sure enough!

Brethren, beware to those "innocent" departures from the truth. Do not depart from the old paths. You never can tell where it is going to stop. Our colleges need to be extremely careful. Look where the digressives have gone! Do these object lessons not mean anything to us?

An innocent young girl may be persuaded to go to a dance. She thinks this will not be a very grievous sin. Everybody is doing it, you know! There is some drinking at the dance. Freedoms are exercised on the dance floor that would not be allowed anywhere else. Passions are aroused. The girl's virtue is destroyed. A large percentage of fallen women started their downfall on the dance floor. It is a burning shame that some elders and preachers are afraid to condemn this terrible sin. Just because the elder's daughter dances does not make it less sinful. Souls will be in hell eternally because they were not taught the evils of the dance. If your preacher will not condemn such sin, fire him and get a preacher that will reprove and rebuke. In such a congregation he may not last long, but he may get enough preaching done to save the virtue of your son or daughter.

The alien sinner hears the gospel of Christ. He knows it is the truth. He fully intends to obey it at some future time, but he postpones his obedience. The next time it is easier to turn the gospel down. He is waiting for a more convenient time. Well does the devil know this convenient time will never come. It never does. Life is lived, death has come, and this poor soul dies unprepared to meet his God. This was all caused by adding sin to sin. He was already a sinner, and then when he heard the gospel of Christ, but refused to obey, he added sin to his sin.

That backsliding Christian never meant to entirely quit the church. He got busy with his business affairs, etc., and did not have time to attend the midweek services or the services of the evangelistic meeting. You know, a fellow cannot go to church all the time! His conscience hurt him a little when he first began to miss, but the devil has a way of taking care of matters like that. He got so he could miss these services without any compunction of conscience. Then he began to miss on Sunday night. It was really the only night of the week that he had for his own and for rest. He would go on Sunday morning, but it was not absolutely necessary to go on Sunday night. He just stayed away. Then he began to miss some even

on Sunday morning. He had an urgent business trip to make, and he could go on Sunday. He had relatives and friends to entertain, and the only time they could come was on Sunday, so he began to miss. Now he very seldom attends. His children are growing up without any true devotion. His home is no longer a Christian home. Sin to sin! Alas and alack!

## Some Men Who Should Not Preach

**W**E have had much teaching, not too much, about who should preach the gospel. I believe we need more teaching about men who should not preach. Sometimes it is very beneficial to know what not to do. The cause of Christ has been made to suffer by men attempting to preach who should not attempt it.

A man should never preach who does not set a godly example before all others. If a man does not love the cause of Christ and the souls of men sufficiently to give up all filthy habits and things that would be injurious to others, most certainly he should not set himself up as a preacher of the gospel. The inspired Paul wrote to his son in the gospel telling him to be "an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." (I Tim. 4:12.) People will look to the preacher for an example. They have a perfect right to expect good things of him.

The preacher of all men must be careful of his words, and that does not just mean when he is in the pulpit. A preacher who will tell "broad" jokes and dirty tales is not fit to be a preacher of the gospel. Precious souls have been made to stumble by some preacher telling some filthy "joke." I have known of cases where a preacher was invited into a home where the husband was not a member of the church, but the wife was.

Instead of teaching this man the truth, and setting a godly example before him, he would engage in some silly talk and some filthy tale. It would be a thousand times better had such a preacher never darkened the door of such a home, and infinitely better if he would not attempt to preach the gospel of Christ. Preaching the gospel is a high and holy calling.

The preacher must be pure in all things. His life must be above reproach. If it is not, he should not be preaching, and the church should see to it that he does not preach. If a preacher does not know his place, the brethren should set him in his place, and do it in no uncertain terms.

Cigarette fiends and tobacco soaks should not be in the pulpit. If they don't love the cause of Christ more than this, they do not love it enough to be preachers. Such filthy habits will cause some good people to stay out of the church. They expect better things from a gospel preacher. They have a right thus to expect.

Men who will not meet their honest financial obligations should not be preaching. There is no excuse for a man not paying his honest debts. There may have been a day when preachers were not paid sufficiently to meet their debts when they came due. That day is past. The preacher is as well supported as the average member of the church. In fact, many are supported far above the average. Many are supported far above what they should be. Some preachers will waste money, and then complain about not receiving enough support to live the way they should. A preacher should set an example in thrift and economy.

No man should preach that will not declare the whole counsel of God. (Acts 20:26, 27.) There is a world of difference between preaching the counsel of God and preaching all the counsel of God. A man might preach in a certain place for ten years and in every sermon declare the counsel of God, but at the same time be keeping back the very thing that should be preached. Even if preaching all the counsel of God offends some of the most "influential" members, it must be preached. If we are ashamed of the gospel or of any part of it, we ought



to step out of the pulpit and let men preach who are not ashamed nor afraid to preach all the word of God. The pulpit is no place for a weakling.

No man should preach that is striving to please men. If a man seeks to please men, he is not a servant of God. (Gal. 1:8-10.) Any true gospel preacher is pleased when he preaches all the counsel of God and men are pleased with that kind of preaching. But there are many who are not pleased with this kind of preaching. The true preacher will not be moved by any of these. He will preach all the counsel of God if he has to stand by himself to do it. The thought uppermost in his mind is to please the Lord. He gives very little thought to wondering whether men will be pleased or displeased. He studies the word. He knows what the word of the Lord is. He knows that it takes the gospel of Christ to save souls. This he declares with all the power of his being.

Men who are preaching for money should quit. That does not mean that it is wrong to receive money for preaching. No man is fit to preach the gospel who thinks too much about the financial remuneration. The gospel is not a way of gain. He is not out to make merchandise of the gospel of Christ. If he is a worthy preacher, he should be supported so that he can give all of his time to preaching the word. It will be a sad day for the church when young men are enticed into the pulpit because they think they can make a living in this way by the least effort. I am afraid that condition is almost upon us in some places. Young men, and some not so young, take up the "ministry" with worldly ambitions in view. They can pull down a good salary without much effort and without much preparation. Such things ought not to be. We are to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

There is one little danger right here that I have not been able to figure out. A brother will work through the week at a good job with a good salary attached. Then on the Lord's day he may go out to some little struggling congregation to "help them out." Right on the surface that looks all right, but maybe beneath the surface there is something that "stinks." Maybe

this preacher on a good salary will be paid fifteen or twenty dollars for "helping the brethren out." He gives five or ten dollars into the treasury of the Lord. He may be still to the good five or ten dollars, and not a cent has he given of the salary that he makes. Is there such a thing as going to heaven without giving as we have been prospered? When does that man's giving begin? From where I sit it looks as if this preacher were being paid for "going to church." Of course, these are just some of the ramblings of my mind when I get to thinking along these lines. The things said here would in no way apply to those honest and earnest souls who are really trying to help the brethren in weak places. I know of some men who go even at their own expense to help out where brethren are not financially able to pay much.

I have oftentimes wondered, if the salary were cut off, if that would have any effect in "helping out at the weak places"! God forbid that any man should be discouraged in any worthy ambition to extend the borders of the kingdom, and may any who have selfish motives in mind be discouraged. I write these things because my observations over a third of a century cause me to think some along the lines set forth in this sermon. May the richest blessings of heaven rest upon every faithful preacher of the gospel. May the other kind be weeded out. "Preach the word; . . . reprove, rebuke, exhort."

## Sound Doctrine

**W**E hear much about "sound preachers" and "sound doctrine." Well, it is a Bible subject. Paul said the time would come when certain ones would not endure "sound doctrine." (2 Tim. 4:3.) In Titus we learn much about what "sound doctrine" is. I am sure that many brethren do not

know "sound doctrine." They do not enjoy hearing "sound doctrine."

Titus was commanded to "speak thou the things which become sound doctrine." (Tit. 2:1.) The rest of the book is given to the enumeration of things which become "sound doctrine." In this sermon we want to put some stress on these things that become "sound doctrine."

"That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience." Many an aged man has lost his influence for good by not observing this sage advice. When an old man is not sober and grave, his influence is greatly hurt. It becomes old men to be sober and grave. All men should be temperate. They should not be given to excesses. So many of our day are not sound in faith. They are too wobbly. They are not sure of what they believe. They are too easily carried about by every wind of doctrine. The old men should be loving and patient. This is "sound doctrine."

Here is some more "sound doctrine": "The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed."

God knows the young women need to be taught these things. There are no better teachers of the young women than the right kind of old women. Of course these old women are not good teachers unless they are in behavior as becometh holiness. Then they are in position to teach the young women "sound doctrine." The young women need to be taught to be sober. Entirely too many are foolish and giddy. They need to be taught to love their husbands and their children. God expects normal young married women to have children, and then he expects them to love and care for these children. This will keep them busy at home. They will be keepers at home. They will not be running around too much. They will not be working in the stores and factories. You see they could not practice

the "sound doctrine" if they were thus engaged.

These young women must be taught to be discreet and chaste. To be discreet means to show good judgment in conduct, etc.; to be chaste means to be pure and modest.

Young women must be taught to be obedient to their own husbands. Many a home goes on the rocks because the young women have not learned these necessary things. When young married women are not sober, when they do not love and obey their husbands, when they are not keepers at home, when they are not discreet, chaste, and good, the word of God is blasphemed. Blasphemy is a terrible sin.

"Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you."

A young man must be taught. He must know the doctrine. He must be grave, sincere. His speech must be sound. Such speech cannot be condemned. He ought to so conduct himself that they who are of the contrary part will be put to shame because they can say nothing truthfully against the ones who are Christians.

"Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."

Christians cannot afford to become embroiled in labor troubles. They should be obedient to their own masters. They should strive to please them well in all things. They must not steal and filch. When a man employed by another does not produce an honest day's work, he is guilty of purloining. When we "kill time" on the job, we are purloining. Brethren, do not forget this is "sound doctrine." We should be faithful servants. We should show fidelity. When we act this way, we are adorning the doctrine of God; when we act otherwise, we cause the doctrine of God to be blasphemed. We cannot afford to be guilty of such.

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee."

When we preach these things, we are preaching "sound doctrine"; when we do not speak these things and rebuke, we are not "sound." Measured by this criterion, I am fearfully afraid that there are some standing in the pulpit who are not "sound." They do not teach much about denying ungodliness and worldly lusts. So many of the members of the church are not denying themselves along such lines. We need to teach the young and the old to live soberly, righteously, and godly. When folks are not living this way, they need to be rebuked strongly. The brethren need to be educated to the place where they will know that when a preacher is engaged in this kind of preaching he is preaching "sound doctrine" just as much as he is when he is preaching faith, repentance, and baptism.

When we preach faith, repentance, and baptism, many of our sectarian friends do not like that kind of preaching. They turn away from it. It is sad when we see folks turn away from the very things that they must do to be saved. It is sad indeed when preachers and teachers teach the members that they must deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly; and then when this teaching is done, to see those who ought to be strong in the faith turn away from such teaching. But the faithful proclaimer of the word will not be deterred. He will preach the things which become the sound doctrine. He will preach it all, and not just the part that his hearers want to hear. Maybe the very part they do not want to hear is the very part they need and the very part that they must have in order to be saved.

"Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work." This is "sound doctrine." We need to be taught to obey the laws of the land when they do not conflict with the laws of God. We must teach the brethren to be ready to every good work.

"To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men." And this is also "sound doctrine."

## Seven Blunders of the World

**F**OR some of the thoughts of this sermon I am indebted to my beloved friend and brother, Kenneth B. Adams.

We all have heard of "The Seven Wonders of the World," but I am sure that a study of seven blunders of the world will do us more good than seeing "The Seven Wonders of the World."

One of the greatest blunders that anyone can make is to yield to temptation. It is no sin to be tempted, but yielding to temptation is sin. Jesus was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. (Heb. 4:15.) He did not yield. The devil tried all of his wiles, but without success. Yes, Jesus was tempted through the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.

Our foreparents, Adam and Eve, were tempted in the same way, and they fell. What an awful fall! "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. 5:12.) God placed Adam and Eve in a perfect environment. They could eat of every tree of the garden save one. If they ate of that tree death would ensue. The devil tempted Eve, because she saw that the tree was good for food, pleasant to the eye, and a tree to be desired to make one wise. She did

the very thing that God had commanded them not to do. She yielded to the temptation, and then the man yielded. So many are led into temptation and sin by the examples of others. What a blunder!

Another blunder of the world is to place material prosperity above spiritual prosperity. Too many put more emphasis upon the material than they do upon the spiritual. Jesus teaches us to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. (Matt. 6:33.) How many of us put the kingdom first in our thinking, in our planning, and in our work? We think too much of our jobs, our business, our farms, our social standing, and other things of this life. "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." (I Tim. 6:7.) While we are striving after the things of this world we may so neglect our salvation that we shall be damned eternally. Why not work for the food that perisheth not? Why not put the emphasis where it belongs?

Lot made a fearful blunder along this line. He was thinking of the fine pasture land of the Jordan Valley. It was a wonderful place for cattle, but a poor place for girls. The environment was wrong. Many of our day are making the same fatal mistake. They place their children under evil influences. They are not careful enough in choosing their companions. What a blunder!

And then there is the sin of presumption. Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire before the Lord. That was fire which the Lord had not commanded. That was presumption on their part. And they died before the Lord. Folks of our day will make "strange" offerings before the Lord. You cannot do this with impunity. Punishment will surely follow. The Lord says to be buried by baptism. (Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12; Heb. 10:22.) Men will say that sprinkling and pouring will do. This is entirely presumption. God says the proper subject for baptism is a penitent believer. Men will "baptize" babies. This is

nothing but presumption. God says the music of the church is vocal. (I Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Rom. 15:9; Heb. 2:12.) Men presume that some instrumental music with the vocal is all right. No, there is no Bible for it, but they just presume it will be all right. What a blunder!

Others make the mistake of partial obedience. They are like King Saul. (I Sam. 15.) He was commanded to smite Amalek, destroy all that they had, slay man, woman, infant, suckling, ox, sheep, camel, and ass. Saul almost did that, but "Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly." It repented God that he had made such a man king. When the Lord says "utterly," that is what he means. "Utterly" does not mean "partially."

Saul's motives may have been good. It would be such a nice thing to offer these fine animals in worship to God. God said he had not obeyed the mouth of the Lord. Let us learn the lesson. Here it is: "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifice, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." This is what the great God in heaven thought of Saul's partial obedience. That is exactly what he thinks of our obedience. Witchcraft! Rebellion! Idolatry!

Another blunder too many of the churches are making is to look back at the things of the world. Brethren, we are in the world, but we are not of the world. The church and the world have nothing in common. We have come out of the world. Let us not go back into it. Lot's wife made the fatal mistake of looking back. She was well on her way from wicked Sodom and Gomorrah. God had commanded that they look not back. Lot's wife disobeyed. She looked back. That was a fatal look.



That was the last time she disobeyed God. There is a last time. There will be a last time for us. We will trample the mercy of God under our feet once too often.

Members of the church will go to their last dance; they will take their last drink; they will see the last dirty show. "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (James 4:4.) "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." (I John 2:15-17.)

The Jews rejected Christ when he came. They are still rejecting him. No greater blunder could be made. However, the Jews are not the only ones that are making this fatal blunder. Multiplied millions of others have done and are doing it. Christ came nineteen centuries ago. He died for the sins of the world. There is no other way but his way. We must accept Jesus as our Savior. To accept him means to obey him. To call him "Lord" avails nothing unless we are willing to follow him. Kind reader, do not make the terrible blunder of rejecting Christ.

Many hear the gospel of Christ, and in a way they believe it. But they are like Felix of old. They postpone their obedience and die before they get around to it. Felix was wicked. Paul knew this. He preached to him the very thing he needed to hear. So many times preachers preach to the ones who are not there! Felix was there. Paul was there. Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and the judgment to come. It made Felix tremble. Such preaching would make a lot of "our members" tremble. They need to tremble; they need to repent; they need to pray God. Felix waited for a convenient season. It never came. What a blunder!

## **"Tell Us Plainly"**

"THEN came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." (John 10:24.)

We should preach the gospel of Christ plainly. Is there a way to heaven? Tell us plainly. "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." (Isa. 35:8.) This was a prophecy of the way to heaven made more than seven hundred years before Christ and the opening of the way. God said he was going to make the way so plain that "the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." Christ said: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Matt. 7:13, 14.)

Lord, tell us plainly if there is more than one church. "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." (Rom. 12:4, 5.) "There is one body." (Eph. 4:4.) "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1:22, 23.) "And he is the head of the body, the church." (Col. 1:18.)

Lord, we are living in an age of religious confusion. One preacher says this and another preacher says that. Lord, tell us plainly what we must do to be saved, or to get into this one body. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16:16.) "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the

remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38.) "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16.) "For by 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.) "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (I Pet. 3:21.)

Lord, one preacher will tell us that sprinkling is baptism; another, that pouring is baptism; and still another, that we must be immersed. Lord, tell us plainly. "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water," (Matt. 3:16.) "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit ... caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing." (Acts 8:36-39.) "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. 6:4, 5.) "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.) "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." (Heb. 10:22.)

Lord, tell us plainly how we must live after becoming members of the church. "For the grace of God that bringeth sal-

vation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." (Tit. 2:11, 12.) "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." (II Pet. 1:5-9.)

Lord, is it very important to attend the services of the church? Tell us plainly. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." (Heb. 10:25.) Lord, tell us plainly whether one service a week would be sufficient. "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." (Acts 2:46.) "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." (Acts 2:47.) "And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily." (Acts 16:5.) "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17:11.)

Lord, tell us plainly how often Christians ought to eat the Lord's Supper. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them." (Acts 20:7.)

Lord, tell us plainly about the music in the worship. "And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name." (Rom. 15:9.) "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the

understanding also." (I Cor. 14:15.) "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." (Eph. 5:19.) "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." (Col. 3:16.) "I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." (Heb. 2:12.)

Lord, tell us plainly about the contribution. "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do we. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." (I Cor. 16:1, 2.) "Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also." (II Cor. 8:7.)

Lord, tell us plainly how and where we should do our good works. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." (Col. 3:17.) "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." (Eph. 3:10.) "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end." (Eph. 3:21.) "Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity." (Phil. 4:15, 16.)

Lord, tell us Christians plainly of the danger of worldly things. "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (James 4:4.) "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the

flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." (I John 2:15-17.)

Lord, tell us plainly what the reward of the faithful Christian will be. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. 2:10.) "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." (Rev. 14:13.) "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." (Rev. 22:14.)

## **"Thou Art the Man"**

**D**AVID was a man after God's own heart, but he was guilty of some of the blackest sins of which any man can be guilty. The Bible tells the truth about men and women. It tells the bad along with the good. Men do not write history that way. They are partial in their judgments.

David's sin began with a beautiful woman. Beautiful women have been the cause of the downfall of many men. David looked upon this woman, and his baser passions were aroused. That is one of the most damning things about the modern stage, including the modern picture show. Beautiful women are shown almost in the nude. Men and women and boys and girls look upon these things. We cannot afford thus to play with temptation. David was a strong man, but he was overcome by this temptation. Many others have been thus overcome.

The dress of many women of our day will cause the damnation of many precious souls. Then when "Christian" (?) women imitate this ungodly dress, it is really too bad. God expects and commands Christian women to dress in modest

apparel. "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shame-facedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." ( I Tim. 2:9, 10.) "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." (I Pet. 3:3, 4.)

David's lustful look led him into adultery with this beautiful woman. He tried to cover up his sin. Sin cannot be covered. There is just one thing to do with sin, and that is to repent of it and get forgiveness by obedience to God. David sent for Uriah, the husband of this woman, He was engaged in war. David was perfectly willing now that Uriah might have a furlough and go home to his wife. This was his way of trying to cover up his own wickedness.

But Uriah did not go home. "And Uriah said unto David, The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? as thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing." (2 Sam. 11:11.)

Thus David is thwarted in his own devilish plans. Next David hits upon the plan of getting Uriah drunk. But still Uriah did not go home. God is not going to allow David to get away with this sin. We cannot get away with ours. "Be sure your sin will find you out." It found David out, and it will find us out. Jesus said: "For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known." (Matt. 10:26.)

The next morning David wrote a letter to his great army captain, Joab. This letter was really Uriah's death warrant. And David had the heart to send this letter by the hand of Uriah. David instructed Joab to set Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle and then retire from him. "And Uriah the

Hittite died also." Yes, David is rid of Uriah, but his troubles are just really beginning. His sins are multiplying. First, it is a lustful look. This led to the bodily act of adultery. Now he has murdered an innocent man. Vice is indeed a monster. The devil is a hard master.

Joab was concerned over the death of Uriah. Uriah's wife mourned for her husband. No doubt her guilty conscience added to the mourning. Well, she had the child.

God sent his prophet to David. "And the Lord sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him." (2 Sam. 12:1-4.)

It is no wonder that David's anger was greatly kindled against that wicked and scheming man. It did not take him a fraction of a minute to make up his mind what should be done to such a man. "And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die."

"And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man." Yes, his sin has caught up with him.

Listen to this: "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; and I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the



sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun." (II Sam. 12:7-12.)

Oh, the sins that are committed secretly! It was not hard for David to see his miserable plight after the prophet had delivered this scathing denunciation. We need more prophets in our day like Nathan. We need men who are not afraid to cry and spare not. Sin is sin, and it is just as bad when those who are in high places are guilty. God loves us too well to allow our sins to go unrebuked. This plain preaching caused David to repent in sackcloth and ashes. Immediately he cried out, saying: "I have sinned against the Lord." Sinners must be made to see their doom. They will not see this unless the preachers point it out in no uncertain terms. They may not repent, but at least the preacher has delivered his soul. Then we can say with Paul: "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." (Acts 20:26, 27.) And, preacher, do not forget there is a difference between declaring the counsel of God and declaring "all" the counsel of God.

"When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy soul." (Ezek. 3:18, 19.)

It would be well for the reader to turn now and read Ps. 51 again. David never got over his sin. "For I acknowledge my,

transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.... Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.... Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation.... The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

Sinner friend, read that last sentence again and again. Repent of your sins. Confess the name of Christ. Be buried with him in baptism for the remission of your sins. Erring brother, repent genuinely of your sins and pray God for forgiveness. (Acts 8:22, 23.)

---

31

## The Glorious Church

**I**N Eph. 5:27 we have the church spoken of as "a glorious church." This "glorious church" does not have "spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." In the New Testament the glory of the church is represented under various heads. The glory has been represented by a bride. The inspired John thus saw the church: "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." (Rev. 21:2.) This is indeed a beautiful picture. What is more beautiful than a bride adorned for her husband? The church is the bride of Christ. Some day he is going to claim his bride. We must be adorned for this. When we think of a bride, we do not think of spots, wrinkles, and such things; but we do think of purity, sweetness, and cleanliness.

The head of an institution reflects glory on the institution itself. The glory of the church is represented by the head: "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1:22, 23.) The glory of an earthly kingdom is represented by the head. Thus we have the glory of the church represented by its head.

The glory of things is represented somewhat by their cost. The church is the most expensive thing on this earth. It cost God his Son, and it cost the Son his blood. It is no wonder that Paul spoke thus to the elders of the Ephesian church: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20:28.)

There are many things that cause the glory of congregations to depart. One of these is hypocrisy. Once upon a time Jesus spoke to some hypocrites after this fashion: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." (Matt. 23:27, 28.) A whited sepulchre had a beautiful outward appearance, but within it was a seething mass of rottenness. So it is with some members of the church. They put on a pretty good outward show, but within they are rotten to the core.

Cold formalism will detract from the glory of the church: "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." II Tim. 3:5.) It is so easy to fall into a form. We can become formal in our singing, in our reading, in our prayers, in our communion, in our giving, and even in our preaching. We must put our very hearts and souls into our work and worship. To do less than this borders on formalism

Love of pre-eminence has caused the glory of many a congregation to depart. Brother Diotrephes is not dead yet. "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have

the preeminence among them, receiveth us not." (III John 9.) We have so many who love to have the pre-eminence. And some of them are preachers! And some are elders! And some are just "leaders"! I would not be misunderstood. My hat is off to a true gospel preacher, to a true gospel elder, or to a real leader. But a real preacher, or a real elder, or a real leader does not desire pre-eminence. Too many are bound to "boss or bust." The spiritual progress of many a congregation is retarded by one of these lovers of pre-eminence.

Commercialism is creeping in some places. We have preachers who will do so much preaching if the pay is high enough. They are ready to be "knocked down" to the highest bidder. Preachers should be well paid for their work. They have enough worries without adding unnecessary financial worries. But when preachers refuse to preach until they are guaranteed a high salary — that is commercialism gone to seed. "And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you." (II Pet. 2:3.) And when there is a place open that pays a good salary, what a scramble there is for that place! Brethren, such things ought not so to be. The place ought to seek the preacher, and not the preacher the place. If you are worthy of a good place no doubt the brethren will fully appreciate your attainments. Paul liked to preach in new places where Christ had not been named.

Jealousy will cause the glory to depart. "Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips." (Rom. 3:13.) Jealousy is an awful thing. It will wreck the life of the jealous.

Utter indifference causes the glory to depart. We have so many lukewarm members, and not a few lukewarm congregations. Lukewarmness makes the Lord sick. The church at Laodicea was lukewarm. "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." (Rev. 3:15, 16.) A lot of so-called

"Christians" are going to be spued out. We cannot be lukewarm in our service to the Lord.

We have written of things that cause the glory to depart. Now for a few of the grand characteristics of a glorious church. A glorious church is a clean church. The members are clean. You do not find dancing members, card-playing members, beer-drinking members, adulterers, and adulteresses in a clean church. They do not have such spots and wrinkles. They keep themselves unspotted from the world.

A glorious church is a faithful church. The members are always found at their post of duty. They attend the services of the church. They are faithful in discharging their Christian obligations. They are faithful in their study of the Bible.

A glorious church is a working church. Each member works. The work is not left to just a few members of the congregation. There is no greater joy than working in the Master's vineyard. And I would like to emphasize the fact that the work should be done in the Master's vineyard, and not in some other vineyard. God is to be glorified in the church, not in something else. A glorious church is always abounding in the work of the Lord. (I Cor. 15:58.) They are busily engaged in working out their salvation with fear and trembling. (Phil. 2:12.) They know that they must work while it is day, because the night is fast approaching. (John 9:4.)

A glorious church is a loving church. How they do love the Lord, one another, and the souls of perishing men and women! They show their love by keeping the commands of the Lord. They know that their Master said that if we love him we will keep his commandments.

A glorious church is humble and unselfish. The poor and humble feel perfectly at ease with such a church. They are never seeking their own, but they are always seeking the good of others. May the dear Lord help us to earnestly strive to make each congregation a glorious church, so that we may be part of that glorious church in the sweet afterwhile.

## The Sisters Should

**T**HE married sisters should be "keepers at home." (Tit. 2:5.) There may be rare occasions when a married sister is justified in working out of the home, but those cases would be rare indeed. If her husband is ill, she might have to go out to provide "the daily bread." If he is not ill and does not provide for her and the children, she married the wrong man! It is passing strange how that many will emphasize one thing that the Lord teaches and then pass so lightly over others. The passage cited above is one in point. The Lord is not teaching sisters that it would be nice for them to be "keepers at home," but he is commanding Christian women thus to do. Commands are to be obeyed, not winked at. The Lord does not intend for us to keep a command if it meets with our approval, but he means for us to keep his commandments. Sister, are you keeping this one? To be "keepers at home" does not mean to work in an office or store downtown. That is not where your home is. That is not where you ought to be.

"For the love of money is the root of all evil." (I Tim. 6:10.) This inordinate love of money is the chief reason why women leave their homes and go to the office, or the factory, or to the store, or some other place. The Lord has everything fixed right. All we need to do is to line up with the laws of God. What this country needs is more good and faithful Christian mothers. When your husband comes home from his daily toil, he should find you in the home. The children should always know that mother is at home doing her home duties. These things that I am setting before you "become sound doctrine." They are a part of sound doctrine. Maybe some of the sisters are getting so they don't enjoy sound doctrine.

"The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness." (Titus 2:3.) It ought not to be very hard to know what is becoming of holiness. When we see a woman

with a cigarette between her lips, we know this does not become holiness. It is no part of holiness. When "broad" stories proceed from her lips, that is further evidence that she is not acting as she should. This is very unbecoming. This shows that her heart is not right in the sight of God.

The sisters should be "teachers of good things." There are so many good things that should be taught. The mother in the home is in position to do a lot of this good teaching that could not be done so effectively elsewhere. She should be a much better teacher of some things than a man could possibly be. Young women need to be taught to be sober. God expects the older women to teach this. Of course, she must be an example of this soberness. Young wives should be taught to love their husbands and their children. Maybe they need to be taught to have some children! It seems in our day that that is becoming needful. It would not hurt if a lot of this teaching were done before the young sisters have a husband or children. Mother should teach her daughters to select some Christian boy to keep company with and to marry. The most powerful teaching is done by a good example. Mother shows her daughters and the daughters of others right in her own home what a Christian wife and mother really is.

Too many young people enter into the sacred institution of marriage with a very poor conception of the responsibilities of married life. It is not much wonder that the terrible divorce evil is rampant. The teaching has been neglected in the home and in the church. The older sisters do not have time to teach the younger ones what the Lord would have them taught. They are so busy with the shows, clubs of various kinds, and society in general that they do not have the time, desire, nor ability to do what the Lord wants done. Very few marriages would be wrecked if the boys and girls were taught to marry Christians, and further taught both by precept and example what it means to be a true wife or husband. Mother, set the example. Your daughters will not be much better than you. And you ought to be thankful that they will not be much worse than you.

Young women need to be taught to be discreet. It would not hurt some older women to have a little teaching along this line. Webster has some pretty good things to say concerning the meaning of this word "discreet." He says it means "possessed of or showing discernment or good judgment in conduct and especially in speech; prudent; hence, prudently silent." How we need discernment and good judgment in conduct, and especially in speech! Sisters, learn to be "prudently silent."

Young women need to be taught to be chaste. Maybe a definition of that word would not be out of order. "Innocent of unlawful intercourse; virtuous; pure in thought and act; modest; pure and simple in design and expression; not ornate." It seems to this old-fashioned preacher that he has seen lots of women that need teaching along these lines. Sister, teach that daughter that she must keep her body pure and sacred. The young men need to be taught the same thing. The very foundations of happy family life rest upon purity. Those bodies must be kept innocent of unlawful intercourse. The young need to be taught by the older that there is no lawful intercourse outside of the sacred relationship of man and wife. They need to be taught to be virtuous. Many older men and women are in mighty poor position to do effective teaching along such lines. They need to wake up and repent before they burn in the fires of hell.

"Pure in thought and act." That should be, and I believe is, characteristic of every true Christian, men and women, boys and girls. They are pure in thought and act. You will hear no impure words from their lips. You will see no impure act upon their part.

It seems that modesty has all but become lost in this wicked and adulterous generation. It is all but impossible to pick up a newspaper or magazine without being confronted with pictures of immodesty. And many of the sisters of the church are guilty of immodest dress and exposure of their bodies. Such things ought not so to be. The girls need to be taught the sacredness of their body. No Christian man worthy of the name wants his wife to expose her body to the gaze of



others. And no Christian woman thus desires to do. This writer doubts seriously if any real Christian woman ever goes about before others in shorts, abbreviated skirts, and the modern bathing suit. Christians just do not do such things. The young need to be taught. And bare legs in the public assembly! Lord, have mercy upon the thoughtless!

"Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." (I Pet. 3:1-4.)

The young should be taught the danger of marrying out of the Lord. Those who have done this should be taught how to win their companions to the truth by their conversation. They must be taught to have Christian homes.

## "They Continued Stedfastly"

**T**HE first thing that is said about the church after it came into existence is found in Acts 2:42. Here it is: "And they continued Stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." So many disciples do not continue. They start all right and run well for a season, and then drop out of the race. To go to heaven we must continue steadfastly. There is no stopping place. We must continue in the right thing. The right thing is the apostles' doctrine. We have this doctrine in the New Testament. We may continue in the doctrines and commandments of men, but

this is all in vain. (Matt. 15:9.) Human doctrines will save no one. These brethren were in full fellowship. They continued in this.

They were regular in the breaking of bread. Faithful Christians never miss the Supper of the Lord unless providentially hindered. The Lord and the brethren can count on them being present for this holy Supper. (Acts 20:7.) And faithful disciples pray without ceasing. (I Thess. 5:17.)

These primitive brethren were God-fearing. The record says: "And fear came upon every soul." (Acts 2:43.) One of the crying needs of our day is a more wholesome fear of God. We need to learn the great lesson that Peter learned. Then we can say with him: "Of a truth I perceive that 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.) God will not accept persons who do not fear him and work righteousness. This will keep us busy all the days of our lives. We need to be busy doing the right thing. Our fear of God will cause us to keep busy doing the right thing. It is no wonder the wise man summed it up in these wise words: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: For this is the whole duty of man." (Eccles. 12:13.) May the dear Lord help us in these two things. This is our whole duty.

These brethren were together. "And all that believed were together." (Acts 2:44.) Nothing retards the progress of the church more than the lack of unity among brethren. The Lord Jesus Christ, foreseeing this, prayed for us in these words: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." (John 17:20, 21.) Jesus Christ prayed for all of his disciples in all subsequent generations. He prayed for the ones that believe on him through the words of the apostles. All any man needs to be saved is to continue in the apostles' doctrine. Jesus prayed that we might be one. Well did he

know that many dear souls would be lost in hell if this unity among disciples was not maintained. The divisions among us are appalling. God hasten the day when all of God's people are one. There is no more prolific source of infidelity in the world than the divided state of the so-called "Christian world." There is nothing that retards the progress of the true church more than division among brethren. When the people of the world see this, they do not take our profession very seriously.

Well did Paul write to the Ephesian brethren: "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Eph. 4:3.) When all of us do what the Spirit teaches through the word of God, we will have this much-desired unity. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Ps. 133:1.) There are many things that are good, but not pleasant; there are many things that are pleasant, but not good. Unity among brethren is both good and pleasant.

These early disciples were liberal. "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." (Acts 2:44, 45.) "Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." (Acts 4:34, 35.) When the disciples at Antioch heard about the brethren in Judea being in need, they did something about it. "Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul." (Acts 11:29, 30.) Many in our day would do a lot of talking about such a situation, but very little acting. (I would like to say parenthetically that this relief was sent unto the elders of the church. That is a pretty good precedent. Maybe today we would have to have some church to "sponsor" such a program, and then all the relief

could be sent to this "sponsoring" church. I have an idea we are doing a little too much "sponsoring.")

These early disciples were happy in the work of the Lord. They ate their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. (Acts 2:46.) It seems that Christians ought to be the happiest people on the face of the earth. They have so much over which to be happy. They are children of God. Their elder brother is Jesus Christ. The best people on the earth are their brethren in the Lord. Heaven is waiting to receive them in the sweet afterwhile. There is no room for murmuring and complaining. We ought to be able to say with Paul: "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." (Phil. 4:11.) What a lesson to learn! Many of us have not learned it very well. We are too much given to complaining. We are not as happy in the work of the Lord as we ought to be. We are too pessimistic.

These early brethren were respectable and respected. Those on the outside of the church had great, sincere respect for the children of God. The disciples had favor with all the people. (Acts 2:46.) Honest folks cannot but help admire a genuine Christian. He may fight the doctrine, but deep in his soul he is forced to honor the real Christian. In our day there is not enough difference between too many members of the church and the world. The world cannot see wherein the Christian is much different from them. Maybe they attend the same dances, see the same show, sit at the same card table, bathe in the same mixed bathing pool, belong to the same lodges and clubs, laugh at the same broad jokes, tell the same dirty stories. The line of demarcation between the world and the church is wide and deep. The Lord made it that way. It is not our business to narrow this line. Our business is to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. (James 1:27.) And, brother, you are not keeping yourself unspotted from the world when you do the same things that worldly people do. We are in the world, but we are not of the world.

It is no wonder the early church grew by leaps and bounds. "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." (Acts 2:47.) Our growth will be phenomenal when we adhere strictly to the old paths and walk therein. "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Amen!

## The Unpardonable Sin

**M**ANY honest souls have been, and are, confused over the words which stand at the head of this sermon. I am in receipt of a letter from California requesting information along this line. I may not be able to give much, but I am perfectly willing to try.

This sister asks this question: "Does the Bible teach that a child of God can so sin that he cannot be forgiven even though he repent?" Then she refers to Mark 3:28, 29. Here Jesus says that all manner of sins and blasphemy shall be forgiven save one. He says if we blaspheme against the Holy Spirit there is no forgiveness. Of course the thing that would bother is to know beyond the peradventure of a doubt just what blasphemy against the Holy Spirit means. We all know that to blaspheme means to speak evil of. We could blaspheme against God, we could blaspheme against Christ, and we could blaspheme against the Holy Spirit. The Lord did not say that blasphemy against God and against Christ could not be forgiven, but he did say that the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit has no forgiveness. It must be a sin of great enormity.

When Jesus was here doing his mighty works, men did speak against him. They sinned against him in every way' they could think of. He gave evidence beyond the peradventure' of a doubt that he was the Son of God; but in the face of all

this, they treated him evilly. However, Christ says this could be forgiven. Jesus gave one demonstration after another, while he was among men that he was God's Son, but many did not believe. However, when the Holy Spirit would come, he would give more testimony concerning Christ. The revelation concerning Christ would be fulfilled by the Holy Spirit. God has nothing further to offer. If we reject the testimony of the Holy Spirit, we are doomed. There is nothing more to be had and nothing more to be done. Revelation has been completed. All the testimony is in.

It is possible to go beyond all the mercy of God. Let us read I John 5:16: "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it." This language is without meaning if there be no unpardonable sin. But I want to say this for the benefit of the average reader, and especially for all conscientious souls: the one that is honestly striving to please the heavenly Father is in no danger of committing this sin. It is no ordinary sin to which poor mortals are so given.

Well does H. Leo Boles say: "Jesus came in the flesh, dwelt among men, and revealed the will of God to men. God, the Father, revealed his will to the Jews through Moses, and Jesus revealed the will of God to us. The Holy Spirit was to come in person and complete the work of Jesus. He said: 'It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you. And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.' (John 16:7, 8.) Many misunderstood Jesus, his teachings, and his kingdom while he was on earth, and even denied him as being the Messiah, who afterward repented and were pardoned, and became Christians. (Acts 2:37, 38; Acts 9:1, 17.) Many could, and did, reject Jesus while he was on earth; and when the Holy Spirit came and testified of him, they accepted Christ. But when the Holy Spirit came and gave the complete will of God, if men rejected this, there was no other evidence to be furnished, no

other divine agency to be given; and if they finally rejected the Holy Spirit, there was no forgiveness for them. There was no forgiveness, 'neither in this world, nor in that which is to come.' Mark says, 'hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin.' (Mark 3:29.) No sin unforgiven here or in this world will be pardoned or forgiven hereafter."

Jesus warned those who were contemporaneous with him that they could charge him with doing his mighty works by the power of the devil; but if they did this when the Holy Spirit had given all the testimony, there would be no forgiveness. Some have taught that those who spoke evil of Christ and attributed his mighty works to the power of the devil had committed the unpardonable sin. There is not a verse or a part of a verse that will bear out any such idea. By such "logic" one would rule out many of the members of the early church, even including the stalwart Paul. He was a blasphemer and injurious, but he received pardon.

While thinking along this line, it might be a profitable line of thought for us to think a little deeper on blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. When we blaspheme, we speak evil of and reject. Suppose we rail against what the Holy Spirit plainly teaches in the word of God? Suppose we absolutely reject what he says? Suppose we misrepresent and pervert what he says? Surely nothing but the lake of fire awaits all such. It seems to this scribe that sectarian preachers of our day are dangerously near the unpardonable sin. They most certainly rail against what the Holy Spirit says. They absolutely reject what he says. In their preaching they misrepresent and pervert what the Holy Spirit says. No wonder the inspired Paul wrote after this manner: "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.)

In this same connection I would like to warn my dearly beloved brethren. Many has been the time when I have sat in

Bible classes where some unlearned brother would not hesitate to tell what he "thought," not knowing what the Holy Spirit had said through the word. It is no wonder that James would warn not to be many teachers. It is a fearful responsibility to teach or preach the gospel of Christ. We dare not make a mistake. The destiny of precious souls is at stake. Brethren, be careful. Do not give your ideas, but stay with the word. If you have an idea that cannot be expressed in the very words of the Scriptures, it would be a good thing for you to keep that idea to yourself. While you do that, it will not harm others; but if you trot it out, it may do untold harm.

You may have an "idea" that all baptisms should be performed in "running water." Of course this is just your idea. The Holy Spirit never said anything about "running water." The Holy Spirit commands baptism of the penitent believer, and this baptism is to be in water. Do you not think it would be a good idea to stop just where the Holy Spirit stopped? What is to be gained by going beyond what the Holy Spirit revealed? You may have an "idea" that the "cup" must be served in one vessel, or not more than three or four at the most. Where did you get the "idea"? The Holy Spirit revealed no such thing. Can you not see how dangerous such things are? Yes, you mean all right, but that does not make it right. Be careful.

## The Coming Judgment

**T**HE things that are in the New Testament now will be there at the judgment. We shall be judged according to what is written. "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of



himself to God." (Rom. 14:10-12.) "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (II Cor. 5:10.)

And we are ready for that judgment? Have we learned the will of the Lord, and have we reduced that law to action in our lives? It is written: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16:16.) That has stood on the pages of the New Testament always. Friendly sinner, you may be dead tomorrow, but this passage will be in the New Testament after you are dead. After you have slept the long sleep of death and come up in the judgment it will be there still. Suppose while you are in the flesh you do not obey this command of the Lord. What chance do you think you will have at the judgment? Do you suppose Christ will change the law at the judgment? No, it will stand. We shall be judged by it. The preachers may scoff at it now, but when they stand before the head of the church at the judgment they will not scoff then.

It is written in Matt. 10:32, 33, and in Rom. 10:9, 10, and in other places that we are to confess Christ. This confession should be made at every opportunity. We may not make it, but whether we do or not the command stands. It has stood ever since Christ was on earth. We may deny him by our lives and words today. Before the sun comes over the eastern hills in the morning we may be cold in death. Our lips are stilled. It is too late to confess him now. However, the old Book still reads the same. It will read the same at the judgment. There we shall have to confess to God. It will be eternally too late for the "good confession" to avail us anything. Are we ready for the judgment on this scale?

Time after time it is written that men must repent of their sins. Jesus said the ones who do not repent will perish. (Luke 13:3, 5.) Have we repented of every sin which we have committed? Baptism will wash away sins that have been repented of. The Christian must repent of his sins and pray God for forgiveness. We may refuse to repent, but that does not change the law of Christ. Brother, it will read the same at the judg-

ment You may abuse your brother here and speak all manner of evil against him falsely, but those sins will face you at the judgment. May I plead with you to repent of those sins before you go the way of all the earth. You will repent of them at the judgment seat of Christ, but then it is too late. While eternity rolls on and you are burning in hell you will remember those sins that kept you out of heaven.

It is written that we must be baptized to be saved. We cannot have our sins forgiven short of a burial in water. The human creeds may say that we can, but the New Testament does not say it. On the birthday of the church believers were told to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. (Acts 2:38.) And to be "baptized for the remission of sins" does not mean to be baptized because your sins have been forgiven. You may have been baptized, but maybe you had been taught that you were saved before you were baptized. The Book does not read that way. It will not read that way at the judgment. If your faith was wrong when you were baptized you had better be baptized with an intelligent understanding of the faith. Maybe when you were baptized you thought that one "church" is as good as another. The Book does not read that way. It will not read that way at the judgment. You had better be baptized to get into the body of Christ. (Rom. 6:3-5; I Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:26, 27.) Maybe you were taught that "sprinkling" and "pouring" are baptism. They are not forty-second cousins to baptism. Read the Book. Remember it will read at the judgment the same way it does now. There is just one intelligent thing to do, and that is to line up with its teaching now, and then we will be in line at the judgment.

Christians are taught to assemble regularly to worship God. (Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7.) Brother, have you always done that? Are you doing it now? When you neglect to meet for worship the Book does not change because you refuse to obey it. God tells us not to forsake the assembly. (Heb. 10:25.) When the Lord opens it at the judgment it will read the same. Are we ready for the judgment on this basis? Were you around the Lord's table every time it was possible for you

to be there? Did you miss it to go visiting, to entertain company, to go about your daily labor? Better do some serious thinking. The judgment is coming.

It is written that every Christian is to give as he is prospered. (1 Cor. 16:1, 2; II Cor. 8:7.) So many refuse to do this. It is still in the Book. We may go around with the Lord's money in our pockets and use it to satisfy the lusts of the flesh, but that does not change the teaching of the word of God. While time shall last it will remain on the sacred pages. When we stand at the judgment it will read exactly as it does now. Are we ready for the judgment on this score?

We will be judged on the basis of our living. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." (I Cor. 6:9, 10.) We had better scan that list again. Folks who do such things are not going to inherit the eternal kingdom of God. They may be preachers, elders, or deacons here, but the judgment is coming. Such folks are not going to heaven. Remember this quotation. It will face us at the judgment.

The New Testament teaches purity of life; purity of thought; purity of word; purity of doctrine. Without this purity we cannot pass the judgment test. Jesus said: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." (Matt. 5:8.) The inspired Paul wrote to Titus thus: "In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned." (Titus 2:7, 8.) Every one of us members should be a pattern of good works. We should be grave and sincere. I am convinced there is too much levity among us. There is too much foolish talking. There is too much jesting. Our speech must be sound. Are we ready for the judgment along these lines?

The widows and orphans must be cared for. This is part of pure religion. The Lord never meant to turn this care over

to some other organization. This is the work of the church. Let us not dodge the responsibility. James 1:27 is still in the Book. What I am trying to impress in this sermon is the fact that all of these things will be in the Book at the judgment. We will be judged by them. If we are not practicing them here we are not ready for the judgment. Some will be on the left and some on the right. Those on the right will be the ones that did right. Those on the left will be the ones that did wrong or did nothing. (Matt. 25:31-46.)

---

36

## **The Christian and the World Introduction**

**T**HIS is indeed a timely subject for this day and age of the world and of the church. Nearly every thinker will readily admit that the world is creeping into the lives of entirely too many members of the church. The line of demarcation between the church and the world is drawn wide and deep in the New Testament. Certainly we do well when we try to keep this distinction between the church and the world. One cannot be in the church and in the world at one and the same time. Too many are trying this impossible feat. The world really hates a Christian. If we were of the world the world would love us. Jesus said it this way: "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." (John 15:19.)

The way to escape the sneers and scoffs of the world is to become worldly. If we will run with the world we can escape the persecution which the world heaps upon the faithful Christian. What an awful price to pay! It is just too dear. We cannot afford to jeopardize our souls in any such way. Listen:

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."  
(I John 2:15-17.)

### **Matt. 5:13-16**

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the stand; and it shineth unto all that are in the house. Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

We all know this is a part of the sermon that Jesus preached on the mountain. We all appreciate salt. It is a great savor. It gives taste and relish to our food. If it were not for the good influence which Christians have the world could not stand. The world is being preserved by Christians. They live the Christian life before others, and they are constantly teaching the gospel to others. We are here to save ourselves and others. There is no such a thing as being saved by yourself.

If salt loses its saltiness it becomes worthless. Yes, it is even worse than worthless — it is harmful. It will "kill" the soil where it may be cast. When Christians lose their saving qualities they are good for nothing. They must be cast out. They lose their saving influence over others.

Then Jesus swings from salt to light. Light drives away darkness. Light and darkness cannot occupy the same place. The Christian goes into the world and sin and darkness are overcome. You cannot hide such a light. What a great influence in the world is a congregation of Christians. One little

congregation in a community becomes the light of that community. Their good works cannot be hid. Indeed they are like unto a city set on a hill.

The word "bushel" in the text comes from a Latin term. This measure was about a peck. The place for the lamp was on a stand and not under the bushel. Christians give forth the light of the gospel. If a Christian were to live alone he would be putting his light under a bushel.

Jesus did not tell us to shine our lights, but to let it shine. There is quite a difference. We don't let our light shine so we can have some glory, and praise, and be exalted by our fellows. No, we are letting it shine to dispel darkness. Too many boast of the "great" things they have done. Light does not make any noise. The faithful Christian quietly goes about his daily toils, letting his light shine. When we don't pay our honest debts; when we go to doubtful places of entertainment; when we refuse to do the many things that are enjoined upon Christians we are failing miserably to let our light shine. It ought to shine with the same degree of brilliancy at all times. Sometimes Christians will shine brightly for a spell, and then their lights go out. How great is that darkness! Reader, are you letting your light so shine before men that they may see it and be caused to glorify God?

**Phil. 2:14-16**

"Do all things without murmurings and questionings: that ye may become blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life; that I may have whereof to glory in the day of Christ, that I did not run in vain neither labor in vain."

Judging by the way many members of the church act we might decide that they had never seen this passage. How folks do murmur and complain! God has not laid on us tasks that are too hard. May we go forth in the discharge of every known duty, and not dispute nor question the commands of

God. We are not blameless when we refuse to do what the Lord commands in the way that he commands it to be done. It is possible to live a blameless life. The parents of John the Baptist did this. The divine record says that "they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." (Luke 1:6.) This does not mean they never made any mistakes. To err is human. We should strive to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

Christians are harmless people. They are innocent people. What a transformation would be worked in this sinful old world if all of us professing Christians would be harmless and blameless. We must not take on our natures the sins that surround us. Christians must live in the midst of a crooked and perverse people. We should be very careful to set right examples before those of the faith, and doubly careful to set such an example before those who are not of the household of the faith. The darker the night the brighter the light shines.

The only spiritual light that a great many know anything about is the light of Christ that they see reflected in the humble disciples of Christ. They know little or nothing of the Bible. They are getting their impressions of Christianity from the lives that we live in their presence. The only Bible they know anything about is the "Bible" they see in us. What if the print is blurred! God forbid!

Christians are ever teaching the gospel to others. In this way they hold forth the word of life. They are not interested in the doctrines and commandments of men. They are waiting for the Lord's return. What a day that will be for faithful Christians.

Paul had labored long and hard at Philippi. Faithful preachers of our day are ever trying to get the converts to hold forth the word of life by teaching and example. What rejoicing round the throne of God when the faithful teacher and the ones that he has taught get home! Then we shall know that we

have not run in vain neither labored in vain. Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war!

**Col. 4:5**

"Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time."

It is true that those who are not Christians constantly watch those who are. They watch our walk and our talk. Our talk will not have very much effect if the walk contradicts the talk. So many are so much better talkers than they are walkers! If all Christians would live lives that would bear real inspection! They see no filthy habits in the life of the genuine Christian. They don't see him at places where Christians should not be. The real Christian is really redeeming the time. He uses every possible occasion to the glory of God. Good-speed translates this verse as follows: "Use wisdom in dealing with outsiders, making the most of your opportunities." Every faithful gospel preacher who has been preaching for any time can tell you of case after case where he has baptized some dear soul because some member of the church used wisdom in dealing with outsiders, making the most of their opportunity to make lasting impressions for truth and right. But, O my soul, how many will be lost in endless hell because some professed member of the church did not use wisdom in dealing with the unsaved, and made impressions for evil that will be as lasting as eternity.

May God help every Christian who reads this to make a new resolve to be more careful in really living the Christian life. Life is short. What we are going to do we must do shortly. May God help us all to live right towards those who are without. Don't forget that you are the salt of the earth. Don't lose your saltiness. Don't forget that you are the light of the world. Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. Go forth in the discharge of your duties. Don't murmur and question. Be blameless and harmless. Be true sons of God



in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation. Shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life. Then you will rejoice in the day of Christ.

---

37

## The Way of Cain

"WOE unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core." (Jude 11.) The "way of Cain" is the way of the transgressor — and this is a hard way. "The way of transgressors is hard." (Prov. 13:15.) The Bible is full of warnings for the transgressor, but it seems so few will heed the warnings. They insist on finding out for themselves.

Sin is the transgression of the law of God. Cain thought he would offer whatever he cared to as an offering unto the Lord. He was a tiller of the soil. What would be more natural than for him to bring of the fruit of the ground? The Lord had no respect for Cain's offering. He will have no respect for us and our worship unless we do it in compliance with his commandments. "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." (II John 9.)

The "way of Cain" is the way of the substitutor. He substituted his way for the Lord's way. The religious world is full of just such substitution. The Lord says one thing, but men want something else. We learn from Heb. 11:4 that Abel offered his offering by faith. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." It is excellent to do

exactly what God commands in exactly the way he commands it to be done. God counts that righteousness upon our part. Anything else than this is sin. Abel has been dead for thousands of years, but he yet speaketh. It is wonderful that a man can speak for truth and right thousands of years after he is dead.

Abel offered by faith. Cain did not so offer. We cannot do anything by faith unless that thing has been ordered of the Lord. God teaches us to sing spiritual songs in worship. (I Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16.) We can render this act of worship by faith. When we add instrumental music, we are substituting our own think-so. We cannot use this instrumental music by faith. There is no word of God for it. The Lord has not commanded it. The Lord had not commanded Cain's offering. He would have none of it. Why should people of our day think that God will accept worship that he has not commanded? Jesus said: "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Matt. 15:9.)

The Lord commands penitent believers to be baptized for the remission of their sins. (Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 2:37, 38; 22:16.) Men want to substitute the baptism of babies for believers' baptism. God will accept nothing of the kind. God says we are to be buried by baptism. (Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12; Heb. 10:22.) Men have substituted sprinkling and pouring for baptism. After they set aside the law of God, and then make a law of their own, they have the audacity to ask God to accept their human law. They will go so far as to say: "It is just as good as what the Bible commands." Millions of honest souls are being deceived by this substitution. Many will not learn until the judgment day that they have been wrong. They trusted in men and in human law instead of trusting in God and his law. Beware of substitution!

The Lord teaches his disciples to meet upon the first day of the week to observe the Lord's Supper. The first day of the week comes every seven days. Men have substituted their "wisdom" for God's wisdom. They will meet every month or so or every six months to do what the Lord said to do on

the first day of the week. Of course the Lord knows nothing about a human church, and he made no laws to govern it. But he did make laws to govern his church. We had better abide in the doctrine of Christ in this and in all other things. "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain."

The "way of Cain" is the way of the evil one. It is the way of the devil. It is an awful thing to be a servant of the devil. "Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you." (I John 3:12, 13.) The wicked have ever hated the righteous. The Lord will not accept the wicked and his wickedness. Cain was of the devil. Many of our day have the same father! Some brethren seem to marvel because the world hates them. There is just one way to get the love of the world. That way is the way of Cain. Go along with the world, and the world will love its own. Draw the line between the church and the world wide and deep, and the world will hate you. Yes, and some of the worldly "Christians" will almost hate you.

The "way of Cain" is the way of jealousy and envy. Cain was jealous of his brother. He was envious of him. This envy and jealousy caused him to kill his brother. Envy and jealousy will go to hurtful extremes to gain their end. "Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?" (Prov. 27:4.) Envy will do anything and everything to accomplish its ends.

The "way of Cain" is the way of the murderer. He murdered his brother. We have many brethren in the church who are doing the same thing. Some may think this statement too strong, but it is not. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." (I John 3:15.) It is an awful thing to hate a brother. Brother, if you go to the judgment with hate in your heart toward a brother, you will land in hell. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom

he hath not seen?" (I John 4:20.) We have many brethren who will profess loudly their love to God, but at the very same time hate some of the brethren. God says such folks are murderers and liars. This was Cain's trouble.

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." (John 8:44.)

The "way of Cain" is to deny that we are responsible for our brother. "And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen. 4:9.) Many of our day have the mistaken idea that they can do as they please regardless. In a very important sense we are our brother's keeper. Some have filthy habits that cause others to offend. We had better lay such habits aside. Our examples are powerful things. Many dear souls will be lost because those professing Christianity set a bad example before them. Many others will be saved because some humble Christian realized his great responsibility in teaching and in living.

May the dear God in heaven deliver us from the "way of Cain."

## **"The Body, The Church"**

**T**HE word "church" does not occur in the Old Testament. It is distinctly a New Testament term. The first time it is used is Matt. 16:18. Here Jesus states that he is going to build his church. That was a year or so before the church became an accomplished fact. The Lord always does what he says he will do. He said he would build his church. He built it. He did not say a word about building some other church.

He never mentioned any church but his own. Men have built many "churches." The Lord built one. It is that one about which we are concerned in this study.

Men build churches, and then they make converts to their churches. A lot of honest people are deluded into believing when they have gone into some human organization they are Christians. Nothing under heaven will make a Christian except obedience to the gospel of Christ. The gospel of Christ makes Christians only. The Lord has never added anyone to a human denomination. He never will. When the Lord adds folks, he adds them to his church. He does not add anyone until that person is saved, and that person is not saved until he obeys the Lord. When thus he does, the Lord adds him to the church. (Acts 2:47.) Just preaching the gospel of Christ will never cause anyone to think that he ought to "join" some human denomination. It will cause him to understand that he ought to obey the gospel of Christ. He will understand that when he does this he is saved, and that the Lord takes care of the addition to the church.

It is absurd to think that the Lord would add one person to one church and another to some other church. It is also absurd to think that God would command one person to do one thing to be saved and another person to do something entirely different. To make anything but a Christian, something besides the gospel will have to be preached, and some book will have to be used besides the New Testament. If a man wanted to start a congregation of Mormons, he would have to take along another book besides the New Testament. If he wanted to start a Methodist congregation, he would need some other book besides the New Testament. The same could be said, and should be said, of every human denomination on earth. When it dawns upon folks that the gospel only makes Christians only, they may take more time to learn the gospel of Christ.

The New Testament says in just so many words that there is one body. (Eph. 4:4.) If any doubt whether this "one body" is the church, all he has to do is to investigate the truth.

In Col. 1:18 we are informed that Christ is the head of the body, and then it is explained that this body is the church. In Eph. 1:22, 23 we learn that Christ is head over all things to the church, and then we are told that the church is his body. In Eph. 5:23 we are taught that Christ is the head of the church, and that he is the savior of the body. The body of Christ is the church of Christ, and the church of Christ is the body of Christ. These terms are used interchangeably in the New Testament.

The one verse referred to above (Eph. 5:23) is enough to teach us where the saved are. They are in the church. The Lord is the Savior of the body. Folks will say that the church does not save; it is the Lord that saves. That is true, but one cannot be saved out of the church, for the simple reason that the same thing that saves him makes him a member of the church. If we want to be saved, we must get into position where the Lord can save us. This position cannot be had out of the church.

There are some things we must do to get into this body. Many fall far short of doing what it takes to get into the church. They think faith alone will save. It will not. One cannot be saved without faith, but he may believe in a way that Christ is the Son of God, but refuse to do what he says. Even faith plus repentance will not put one into a saved condition. There is only one way under heaven to get into the body of Christ, and that is to be baptized. As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. (Gal. 3:26, 27.) Christ is put on in baptism. He is not put on one minute before. We are all baptized into one body. (I Cor. 12:13) You may get into many bodies without being baptized, but not one can get into the body of Christ without being baptized into it. And when we intelligently obey the Lord and the "other fellow" does the same, we are in the "one body" together, and in the same body that every other person is in that has obeyed the Lord.

The Lord did not leave us in the dark about how to be baptized. We do not have to guess about this. We do not have to take the word of preachers for it. One preacher will

sprinkle a little water on a person and call it "baptism." Another preacher will use a little more water, perhaps pour it on, and call that "baptism." But the good Lord makes it so plain that the most humble can understand it when he says we are "buried by baptism." (Rom. 6:3-5.) A humble disciple can hold his ground with the most learned sectarian bigot if he will just cleave to the word of God. Just hold that false teacher to the issue. Hold him to the subject. Just tell him that the Lord said we are "buried by baptism." Surely we can remember three words, and surely we can turn and read those words. If that is not enough, remember that the Lord said that we have our bodies washed. (Heb. 10:22.) The forehead, or the top of the head, would not be the "body." When one is scripturally baptized, his entire body is washed. Yes, we are "buried with him in baptism." (Col. 2:12.)

This one body has many members. They are many members, yet but one body. (I Cor. 12:20.) The physical body has many members. The spiritual body has many members. (Rom. 12:4, 5.)

One cannot be saved without being a member of the body, but one can be lost and be a member of the body. One can depart from the living God, The doctrine of once in grace, always in grace, is not a Bible doctrine. The idea of once saved, always saved, is foreign to the word of God. If one is going to teach such doctrine, he will need another book besides the New Testament. The New Testament would be of no use in trying to teach such stuff. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." (Heb. 3:12.) You will note that one can depart from the living God. Yes, the "brethren" can do this. Thousands have done it. "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." (I Cor. 9:27.) Paul knew that his going to heaven depended upon keeping his body under control. He knew he could be a castaway. One can preach the truth to others, and then go to hell himself.

The members of the body who are faithful unto death will go to heaven after a while. (Rev. 2:10.) "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." (Rev. 22:14.) You cannot do his commandments and remain out of the body. Just as sure as you do his commandments he will add you to this body. You cannot enter heaven without doing his commandments. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

## Three Prayers

**T**HERE are many recorded prayers in the book of God. In this sermon we want to call attention to three of these short prayers, hoping to get lessons that will help us on our journey to the skies.

The first of these is a prayer of Jesus. These precious words fell from his lips while he was dying on the cross: "And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death. And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:32-34.)

Jesus died praying for his enemies. He practiced in his death what he preached in his life. At the beginning of his ministry he had taught his disciples to pray for their enemies: "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." (Matt. 5:44.) So many times in our day disciples do not even love the brethren, to say nothing of loving their enemies. We should never curse, but we should bless them that curse us. People will hate us without a cause, but we should ever seek opportunities to



do them good. We must not retaliate. The spirit of hatred is the spirit of the devil.

However, we know by subsequent events that Jesus did not mean by this prayer that he wanted God to save these miserable sinners in their sin. God cannot save folks in sin. Fifty-three days later these sinners for whom Jesus prayed are not saved, but now they are given an opportunity to be saved. The prayer of Jesus is about to be answered concerning many of them. The day of Pentecost has fully come. The apostles and others are come together. For the first time after the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, the gospel of Christ is being preached. The birthday of the church has come. Peter and the other apostles are preaching to the very ones who a little less than two months before had betrayed and murdered the Son of God. In his sermon Peter said: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." (Acts 2:36.) That is positive preaching; that is plain preaching; that is kind preaching. It brought results. Gospel preaching always brings results. "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37.) They had heard the gospel of Christ. They believed it. They wanted to know what to do to be saved. Hear the answer: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38)

The prayer of Jesus is answered. The ones who crucified him are told what they must do to be saved. It is hard to imagine a preacher of our day not telling believing sinners the same thing to do to be saved. But very few preachers of our day will just give this simple answer to this simple question. But it is the only correct answer. Obedience to this will bring salvation. Nothing else under God's sun will save a soul from

death. Reader, do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God? If so, repent of your sins and be buried by baptism for the remission of those sins. Rise from the watery grave of baptism to walk in newness of life.

But another prayer. The first Christian martyr was Stephen. He died as his Lord had died before him. He died praying for his enemies. They were stoning him to death. Stephen was preaching to them, trying to turn them from death unto life. But they were determined to kill him, and this they did. It had been but a few brief months since Jesus had died. Now Stephen follows him into eternity.

And what a grand death he died. "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep." (Acts 7:59, 60.)

They could stone Stephen, but they could not keep him from praying for them. He would even kneel down in the face of an angry mob. What a spirit! It is no wonder that he, "being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." (Acts 7:55, 56.) Jesus did not sit while his faithful martyr was dying. We need to kneel down more. We need to humble ourselves more. Heaven will be open for those who humble themselves. It is dangerous to allow days to go over our heads without kneeling before our Maker.

But we have room for one more prayer. The ones who stoned Stephen laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man. This young man was Saul. (Acts 7:58.) He was consenting unto his death. At this time he thought Jesus was an impostor, and that his followers should be killed. Of this period of his life he said: "I verily thought with myself, that

I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities." (Acts 26:9-11.)

Yes, Paul was mad against the disciples. He had not yet learned that he would bear the name of Christ before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. He had not yet been shown how great things he would suffer for the name of Christ. (Acts 9:15, 16.) But he learned. Yes, he learned that he was wrong. He learned that "the old-time religion" would not do. He learned that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. When this he learned, he repented of his sins. The poor fellow could not eat nor sleep until he had gotten rid of this great burden of sin. Just as soon as he learned that he must arise and be baptized to wash away his sins, he did it. (Acts 22:16.)

And for a little over thirty years he preached the faith which once he destroyed. (Gal. 1:23.) How he sacrificed to do that! He knew what it meant to be hungry; he knew what it meant to be cold; he knew what it meant to be naked. He was acquainted with stripes, and rods, and stones, and prisons. He knew shipwreck and what it meant to be in the deep. But none of these things moved him. He was looking for the crown. The end of his earthy sojourn is in sight. He was in jail. He was already being offered. Those precious hours are not wasted. He writes to his son in the gospel, Timothy. His pen is about to be laid down for the last time. Let us read the little prayer: "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge." (II Tim. 4:16.) Servant of God, well done!

## **The Works of the Flesh**

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Gal. 5:19-21.)

This is an awful catalogue of sins. These things will keep us out of heaven. God says that folks who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. The brethren may carry them on the church roll here on earth, but their names are not in the Lamb's book of life. I am sure that we have many members who engage in one or more of these things. It will be a profitable study to scan this list carefully. It may keep us out of hell.

"Adultery" and "fornication" seem to be used interchangeably in the Scriptures. Perhaps "adultery" applies more specifically to illicit relations with a married person, and "fornication" to illicit relations between unmarried persons. However, "fornication" also denotes "adultery." There is so much fornication and adultery in the world today. Such things ought not to be mentioned among members of the church. Homes are broken up because of the ungodly lusts of men and women. To avoid fornication God has wisely provided to let every man have his own wife and every woman her own husband. (I Cor. 7:2.) And to have one's own husband or wife does not mean to have the wife or husband of some other man or woman. People who do such things shall not escape the damnation of hell. If you have already done that, you had better repent before you get to hell. It will be too late then!

Anything that is not pure is unclean. We have something of the nature of the meaning of this word in Rom. 1:24:

"Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves."

"Lasciviousness" means all manner of lewdness and unclean-ness. It means lewd and lustful. It is something that has a tendency to produce lewd emotions. The way some Christian (?) women dress in our day and age would have a tendency to produce lewd emotions. Maybe some of the brothers are not too much behind in this. Sisters, any indecent exposure is wrong and sinful. Brother, it is the same thing in men.

"Idolatry" primarily means the worshiping of idols. However, there are idols many. We may worship many things besides the true God. Some worship money; some, fashion, some, men; some, education; some, fame. Kind reader, flee from idolatry.

"Hatred" is the very opposite of brotherly love and kindness. There is a great lack of brotherly love and kindness among us today. This deficiency is the very cause of many of our troubles. We have too much hatred in our hearts. We should love the brethren with a pure heart fervently. Hatred in the heart will land our poor souls in the lake of fire. Brother, do not die with hatred in your heart toward a fellow man. Do not allow the sun to go down upon your wrath. If you do, before the sun rises in the morning you may be in torment.

Hatred just leads to variance. Variance is hatred in open action. It is contests, altercations, lawsuits, and disputes in general. Brethren have even gone to law with brethren before the unbeliever. We have so many jars and disputes. These things will damn our souls for time and for eternity.

It is all right to emulate if we are trying to emulate ourselves — that is, if we are striving to excel ourselves. When we strive to excel at the expense of others, it is an awful sin. Sometimes we try to build up ourselves by lowering others. In the sight of God this is a great sin. Emulation is an unholy zeal. There is such a thing as holy zeal. Rivalry is bad, even among preachers!

Wrath causes us to be mentally unbalanced. It is a mild form of insanity. It leads to broils and quarrels.

Strife is disputing and jangling. One of the definitions is strife about words. There is a difference between debating and disputing. Some dispute for the mere sake of disputing.

Seditions are factions and parties in the church. Factions are having a field day in our time. Some little trouble arises in a congregation, and the next thing we know a faction is meeting in a hall three blocks down the street, labeling themselves "the church of Christ." Brethren, take the sign down! Put up the true one: "A Faction from the church of Christ." Why did you form this separate party? Maybe it was preceded by hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, and strife. Was the worship corrupted? Do they still sing and pray at the old stand? Do they preach the gospel there? Could you give of your means to the spreading of the gospel of Christ? Is the worship pure? Now, just why did you leave? Was it because of your unbounded love for the truth, or was it because you did not like some of the brethren? If there were no factions, the Lord would not have warned us about them. A factionist usually thinks that everyone else is a factionist but himself!

When a faction pulls off from the church and sets up the worship, then we have a heresy. About all I would know to do with a heretic would be to admonish him a couple of times, and then reject him, knowing that he that is such subverted and sinneth, being condemned of himself. (Tit. 3:10, 11.) And, brother preacher, this does not mean to hold a meeting for the faction!

Envy is a bad disease. When we see others excelling and happy, and it causes pain in our chest, we are envious. There is just not much cure for it. Maybe a lot of Bible reading and some sincere praying would get this devilish spirit out of our hearts.

We can be murderers without taking human life. The Bible tells us that if we hate our brother we are murderers. (I John

3:15.) I am sure we have murderers in the pulpit, among the elders, among the deacons. They hate some of the brethren.

Drunkenness is common in our day. Folks drink wine, beer, hard cider, etc. Some who call themselves "Christians" do it.

The foregoing list is long. How many sins it includes! But if the sin is not specifically mentioned here, it is found under "revellings, and such like." The modern dance comes under "revellings." The motion-picture show borders on "revellings." Obscene songs and music make "revellings." What could be more obscene than the show? Where would you go to get your obscene music?

Brethren, go over the list again. Be honest; be sincere. Look at it fairly and squarely. "I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Amen and amen!

## **"Well Reported of by the Brethren"**

"THEN came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek; which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek." (Acts 16:1-3.)

It seems that Paul was ever looking for young men to preach the gospel. This is a fine example for us today. We should be on constant lookout for young men who may develop into great preachers of the word. However, in looking for gospel preachers there are some important things that must not be

overlooked. One of these is that he must have a good report of the brethren. The ones who know him best must have complete confidence in him. Of course the preacher will have this good report and confidence of the brethren if he is what a gospel preacher ought to be. There is something radically wrong when evil reports constantly follow a preacher. God knows we do not have enough preachers, but one of the wrong kind is too many of that kind. One preacher who does not set the right example before the young and others can do, and does do, untold harm to the cause of Christ. It goes without saying that if Timothy had not had a good report of the brethren, Paul would not have had him go forth with him. Paul loved the cause of Christ too much to encourage someone to preach the gospel who was not well reported of.

It is reported that some preachers smoke pipes, chew tobacco, and smoke cigarettes. I have even heard of a preacher who would preach against the tobacco habit, and this same preacher would use it when he was not in the pulpit! "O consistency, thou art a jewel." All of us have heard outsiders talking about someone and telling of his good traits. Many times they will say he does not even use tobacco! They must think that if one, especially a preacher, uses tobacco, he is not as "good" as he ought to be. They evidently think this is part of being good even if they are addicted to the habit. I know that no preacher's influence has been hurt because he did not use tobacco. I further know that the influence of some has been hurt because they did use it. They may try to laugh it off, but it is not that easily gotten rid of.

Sometimes it is reported on some preachers that they are "too thick" with other women than their wives. They are seen too often in company with some other woman, and maybe this woman has some questionable marks about her character. She may be a "divorcee." Certainly a preacher who has the cause of Christ at heart, who loves his own wife and family, will be more careful of his conduct. He will shun the very appearance of evil. For the life of me I do not see how such



reports could get out on a preacher if there is no foundation for the report. Where there is so much smoke there must be a little fire. The only thing for the preacher to do is to put out such fires. The brethren ought to help him put them out! He may need just a little help along such lines. In my thirty years of preaching I have never known of such a report getting started on a preacher until after he had done something that gave cause for such reports. Preachers must be more discreet.

Sometimes it is reported of preachers that they are careless along financial lines. They do not meet their obligations as promptly as they should. We should not contract debts that we cannot pay. In our day most preachers are paid a living wage. In fact, some of them are overpaid. They are paid more than they earn. Nothing would cripple the good influence of a preacher more than to have bills around that he has not paid. No such evil reports should ever follow a preacher. We should learn to use our money wisely. It is morally wrong to waste money which is paid to them for preaching. Many will say that it would not be possible for preachers to squander money, because the brethren do not give them sufficient that they could do this. This simply is not true. Many preachers are making more money than they could possibly make in any other way.

It seems to me that preachers should work at their job the same as other working people work at theirs. There is much to be done. It takes hours of time in preparation. The preacher needs to do much reading and writing. He has visiting to be done. He should be constantly on the lookout for some opportunity to preach a few extra sermons. Souls need to be taught privately the right ways of the Lord. The church is paying the preacher to work. It is not paying him to loaf. It will not be hard for the true gospel preacher to be busy. He should be well reported of by the brethren along these lines.

Sometimes preachers, especially young ones, become too enthusiastic over sports. They spend too much time and money at the games. They are sometimes late for prayer meeting

because the game was not over. I am sure that too much emphasis is being put on athletics in our high schools and colleges. This may be true even of our Bible colleges. It seems that a lot of good energy is being wasted along these lines. It is being overdone. I know that the immodest apparel of the athlete is not right for the Christian.

Brethren will shout themselves hoarse at a game. They will stand or sit in the cold rains and snow to see a game. Some of these same brethren would complain mightily if a preacher were to preach the gospel for an hour. Maybe their hearts are in the wrong place. It does not seem just the thing for preachers to take a very prominent part in such things. It would not cause them to have a good report among the brethren.

A preacher could hurt his influence by loud and boisterous talk before and after services. Our brethren are entirely too loud in the meetinghouse. They talk too much and too loud before the services begin and after they are over. The preacher should surely set a good example along these lines. He should take his seat quietly some few minutes before the services begin. This will be a good example for the other members to follow. Maybe the preacher can set the example and do a little teaching along the line. Then when it comes time to worship, the song leader can be heard when he announces the first song. It goes without saying that the brethren should be in their seats a few minutes before the services are to start. They should not come tramping into the building during the song service. That song service is worship. If you miss the first song, you have missed that much of the worship. You have caused others to be disturbed who were trying to worship the God in heaven. Maybe the word of God is being read. It is a serious thing to disturb this reading.

Listen, preacher: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. . . . Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." (I Tim. 4:12, 13.)

## Widows Indeed

**T**HE world is full of widows who are not widows indeed in the true Bible sense. In this study we want to learn more of the characteristic of a true widow. Paul gives this description in the fifth chapter of his first letter to Timothy. "Honour widows that are widows indeed." This would indicate that there are widows who are not widows indeed. The word "honor" sometimes means to support or sustain. This is the evident meaning in this passage. When aged widows have no children nor friends to sustain them, it becomes the duty of the church to support and sustain this class of widows. They are destitute, old, and helpless. Jesus taught along this line in these words: "For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death." (Matt. 15:4.)

"But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God." A widow indeed is one that does not have children or other relatives who will or can help them. When believers have widows indeed, it is their duty as Christians to take care of them, and not let the church be charged. The church must take care of the widows indeed. The word "requite" means to repay. When we were young and helpless, our parents took care of us. Now when they are old and helpless, we must repay them. It is a poor brand of Christianity that will not do this. "Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live on the earth." (Eph. 6:2, 3.) It will not be well with the ones who do not honor their parents, in this world or in the one to come.

"Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day." One who is desolate is one who is left alone without

relatives and friends. Such a widow is a widow indeed. Such a widow would naturally continue in supplications and prayers night and day. She realizes her utter dependence upon the heavenly Father.

"But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." We have heard of someone lecturing on the subject, "Millions Now Living Shall Never Die." According to this statement from Paul, millions now living are already dead! We have too many widows that are spoiled. Well does Adam Clarke comment on this: "She that liveth delicately — voluptuously indulging herself with dainties; it does not indicate grossly criminal pleasures; but simply means one who indulges herself in good eating and drinking, pampering her body at the expense of her mind. The word is used in reference to what we term petted and spoiled children." We have many widows who thus live. Yes, and many others who are not widows. They pamper the body at the expense of the mind. When people thus live, they have no real purpose in life. They are dead while they live.

"And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless." Widows need to be taught these things. The whole church needs to be taught along these lines. This is the way we can escape and be blameless.

"But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." We think that an infidel is an awful person, and so he is; but we have members of the church who are even worse. They will not provide for those of their own house. We cannot escape our responsibility in caring for widows that are widows indeed. By our very acts we deny the faith when we refuse to do the things that are obligatory upon us. Many infidels will provide for their own; many "Christians" will not. These "Christians" have denied the faith and are worse than infidels.

"Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man, well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she

have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work." Now we are learning what God means by a widow indeed. Widows who do not come under this description are not widows indeed, and the church is not to be charged with their support. Other things being equal, a widow under sixty years of age can certainly do something toward her own support. God expects her to do it. God never makes provision for lazy people and triflers. She must not be a widow who has had more than one husband at a time. Her reputation for good works is universal. Folks know how she used to help the needy and follow every good work. She has been a faithful Christian in every way.

This widow indeed has brought up children. Her love for children may have gone even beyond her own household. She has reached out after other children. Maybe she had an "orphans' home" right under her own roof without an extra "organization." She was not even placed in the "budget." Her hospitality even extended to strangers. In the Eastern country strangers and travelers needed to have their feet washed. This was a good work. Many times they walked barefoot or without any sole to protect their feet. Pious women often "washed the saints' feet" She has ever been interested in the sick and afflicted. You could count on her doing what she could to relieve the afflicted. She has been a Christian in every true sense of the word. She diligently followed every good work. It is no wonder to a thinking person that if members of the church have such widows and do not provide for them, they have denied the faith and are worse than infidels.

"But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry; having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith. And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not."

Such characters are not widows indeed. If a widow under sixty were to be taken into the number for the church to sup-

port, the chances are that "when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry; having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith." The apostle is not condemning the young widows for marrying, but he is condemning them for being taken into the number for the church to support. These young widows might make all kinds of promises and vows that their widowhood would be permanent, and then marry. What have they done? They have broken their vows.

Idleness is dangerous to all. If these young widows were supported, they would have plenty of time to wander from house to house. They would be tattlers and busybodies. They certainly would speak things which they ought not to speak.

"I will therefore that the younger women [widows] marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. For some are already turned aside after Satan. If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed." Believers, do your duty!

## **Why Are You Not a Christian?**

**T**HIS would be a good question for all of us to ask all of our friends and loved ones. If you are not a Christian, it would be a good question to ask yourself. I heard of an old gospel preacher once who always asked those with whom he came in contact if they were Christians. If he learned they were not, he would then ask them why they were not. Some are not Christians because they are afraid of ridicule. The church is unpopular, and real Christians will be ridiculed by some. Yes, even by some from whom we have a right to expect better things! But we must not be ashamed of ridicule

and persecution. Listen to Jesus: "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels." (Luke 9:26.) It will be an awful thing for Jesus to be ashamed of us. It is an awful thing for us to be ashamed of him and his words. Do you refuse to be a Christian because you are ashamed of him?

Some are not Christians because, as they say, they are waiting for a "special call." This comes from a misunderstanding of the Scriptures. God makes no "special calls" to men and women today. We are called by the gospel: "Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." (II Thess. 2:14.) These brethren had been called by the gospel. God is still calling folks by the gospel. We must not wait for a further call. In one of the parables Jesus said: "And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready." (Luke 14:17.) Jesus would have us to learn that all things are now ready. It is up to us to answer the call. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. 22:17.) This is the way God's good Book ends. It is heaven's invitation to all to come. The Holy Spirit invites. The church invites. Jesus gave the great invitation in these words: "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." (Matt. 11:28-30.) Let us not sin by saying this is not enough, and that we are waiting for a "special call." The Lord is not running any "specials." It is "whosoever will," not "whosoever will not."

Some say they are not Christians because there are so many hypocrites in the church. Sometimes I am almost tempted to say there is always room for one more! This excuse is founded in hypocrisy. There are some hypocrites in the church, but there are more out of the church. The time is coming

when the Lord will weed out all of the hypocrites. And where will they be put? They will be cast into hell with all those who will not obey the gospel of God. It is better to put up with a few hypocrites in the church for a little while than to be with all the hypocrites for eternity. "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Rom. 14:12.) You will not have to answer for the hypocrites, but you will have to answer for yourself. What will your answer be?

Others say they are not good enough to be a Christian. Becoming a Christian is what makes us "good." The betrayers and murderers of Christ were not very "good," but about fifty days after they had killed the Prince of Peace the gospel was preached to them. They learned from this preaching that they were lost and undone. They learned that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. They believed the gospel. They asked what they must do (Acts 2:37), and they were told to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38.) If you are ever saved, this is what you will have to do. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23.) "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3.)

You may be a great sinner, but you are not such a great sinner that the blood of Christ cannot save you. "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." (Isa. 1:18.) And if you are a member of the church and have fallen, there is a way back. "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." (I John 1:7-10.) Yes, God wants all men to be saved. "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God



our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." (I Tim. 2:3, 4.)

Some hesitate to become Christians because they are fearful they cannot hold out faithful. You start out to drive your car on a dark night, but you cannot see all the way home. But you start. You do not expect to see every curve and dangerous place from the beginning, but you will pass over them as you come to them. Thus it is in living the Christian life. We are able to surmount the difficulties as we come to them. The Lord gives strength and help. "There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (I Cor. 10:13.) When we say that we cannot hold out faithful, and that the temptations that confront us are too heavy to bear, that is distrusting God, and dangerously near to calling him a liar. God says he will not allow the Christian to be tempted above that he is able to bear. Christians are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. (I Pet. 1:5.) "For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee." (Isa. 41:13.)

Some say they are not ready to be Christians. That may be true, but it would not take you long to get ready if you wanted to. If you are not ready, you had better get ready and stay ready. "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." (Matt. 24:44.) Christ is not coming in an hour when you think, but when "ye think not." Do not let these date setters fool you. "And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this

night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." (Luke 12:16-21.)

"Go to now, ye that say, To day or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4:13-17.) "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 6:23.)

## **"What Lack I Yet?"**

**I**N Matt. 19:16-22 we have a very human and a very touching story. A young man came to Jesus asking what he must do to have eternal life. This is the most serious question that can engage the mind of a thinking person. The young man is to be commended for giving this question serious and sane consideration. So many seem never to give it a thought. He is to be further commended for going to Jesus with this question. He went to the right authority. We would do well to emulate his example. Jesus has all power and all authority. It is he who can give us the correct answer to this all-important question. We cannot afford to risk the salvation of our souls upon human answers to the question.

Of course, Jesus referred the young man to the law under which he was living. He was under the Old Testament law.

Jesus had not died. The church had not been established. The gospel plan of salvation had not been given. The law of Moses was in force as yet. The Lord told him to keep the commandments of the law under which he was then living.

The young man told Jesus that he had kept all those commandments from his youth up. He may have exaggerated a little here, but he was sincere in thus expressing himself. But the Lord told him to sell what he had and give to the poor. He was not doing so well along that line. The Lord knew it. He told him what he lacked. But instead of doing what the Lord told him to do he went away sorrowful, "for he had great possessions."

So many times we seem to want the word of the Lord until it is specifically applied to our condition, and then we, too, go away sorrowful. Seemingly we do not want to know the will of God concerning us. We do not want to be told of the one thing that we lack. We may be strong in many ways, but we lack — woefully lack — one thing. This one thing may be the very thing that will cause our poor souls to be cast down to an endless hell.

There are many who believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and their Savior. They are willing to turn from sin and confess his holy name before men and angels. But they hesitate to be buried with their Lord by baptism for the remission of sins. (Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12.) Jesus commands this of them. (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15, 16.) This is what the Lord says they must do to be saved from their old sins. But instead of receiving this good news joyfully they go away from him sorrowfully. They are not willing to humble themselves to do the Lord's requirements.

Others will obey the gospel, thus becoming members of the church, but they cannot see any harm in instrumental music in the worship. Why not go to Jesus with this question? If he wants us to use the mechanical instrument in the worship, he will tell us; but he does not tell us to do it. He tells us what to sing. He tells us how to sing. (I Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16.) He does not want us to play. He wants us to

sing. But many go away sorrowful. They want to play. They know what they want to do, but they do not want to do what Jesus wants them to do. So they will join themselves unto a party where they can do what they want to do rather than what the Lord wants them to do. They lack this one thing. The devil is pleased.

The Lord wants us to meet at stated intervals with the brethren to worship. He does not want us to miss a single service, unless we have a legitimate reason. He does not want us to forsake the assembly. (Heb. 10:25.) But some of the brethren do not want to assemble every time the church assembles. They want to visit some of their friends when they ought to be assembling with the saints to worship God. They want to stay at home and entertain some of their friends when they ought to be wending their way to the place of worship. They want to work on the Lord's day at big wages rather than meet to break bread. (Acts 20:7.) Perhaps some work on the Lord's day is necessary, but a great deal of it is unnecessary. Many times brethren could change positions so that they would not be thus hindered in their service to God. It might mean a financial loss, but Christ said something about putting the kingdom first. (Matt. 6:33.) Brother, you will never lose anything by thus doing. Put the kingdom first. These earthly things will not last long, anyway. Your poor soul will exist forever. Not putting the kingdom first may be the very thing we lack.

And still other brethren will engage in businesses that are questionable. They will work at things that are just a little doubtful. They cause outsiders and weak members to doubt their sincerity. The thing they work at is a stumbling block to others. Why continue in such a course? Why not change? You had better do it. Do not lack this one thing.

Some otherwise good members of the church do not study the Bible. They allow days and weeks to go by without getting right down to good, solid study of the word. And this pleases the devil. He does not want us to study the Bible. He will do all he can to take up our time with business engagements,

with our social activities, with our other reading, so that God and his word are crowded out. We just do not have time to read and study the most precious book in all the wide, wide world. No, sir, we just lack that. This lack may cause us to miss heaven. We cannot afford to do this.

Maybe we attend worship regularly, we study the Bible much, we pray often; but we just do not give as we are prospered. We are in debt; we have many obligations to meet. We just cannot give much for the advancement of the kingdom. We are going to do great things some day. The devil is happy when he can get us to use the greater part of our income on ourselves, providing for the material things of this life. The average member of the church will waste more than he gives into the treasury of the Lord. We lack this one thing. We are not putting enough of our means into the salvation of souls. We are not putting much money in the bank of heaven. We are putting too much of it in the First National Bank, war bonds, etc., etc. We are failing to do what the Lord said. We are not abounding in this grace of giving. We are lacking. And then when some humble Christian tries to tell us, we turn away sorrowfully. Too bad!

We may attend all the services of the church, we read the Bible much, we do well along most lines; but we are continually backbiting, faultfinding, criticizing. We speak evil of the brethren. We say so many things to their backs that we would refuse to say to their faces. We do not love them as we should. We are not interested in the salvation of others. We can see the mote in our brother's eye, but we cannot see the beam in our own eye. The church is going to the dogs. The elders are no good. We are easily offended. We cannot endure sound doctrine. We do not want the preacher to preach against our pet sins. We are wrapped up in our politics, in our lodges, in our clubs, in our social life, and we do not want to be disturbed. We want to attend the dirty shows and the dirtier dances. We get so much enjoyment out of these sinful practices. If the preacher gets too plain along these lines, we are going to turn away sorrowful. Brethren, why not get out of the

worldly entanglements? Why not come clean? If we are doing the work of the Lord, we will not have time to engage in these sinful and doubtful practices. "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" (James 4:4.) Finally, "what lack I yet?"

## **"Who Then Can Be Saved?"**

**A** man went to Jesus and said: "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" (Matt. 19-16.) No more important question ever engaged the mind of a thinking person. This man knew he had to do something to be saved. He knew he had to do something good to be saved. Of course, the Lord directed him to keep the commandments of the law under which he was living. He was living under the law of Moses.

This young man said that he had kept the commandments from his youth up. He wanted to know what further he lacked. He was rich. The Lord directed him to sell what he had and give to the poor. Then he was to follow Jesus. This was too much for this young fellow. He was not willing to pay the price. He went away sorrowful. He had great possessions. So many seem to want to know what they must do to be saved; but after they are told, they do as this young man did. They refuse to obey. They go away sorrowful. Too many want to do as they please to be saved rather than to do what pleases the Lord.

It is hard for the rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. It is not impossible, but it is hard. It is hard because they trust more in their riches than they do in the living God. Jesus said to his disciples: "Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I

say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?" (Matt. 19:23-25.)

This question is not unanswered in the New Testament. We might illustrate it this way. Who can become a citizen of the United States? There are three questions to be considered in answering this question. First, who has the authority to say? Second, has this authority spoken? Third, what has this authority said? Now, we can all see this in relation to becoming a citizen of the United States. The authority must be vested in someone. Then we must learn what the will of this authority is.

Who has the authority to say who shall be saved? Who has the power to save? Before the Lord was born into this world an angel said: "And thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins." (Matt. 1:21.) From this we learn that the Lord is the one who was given the power to save.

In Christ "we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." (Col. 1:14.) There is no salvation outside of Christ. There is no other name under heaven whereby we can be saved. (Acts 4:12.)

Now we have learned who has the authority to save. We know who has the power to save. What has this authority spoken? We are not interested in what some men (or some man) say about being saved. We want to know what this one with divine power has said. When men differ from what he says, they are wrong. It makes no difference who the men may be. They may be very learned, intelligent, and all of that, but they have never been given the authority to say who may be saved. This power does not belong to them. Someone might tell a foreigner how he can become a citizen of the United States. What he would say would mean nothing unless he is telling the very same thing as the ones who have the authority to say. Then it is not binding because this person said it, but because the constituted authority has spoken.

Now let us hear what the Lord has spoken. Here it is in simple language: "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.) For nineteen centuries men have been telling dying sinners that they can be saved without doing this. They have been acting without one iota of divine authority. Men may refuse to give heaven's remedy for sin, but that will not change the terms of salvation.

Well did Paul know that the one with authority had spoken. Well did he know what he had spoken. Hence, Paul was not ashamed nor afraid to say: "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." (Rom. 1:16.)

After Jesus had delivered the law by which men could be saved, he was taken up to heaven. A few days after his ascension, this gospel of Christ was first preached to a great multitude of people in the city of Jerusalem. The Lord had said before his ascension that this gospel was to have its beginning in Jerusalem. It was to be first preached in this city. (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4, 5.) Here to an assembled host the good news is proclaimed. There were Jews in the city from every nation under heaven. Less than two months ago they had betrayed and murdered the Son of God. The inspired preacher did not forget to tell them of their heinous sin. (Acts 2:36.) This kind of preaching brought results. This same kind of preaching will bring results in our day. It will cause people to be pricked in their hearts. It will cause them to cry out in the agony of their souls, making inquiry what they must do to be saved.

Then if the preachers will just keep in mind that they have no authority to tell someone that he can be saved upon other terms than those given by the Lord. Peter had learned that this power did not rest in him or in any other man. So when he and his fellow apostles were asked what to do to be saved, they delivered the Lord's commands. These believers were



told to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins. (Acts 2:37, 38.)

Kind reader, do not be deceived. Turn a deaf ear to all "religious" teachers who do not speak as the oracles of God. (I Pet. 4:11.) Keep in memory ever that the one who has the authority to save is the Lord. This authority has spoken in plain language. We know, or we can know, what he has said. Then there is just one thing left for lost souls to do to be saved. They must humbly obey the commands of this one who has all power in heaven and in earth.

Do not be like the rich young man. After the Lord had given him direction, he turned away sorrowful. Had the Lord told him most anything else to do, the chances are he would have done it: It seems that we have millions of souls in the world today who are ready to do most anything except what the Lord says. This I am unable to understand. How much better it will be for us in this time world and in the world to come to do just what the Lord says!

Then we have some who will listen to the Lord relative to having their past sins forgiven, but refuse to go ahead and listen to him when he tells them how to live and how to worship. He has authority here too. The one who is to be worshiped has the authority to say how this worship is to be offered. He has spoken. It is not left to our likes and dislikes. We have twenty-one Epistles written to tell us how to behave ourselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God. Every one of these letters is written to members of the church. Yes, verily the authority has spoken. Will you hear him and obey him? May the Lord grant it.

## **Why I Want to Go to Heaven**

**T**HERE are many reasons why we want to go to heaven. In this sermon I want to set down a few of those reasons, hoping that they may induce others to want to go.

### **Do Not Want to Go to Hell**

I am sure that no rational person wants to go to hell. Hell will be much worse than we can conceive. The punishment will be awful. The remorse will be terrible. "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. 8:12.) "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." (Mark 9:48.) Who would want to go to such a terrible place? Becoming a Christian to keep out of hell may not be a very high motive, but it is a motive.

### **Heaven Will Not Be Crowded**

There will be plenty of room in heaven. Our heavenly Father will make provision for all who will be saved. On the saddest of sad nights Jesus said: "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you.... And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2, 3.) There are many mansions over there. I want to be there in one of them throughout a never-ending eternity. "And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal." (Rev. 21:16.)

### **Heaven Is a Beautiful Place**

The beauty of heaven is beyond compare. This old world in which we live now is a beautiful place. I am writing this on a glorious day. The sun is shining beautifully, the birds are singing, and the grass is green. But the beauties of this earth are not comparable to what God has in store for us. This earth is marred by sin and death. There will be no sin there, and death will never come. Here we have pain and sadness. There are no pains and sadness in heaven. Here we have tears and broken hearts. There will be no tears in heaven, and hearts will never be sad and broken. Here we must be sepa-

rated from those whom we love dearer than life. There will be no separations in heaven.

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." (Rev. 21:4) "And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there." (Rev. 21:25.)

### **Comfort and Rest in Heaven**

We need comfort here. Our real friends try to comfort us, but our comfort will be complete in heaven. We get tired and weary here. There is no time to rest, and we could not rest completely if there were time. We shall know what sweet rest is in heaven. We are in the midst of the fight now. Rest will come after the battles are won.

### **Invited and Welcome**

What a wonderful thought to think that God has invited poor souls to heaven. Hear the gracious invitation: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. 22:17.) "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." (Isa. 1:18.) How can we spurn the invitation of God? Friend, do not do it.

### **Its Companionships**

Heaven will be sweet because of its endearing companionships. To think of being with characters such as Abraham, Moses, and Paul! To spend a week with Paul ought to be inducement enough to cause us to want to go to heaven. And the blessed Christ! To think what it will be! And we shall meet our faithful brethren and loved ones who have gone on before.

### **How Reach It?**

We must accept Jesus Christ as our Savior. At every opportunity we must confess him. What we do with him here will determine what he will do with us there. We must turn from all manner of sin. To have our sins forgiven we must be buried with Christ in baptism. When we are baptized, we are raised to walk in newness of life. The old things are passed away. All things are become new. At every opportunity we must meet with those of like faith to worship God in spirit and in truth. This course will bring us home at last. Glorious consummation!

---

47

### **What Is a Christian?**

**T**HE highest encomium that can be given anyone is to be able to say truthfully that he is a Christian. We have this word three times in the Bible. The first time is in Acts 11:26: "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." God called the disciples "Christians." We ought to call them the same thing. That is sufficient. Paul preached the gospel to King Agrippa. After Agrippa had heard the gospel at the mouth of Paul he said: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." (Acts 26:28.) If all preachers would preach the same gospel that Paul preached, it would make the ones who heard and obeyed it Christians. They would be members of the New Testament church. To make something besides a Christian, something besides the gospel of Christ will have to be preached. The gospel only makes Christians only.

"Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf." (I Pet. 4:16.) Oftentimes it entails suffering to be a Christian. We must not be

ashamed of this suffering. We ought to rejoice that we are counted worthy to suffer for his name.

In faith a Christian is a believer. He believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Savior of all that believe. After the apostles had been with Jesus for nearly three years he said to them: "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" (Matt. 16:13.) Those who had seen and heard him had some erroneous ideas relative to his identity, but they did not believe he was just another man. He asked the disciples: "But whom say ye that I am?" (Verse 15.) Peter answered by saying: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Thus does every Christian believe; thus does everyone who ever will be a Christian believe. Without this faith it is impossible to please God. (Heb. 11:6.) Paul says: "I know whom I have believed." (II Tim. 1:12.) The devil has a lot of people fooled into thinking that they believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, but in reality they deny him.

In knowledge a Christian is a disciple. A disciple is one who receives instruction from another. He is a follower, a learner. The Christian receives his instruction from Christ. He allows no man to come between him and Christ. He is a follower of Christ. He sits at the Master's feet and learns of him. He drinks in what the great Teacher says. He remembers that Jesus said: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32.) He wants the truth, and nothing but the truth. He knows that this truth is the word of God. He knows his Master's voice. He knows not the voice of strangers. He studies to get the approval of God. (II Tim. 2:15.) Well has he learned this lesson. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Ps. 119:105.) He knows that "the entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." (Ps. 119:130.)

In character a Christian is a saint. We do violence to the Scriptures when we apply the word "saint" to just certain ones of God's children. All Christians are saints. A Christian's character is unstained by the contaminating influences of

sin. He has pure religion. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." (James 1:27.) He loves to help those who need help. He is not spotted with the things of this world. Dirty places of amusement have no attraction for him. He is busy about his Father's business. The world has lost its attractions for the saint. He has learned his lesson. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." (1 John 2:15-17.) You cannot be a saint and a worldling at the same time. You have to choose one or the other. "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (James 4:4.)

Character is what God and the angels know about us. Reputation is what men and women say about us.

In influence a Christian is a light. He does not shine his light, but he lets his light shine. Light is attractive. It has drawing power. The very life of a Christian is a powerful influence for good. The darker the night, the brighter the light shines. Christians are lights in this dark world of sin. They go about doing good. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 5:16.) The light of the Christian shines steadily. The Father can count on his child letting his light shine. This will show others the way home.

In relationship a Christian is a child of God. God is his Father. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." (Rom. 8:16, 17.)

Our Father is rich. We are his heirs. We are joint heirs with Christ. What a marvelous thought!

In purpose a Christian is a sojourner. He is a pilgrim here. This world is not his home. With Abraham of old, he is looking "for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (Heb. 11:10.) He knows he has no continuing city here. He is looking for a better home. Here he has sorrows and tears. How he longs for that home where sorrows do not come and where tears of sorrow never come! Here he has pain and sickness. There will be no pain and sickness in heaven. Here he sees death on every hand. Every few days he must follow some of his loved ones or dear friends to the cemetery. Over there no partings ever come.

Kind reader, are you a Christian? If not, oh, hasten to the outstretched arms of love and mercy! Believe with your whole heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Genuinely repent of every sin and turn from all manner of sin. Make a wholehearted confession of your faith in the Christ. Then be gently lowered with him in the waters of baptism. Rise from the grave of baptism to walk in newness of life. Keep looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith. Do not allow the cares and anxieties of this world to turn you from the faith. Teach others the right way of the Lord. Remember that we are saved to save. God wants us to tell others about the love of Jesus. He has no other tongues but our tongues to tell this old love story. He has no other feet but ours to run the errands of mercy. He has no other hands but ours to do the many things that must be done in this vale of tears.

You want your life to count for something here. It would have been better had you never been born if you live and die without Christ. "Of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these. It might have been."

May God help us to be Christians in deed and in truth, and then heaven is waiting for us when we must lay down this mortal body.

## Who Controls the Money?

**M**ANY of the troubles of the church center around the church treasury and the property of the church. Such things ought not so to be. Just as quickly as it is possible to develop elders in the congregation, every congregation should have them. The Bible knows nothing about our new set of officers called "leaders." In the absence of elders, the men of the congregation will have to act as a body until such time that elders can be appointed. Naturally, some are more efficient at leading in the activities of the church than others. However, for these "leaders" to assume all the prerogatives that belong to elders is a far cry from the teaching of the New Testament.

And then in some instances the deacons have assumed that they have the power to control the physical assets of the church. The deacons are working under the oversight of the elders the same as are the other members of the church. They have some work that belongs to them, but they are under the supervision of the elders. The idea that they have control of the treasury of the Lord is not a scriptural idea.

In many states it is necessary to have trustees who are the guardians of church property. This is a legal angle of the situation, and because of them some of these trustees take unto themselves entirely too much authority. From whence do they derive this authority? Most certainly not from the New Testament. The New Testament knows nothing about the "trustees." The way some of them act one would be caused to believe that they have a commission direct from the Head of the church! They have something to do, and this something is under the supervision of the elders of the local congregation.

And many times the church treasurer thinks he has just about all the say in the distribution of the money. I have



known some of them to totally ignore the wishes of the elders, and set up their own individual judgment in the use of the money of the Lord's church. In this they are entirely out of place. The treasurer is a servant of the church, and his work is under the oversight of the elders of the congregation. If he is the man that he ought to be, he will not think of taking authority that does in no way belong to him.

And then in some places the preachers have just about taken over everything, including the treasury of the church. The elders are mere figureheads to amen what the preacher wants done. And if he cannot have his way, he begins to "politic" among the weaker members of the congregation. Pretty soon he has a following in the church. They are following the preacher instead of the Lord. They are converted to the preacher instead of being converted to the Lord and his ways.

Sometimes the elders of the church are just about the greatest men in the world when they hire the preacher; but when these same elders think the preacher has served his usefulness with them, they become about the worst men in the world.

Far be it from me to try to justify some "elders" in their lording it over God's heritage. We have many men who are filling the office of an elder who should never have been put into the eldership to begin with. I have in mind scriptural elders with scriptural qualifications who have been scripturally selected by the congregation and scripturally appointed to the work. If this condition obtains, these elders are the feeders and rulers of the church, and this will take care of the physical assets of the church.

Nothing but trouble can ensue when we set aside God's order and set up one of our own making. Some preachers are better politicians than they are preachers of the word. They can so manipulate the affairs of the congregation to perpetuate themselves in a congregation. Elders of a congregation have a fearful responsibility. They are watching for the souls of the congregation. They will have to render account in that great and final day. If they allow the money that is contributed to preach the gospel and to care for worthy poor to be wasted or

divested into channels entirely outside of their jurisdiction, they will have to answer for that. This money is not contributed to be used to promote any and every scheme that some cunning schemers may desire to hoist onto the church.

You will recall that when there was a famine in the land, the brethren in Antioch determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea. Do you recall to whom this relief was sent? This would make good reading in our day. Here it is: "Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul." (Acts 11:29, 30.) The two preachers mentioned carried this relief to the brethren, but delivered it to the elders. They did not send it to the deacons, nor to the preachers, nor to the "trustees," but they sent it to the elders.

I remember that the inspired Paul wrote this to the Corinthian brethren: "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem. And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me." (1 Cor. 16:2-4.)

Surely we can learn from these inspired examples. Paul was not willing to take too much responsibility regarding this finance. He wanted to share it with others. He was willing to go along, but he commanded that others should go also. I am sure that had he been "counting the money" on the Lord's day he would have wanted some others to check his figures. This is not only scriptural, but it is just good common sense — business sense.

It would be a fine thing if the elders of the congregation would keep the members posted on what the financial needs of the congregation are. They should plan the work, and then work the plan. Nothing should be done in a corner. Map out much work to be done to the saving of souls, and then tell the congregation about it. Ask them for helpful suggestions.

Let thou know how the money is being spent. Be able to give them the figures and show them that not one cent is being wasted. Things that are right do not have to be done in a corner.

If you have a set of deacons who are not willing to be in subjection to the elders, there should be a change of deacons. If you have some trustees that think they have authority to do as they please with the church property without consulting the elders of the church, you need a change of trustees; and the sooner this change is made, the better it will be for the work of the congregation. I have even heard of the work of the Lord being stalemated by a set of trustees who were not even faithful members of the church. Some or all of these trustees had backslidden. Such a condition is preposterous. Such men should be told in no uncertain terms by the faithful of the congregation that such a condition would not be tolerated. They should be told that the money belongs to the church, and not to these few trustees to be used as they please.

## "Whatsoever He Saith"

**I**N the first part of John 2 we have a very human story. Jesus and His disciples were at a marriage. His mother was there. In talking of her Son she used this language: "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."

What a transformation would be worked in the world if all human beings were to take the sage advice of this woman! It would bring happiness on this earth and eternal life in the world to come.

It would be marvelous if we could get the preachers to tell folks just what the Lord says. When they are telling people how to become Christians, they would tell them that Jesus said a man must be born again. (John 3:3-5.) They would

explain this spiritual birth to this prospective Christian. They would explain that we must be begotten by the gospel and brought forth from the waters of baptism. (James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23; 1 Cor. 4:15.)

These preachers would be careful to explain that there is no salvation from past sins until we are baptized. They would tell people that Jesus said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16:16.) From this it would not be hard to show that the ones who are saved are the ones who believe and get themselves baptized. They would explain carefully that baptism is a burial in water. To show this beyond a shadow of a doubt they would read such passages as Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12; and Heb. 10:22.

If we are going to do whatsoever Jesus says, we will worship God in spirit and in truth. He said that God must be worshipped this way. (John 4:24.) When you do not worship God just the way the Bible directs, your worship is vain. Jesus said this in Matt. 15:9. And not only must we worship as it is written, but we must worship in spirit. We must put our very souls into the worship. We cannot sit and doze and worship God at the same time. We cannot whisper and giggle and worship God at the same time. We cannot be planning our social and business engagements and worship God.

If we are going to do what Jesus says, we will let our light shine. He said to do this. (Matt. 5:16.) It ought to shine so brightly and so clearly that folks will be attracted to the church. You know light attracts. Even insects are attracted by a bright light on a dark night. Lost sinners are attracted when they see the light shining by Christians doing what they ought to do.

If we are going to do what Jesus says, when we come to worship and remember that we have wronged a brother, we will go and make that right with our wronged brother before we try to worship God. Jesus said to do this. (Matt. 5:23, 24.) Too many are trying to worship God who have wronged their fellow man. It cannot be done. We must make our wrongs right, and then come and offer our gifts to the Lord. He will have none of it until thus we have done.

If we are going to do what Jesus says, we will not do anything to be seen of men. He said we would not. (Matt. 6:1-6.) We will not give to be seen of men. We will give because we love to give and for the good it will do. We will not pray to be seen of men, but to be heard of God. We will not preach to gain the admiration of men, but for the glory and praise of God. We will not sing to be seen and heard of men, but to hymn praises to his holy name. Our love for God will well from honest hearts, and the song will ascend to the throne. We will not drag in instrumental music into the worship. No, we will not if we are going to be guided by what Jesus said. He told us to sing. He did not tell us to play. He does not want us to play as an act of worship, or he would have said so. You see every act of worship must be an act of faith. (Rom. 14:23; Heb. 11:6.) Faith comes by hearing God. (Rom. 10:17.) You cannot hear God for playing an instrument as an act of worship; therefore, you will not do it. You will be guided by what Jesus says.

If we are going to do what Jesus says, we will not lay up treasures on earth, but we will lay them up in heaven. He said to do this. (Matt. 6:19-21.) He knew, and said that where our treasures are, our hearts will be also. If we lay up most of our treasures on this earth, our hearts will be here. If we lay up the treasures in heaven, our hearts will be there. Not many of us are putting enough money in the bank of heaven. We may be putting too much of it into the things of this life. We are going to leave this old world before long. You will want a big bank account in heaven when you get up there. You will not then be able to write your checks on the First National here on earth. The money you leave here may be spent by others to damn souls, instead of to save them. Let us invest just as much as possible in eternal investments.

If we are going to do what Jesus says, we will not try to serve two masters. He said you could not do this. (Matt. 6:24.) Too many are trying to serve both God and the devil. Too many are trying to be in the church and the world at the

same time. It cannot be done. To serve Jehovah we must cut away from the world. We are in the world, but we are not of the world.

If we are doing what Jesus said, we will put the kingdom first. He said to do this. (Matt. 6:33.) That does not mean to put our loved ones first. It means to put the church first. It must be uppermost in our minds. It does not mean to put our job first. It means to put the church first. If the job interferes with our work in the kingdom, we will quit the job and seek another. It does not mean to put worldly pleasures first. It does not mean to postpone prayer-meeting night so the members can go to a football or basketball game. It does not mean cutting the service short so the men can attend lodge or a political rally. No, it means to put the church first. It does not mean to wait until we get out of debt before we give much to the Lord.

If we are going to do what Jesus said, we will get rid of the beam in our own eye before we try to pull the mote out of our brother's eye. He said to do this. (Matt. 7:3-5.) So many of us have such big beams in our own eyes that we cannot see clearly to cast the mote out of our brother's eye. If we would get rid of those beams, it would be a great help in getting the motes out of the eyes of others. We may not have the same "mote" as the other fellow, but what "beams" there are!

If we do what Jesus says to do, we will treat others as we want to be treated. (Matt. 7:12.) We do not want folks to lie about us. We will not lie about others. We want to be treated with kindness and courtesy. We will treat others kindly and courteously. When we need help, we like to be helped. We will help others who need our help. If we were lost in sin, we would like for someone to bring us the good news of the gospel. Millions are lost in sin and wickedness. We will do something to tell them of Christ and his goodness.

In short, if we are going to do what Jesus said we will do what we are commanded to do. He said for us to be faithful even unto death. (Rev. 2:10.) Lord, help.

## 50

**Zacchaeus**

"AND Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19:1-10.)

There are many practical lessons in this human-interest story. Zacchaeus was a publican. This made him unpopular with the masses. He was a collector of taxes. These publicans were in position to do many things that were wrong. This man was rich. Some of his riches may have been gotten by questionable practices.

We have many rich in our day. A few of them are members of the church. Some of these riches may have been acquired by questionable means. It would not be wrong to have much of the things of this world if they were gotten in an honorable way and then used to the glory of God. It is dangerous to the salvation of our souls to have too much of this world's goods. It is apt to turn our minds away from the simplicity

which is in Christ. It is always wrong to get even a dollar and not get that dollar honestly.

Zacchaeus really wanted to see Jesus. Very few of our day seem to be enough interested to find out much about Jesus. They are not interested in him nor in his doctrine. They have gone wild over the things of this life. This man was a little man. He was too short to see Jesus because of the press of the people. However, where there is a will, there is a way. Zacchaeus thought out a way to overcome his handicap. He ran before and climbed up into a sycamore tree. From this vantage point he would get an unobstructed view of the Lord when he would pass that way.

It is hard in our day for "little" people to get a clear view of the Lord. He has been hidden from their sight by the doctrines and commandments of men. We need to climb up above these things and get a real and true view of the Lord. We cannot get this view through sectarian glasses, nor through the reading of the doctrines and commandments of men. We need to go directly to the source of all spiritual light. We need to really look into the word of God. There you will not find anything about modern denominations with their creeds. There you will see Jesus and his blood-purchased church. It will take some effort to make this "climb," but the view is worth every effort that we make.

Perhaps Zacchaeus never dreamed of Jesus seeing him in the tree. But the eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good. We cannot get out of his sight. When we go places and do things that are not right, the Lord knows it. But, thanks be to God, when we are making an honest effort to please him, he knows that. He knows every prayer and every tear and every heartache. We have a sympathizing Jesus. He knows all our burdens. May we lean heavily upon him.

When Jesus came to the tree, he looked up. Perhaps Zacchaeus received the surprise of his life when Jesus told him to make haste and come down, that he was going to be his guest. I wonder if we are all anxious to have Jesus for our



guest? Would we be embarrassed to have him sit in the family circle with us? Would we care to have him eat a meal with us? Are our lives so ordered that we would be glad to have him travel with us? You know perfect love casteth out fear.

Zacchaeus really came out of that tree in a hurry. He made haste and came down. He received him joyfully. That is the way that all sinners must receive the Lord. The service of the Lord is a joyful service. His people are a happy people. They love to do the will of the Master. It is not an irksome duty. It brings joy and real happiness into our lives on this old earth and eternal life in the world to come.

Of course there are always some carping critics. Jesus had them. Christians have them. Jesus was criticized without a cause. We may be. When we are, we must not think it too strange. The servant is not above his master. Yes, Jesus was the guest of a sinner. He was associating with a sinner, but this association brought about the salvation of the sinner.

Too many in our day associate with sinners, and these sinners bring about the damnation of the saint. It ought to work just the other way around. It is not wrong to associate with sinners sufficiently to do them good. Our very association with them ought to do them good.

This man was in earnest. He said he gave half his goods to the poor. That is a real record. Very few rich people have ever attained unto this. Too many are forgetful of the worthy poor. They do not have time for them. Jesus said we could do them good. Part of pure religion is to visit the widow and the orphan. Many a time we could make this call with a truck. You know we haul coal and wood in trucks. We need to do more of this kind of visiting. Not many of us are in position to give half our goods to the poor, but most of us could give much more than we do. It is easy to give to the work of the Lord when we are really converted.

If Zacchaeus had taken anything from any man by false accusation, he restored him fourfold. That kind of spirit will bring about one's salvation. It is easy to take from men by "false accusation." We have too many careless talkers. They

will tell things, even about a brother, when they do not know these things to be true. Yea, they will even tell them when they know they are false. Such a spirit will send one's soul to hell. Many are scrupulously honest in business transactions, but they will not stop to take from some man by "false accusation" something that is far more important than money. Many will have a hard time explaining to the Judge many of the things that they have circulated to the injury of their fellow man.

Kind reader, buy the truth and sell it not. Be honest with God and with your fellow man. Tell the truth regardless of what that may cost you. Be kind in your dealings with lost sinners. They have souls to save. Without the love of God, all of us would land in perdition. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There is none righteous. We cannot be saved without a Savior. Christ saved the sinner, Zacchaeus. He will save us if we obey him.