

[Click here for table of contents](#)

# Fifty Short Sermons

# *Fifty Short Sermons*

*by*

FRED E. DENNIS

*Evangelist and Writer*

For Twenty Years a Writer for the *Christian Leader*, Cincinnati, Ohio  
Staff Writer, *Gospel Advocate*, Nashville, Tenn.

Volume Two

THIRD EDITION

WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING COMPANY

Grand Rapids, Michigan

1944

FIFTY SHORT SERMONS

*by* FRED E. DENNIS

*Copyright, 1944*

*All Rights Reserved.*

*Fred E. Dennis*

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

## Preface

In the fall of 1942 Volume One of "Fifty Short Sermons" came from the press. The first edition of one thousand copies was gone within three months after it came out. The second edition is now practically gone. The warm reception recorded it went far beyond my fondest expectations. God knows I am humbly thankful. Hundreds of these were placed in the hands of outsiders. They were sent to our boys in service throughout the world. This will explain in some measure the appearance of this second volume of short sermons. I pray God that it may receive the same hearty welcome. These sermons have appeared from time to time in the columns of the Gospel Advocate, Nashville, Tenn., of which the author is one of the staff writers. This volume is affectionately dedicated to my faithful wife, Bessie E. Dennis, and to our dear children.

FRED E. DENNIS,  
209 Spring St., Marietta, Ohio  
November 11, 1943.

## Introduction

THE author of this volume of sermons scarcely needs an introduction to thousands who have known him for more than a quarter century as an eminently able, faithful and fearless preacher of the gospel. The life and labors of Fred E. Dennis among the churches of Christ have caused his name to be synonymous with doctrinal soundness, spiritual intrepidity and moral purity. The author's keen discernment of the will of God, his unwavering loyalty to the doctrine of Christ, his natural piety, unfeigned humility, tireless zeal and Pauline courage, plus a childlike faith in the promises of God, present a rare combination of qualities resulting in his immensely successful career as a gospel preacher.

Fred E. Dennis was born in Monroe County, Ohio, June 20, 1894, and while yet in his teens he removed with his parents to Marietta, Ohio, where he has lived ever since. In 1915 he was married to Miss Bessie E. Caskin, and they are the parents of six living children. The author preached his first sermon on July 2, 1917, while a teacher in the public schools of Washington County. Six years later he gave up teaching to devote all of his time to preaching the gospel, and he has been in constant demand as an evangelist ever since. For many years he has been a staff writer of the *Gospel Advocate*, Nashville, Tennessee; he is the author of *Musings*, published in 1936, and Volume One of *Fifty Short Sermons*, published in 1942. The phenomenal reception accorded the latter, a collection of sermons first appearing in the *Gospel Advocate*, evidenced the merit of the work as well as the interest of the brotherhood. The present work, *Fifty Short Sermons, Volume Two*, will certainly be accorded the same eager reception as its predecessor. The spiritual benefit to be derived from a careful, prayerful perusal of this book of sermons is of incalculable proportions, being profitable both in the 'life which now is, and that which is to come'.

Kenneth B. Adams,  
November 4, 1943.  
East Liverpool, Ohio

## CONTENTS

[Click on lesson title for text](#)

1. Study	11
2. Some Men Who Did Not Write the Bible	15
3. The Gospel of Christ	18
4. Lost and Found	22
5. The Great Bible Question	25
6. Five Reasons Why You Should Be a Christian	29
7. The Making of a Christian	32
8. The Judgment	35
9. Payday	38
10. The Value of the Church	42
11. The Great Salvation	45
12. The Family of the Lord	48
13. Some Things No Man Knows	51
14. Different States of Man	54
15. Remembering Jesus	58
16. The Resurrection	61
17. Now!	65
18. Lot's Wife	69
19. A Quotation from Adam Clarke	72
20. Three Things the Devil Wants to Do	75
21. "Son, Remember"	79
22. The Two Adams	83
23. Four Fundamental Needs	86

24. Practicing What We Preach	89
25. Spiritual Arithmetic	92
26. Four Dangerous Precedents	96
27. Backsliding Preventives	100
28. Some Plain Lessons from Rom. 12	102
29. The Devil's U-Boats	106
30. "On Jordan's Stormy Banks" (No. 1)	110
31. "On Jordan's Story Banks" (No. 2)	114
32. He Left Us an Example	118
33. We Know	122
34. Seven Things We Should Keep	125
35. Calling Names	129
36. The Kingdom First	132
37. To Our Boys in the Armed Forces	136
38. Following Paul	140
39. The Gospel Mirror	143
40. "The Lord's Prayer"	147
41. A Few Things New	150
42. The Friend of God	153
43. Some Marks of a Real Christian	156
44. To What Is the Church Comparable?	159
45. Worldliness	163
46. Laborers in the Vineyard	166
47. Foolish Hobbies	169
48. The End of a Great Man	173
49. "The Days of Our Years"	177
50. Benediction	181

## **Study**

MANY sermons have been preached and many articles have been written using 2 Tim. 2:15 for the text. That old familiar verse reads: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Why should we be diligent, careful students of the word?

## **To Know God**

Those who do not know the Bible do not know God. God has told us all he wants us to know about himself in the Bible. It is possible to be highly educated, refined, and polished in the modern sense without knowing God. In fact, some of the most highly educated and gifted people of our generation do not know God. The reason they do not know God is that they have not been students of the book in which God reveals himself to the human family.

Paul went to Athens to preach. Those Athenian philosophers spent their time in learning some new thing, and then imparting this knowledge to others. But they did not know God! It was not that they were ignoramuses, but they were not Bible students. Because of their lack of knowledge of the true God they were idolaters. Paul said to them: "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription. To THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." (Acts 17:22, 23.) These fellows knew much, but they did not know God. There are many of our day who know much, but of the important



thing—that of knowing God—they are ignorant. And this is willful ignorance, and willful ignorance is the worst kind of ignorance. It is inexcusable.

The world by its own wisdom will never know God. The world by wisdom cannot know God. "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." (1 Cor. 1:21.) God gave us the Bible so that we may know him.

Of course we have the book of nature. We read: "The heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge." (Ps. 19:1, 2.) Give man nature without the Bible, and he becomes a worshiper of nature.

### **To Know Jesus**

There is no way of knowing Jesus except through the Bible. It testifies of him. Because of their ignorance the Jews put him to death. Their ignorance did not excuse them. "And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." (Acts 3:17.) Why were they thus ignorant? They were not sufficiently acquainted with their own Scriptures. "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." (Acts 3:19.)

Many today are just as ignorant of the real Jesus as were these ancient Jews; and the cause of their ignorance is the same, and the remedy for their sins is the same. They will have to be converted, or turned to the Lord; and the power to bring about this conversion inheres in the word.

### **To Know the Plan of Salvation**

Not one of us would know how to save ourselves if it were not for the Bible. Our feelings are very deceptive. We cannot know by our feelings whether we are right or not. "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jer. 10:23.)

We cannot afford to risk the salvation of our souls upon the word of any man or any set of men. They may be false teachers and blind guides. And if we follow these "leaders," we shall fall into the ditch. Jesus said: "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." (Matt. 15:14.) And what an awful fall that will be! And there is just one way that we can know that we are not blind and following blind leaders. We must study for ourselves. We must know what the Lord has spoken.

### **Its Good Fruit**

We ought to study the Bible because of the fruit that it bears. The things of civilization that are worth while are the products of the Bible. These good things are brought about by the word of God. The sins and bad things of the world are here because folks are not willing to be guided by the Bible. *We* ought to count our many blessings, naming them one by one, and then get down on our knees and thank God for giving us a book that will bring about such blessings in our lives.

### **It Is Living and Eternal**

Men write many good books, but they pass away. Not so many even survive the generation that produced them. Their readers become fewer and fewer. God gave us a book that will never pass away. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." (Matt. 24:35.) "But the word of the Lord endureth for ever." (1 Pet. 1:25.) When this old world is wrapped in flames, the Bible will survive. All other things are passing away. Death and decay are written upon everything. Death is on our track. It will soon catch up with us. The word of God will not die. "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Heb. 4:12.) A book that will endure forever certainly should demand our most careful study.

### **The Source of Spiritual Light**

All spiritual light is from the Bible. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Ps. 119:105.) "Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way." (Verse 104.) "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." (Verse 130.)

### **Basis of Faith**

Our faith comes by hearing the word. Without hearing the word we can have no faith. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Rom. 10:17.) That is why the Christian will not do things that he cannot read about in the Bible. He would have no faith in them. Peter stood up in old Jerusalem before many and said: "Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe." (Acts 15:7.) We hear and we believe. In the absence of hearing we cannot believe.

### **Foundation of 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.) "Which hope we have *at*, an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." (Heb. 6:19.)

### **Judged by It**

And we shall stand in the judgment and be judged by the things written in the Bible. What a fearful thought! There is just one way to be ready for the judgment, and that is to study the Bible, learn God's will concerning us. and then while we are in the body do the things that God wants us to do.

**Some Men Who Did Not Write the Bible**

IN our study of the Bible we can learn much about the men who wrote it. We can also learn much about the men who did not write it. In this study we want to call attention to some men who had no part in writing the Bible.

First, the infidel had nothing to do with writing the Bible. Infidels do not write like Bible writers. If an infidel had written the Bible, the very first verse would not have been written. This verse says: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Infidels do not believe this: so, of course, would not have written it. Neither would have an infidel written Ps. 14:1: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." This is God's description of an infidel. There are thousands of other passages that no infidel would have written.

Profligates had no part in writing the Bible. If such base characters had written the Bible, much of it would never have been written. Profligates are denounced in the most scathing terms. Listen to this: "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.) These are the things that profligates are interested in, but God says that folks who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. It might be well for some professed Christians of our day to take a little squint at this list. Especially note the "revellings" and "such like." We have entirely too much of the "such like." and folks that engage in "such like" cannot and will not inherit the kingdom of heaven. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sor-

cerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." (Rev. 21:8.)

The universalist had nothing to do with writing the Bible. You know he believes that all will be saved. Not a writer of the Bible believed this: "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.) You will note from this that salvation is for those only who obey. All others will be lost. "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thes. 1:8.) The ones who obey not the gospel will have vengeance taken on them. This does not sound like universalism. No, Paul was not a universalist.

Sectarians did not write the Bible. You know they believe that there are good and bad in all "churches," and that "one church is as good as another. The Bible writers did not think this. They thought that there is just one body, or one church. In fact, they say so in so many words. In Eph. 4:4 the inspired Paul says: "There is one body." And then in other places (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22, 23; 5:23; Rom. 12:4, 5) he explains that this "one body" is the church. Just as sure as we have one physical body, just that sure the Lord has one spiritual body. Sectarianism is severely condemned by the Bible. "For while one saith, I am of Paul: and another, I am of Apollos: are ye not carnal?" (1 Cor. 3:4.)

A faith-alone theorist had nothing to do with writing the Bible. The Bible knows nothing about justification by faith only. In fact, the words "faith only" come together just once in the Bible, and there they are used together to condemn the theory. "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." (James 2:24.) "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." (James 2:17.) "And now abid-

eth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." (1 Cor. 13:13.)

Innovators did not write the Bible. An innovator would not have written Deut. 4:2: "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you. neither shall ye diminish ought from it." The innovator does not hesitate, to add to, or diminish from, the word of the Lord. When he finds no Scripture for his innovation, he just goes ahead and adds it. anyway. That is the way instrumental music got into the worship. It is a modern innovation. There is no Bible Scripture for it. Christ and his inspired apostles left it out. and it remained for innovators six hundred years later to introduce it. The Bible teaches Christians to observe the Lord's Supper each first day of the week (Acts 20:7). but those who diminish from the word do not hesitate to do away with the weekly observance of the Lord's Supper. What about these innovators and diminishers at the last day? "If any man shall add unto these things. God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in his book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of his prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." (Rev. 22:18. 19.)

A grace-alone theorist did not write the Bible. The Bible writers did not believe this theory. "By grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." (Eph. 2:8. 9.)

A human creed maker had nothing to do with writing the Bible. The makers and users of human creeds are condemned by the writers of the Bible. Christians have no use for a human creed, either written or verbal. "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.) God has given the man of God everything he needs to make him perfect. He has everything to furnish doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness.

Where is there any room for a human creed? What would it be for? "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.)

Covetous men did not write the Bible. "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation." (Mal. 3:8, 9.) Christians are to abound in giving. "Therefore, as ye abound in every thin", in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also" (2 Cor. 8:7.) We are to give in proportion to our prosperity. (1 Cor. 16:1, 2.)

Lukewarm "Christians" did not write the Bible. "Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit: serving the Lord" (Rom. 12:11.) That does not sound like the utterance of a lukewarm and indifferent Christian. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." (1 Cor. 10:12.) There are many who think they are standing who are riding for a terrible fall. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. 2:3.) "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4:17.) A lukewarm Christian is a sickening thing, both in the sight of man and in the sight of heaven. "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.)

### 3

#### **The Gospel of Christ**

THE gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes it. (Rom. 1:16.) Men and women are saved by the power that inheres in the gospel. The power is

not in the preacher, but in the gospel that he preaches. When the gospel is preached. Christians are made; when no gospel is preached, there are no Christians made.

The righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel of Christ. (Rom. 1:17.) Jesus Christ is the author of the gospel of Christ. Paul said: "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Gal. 1:11, 12.) Preachers today should be sure that what they preach is the gospel of Christ, and that they do not receive it of man. Jesus Christ is the author, not Moses or David or some other man. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation: which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?" (Heb. 2:3.) We are further taught to look "unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith: who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb. 12:2.)

Jesus commanded the apostles to preach the gospel to every creature. (Mark 16:15, 16.) The seed of the kingdom is the word of God. (Luke 8:11.) This good seed must be planted in good soil. The good soil is honest hearts. When the seed is planted in this good soil, a good crop is produced. The inspired Paul says that we are begotten by the gospel. (1 Cor. 4:15.) The same thought is expressed by Peter when he says: "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.) "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." (James 1:18.)

There are three fundamental facts of the gospel of Christ. (1 Cor. 15:1-4.) First, Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures: second, he was buried: third, he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. Facts cannot be obeyed, but they can be, and must be, believed. We believe the facts of the gospel. These basic facts were proclaimed for the



first time on the first Pentecost after the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. This took place in the city of Jerusalem. "Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Isa. 2:3.) In our search for the truth this is one way of finding the true church. Any church that had its beginning at any other place than Jerusalem, and its time of beginning any other time than Pentecost, could not be the New Testament church. Jesus said to his apostles just before he was taken up that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke 24:47.) Please note that word *beginning*. He further said upon the same occasion: "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." Luke 24:49.) In another account of the same incident Luke says: "And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which saith he, ye have heard of me." (Acts 1:4.)

Thus did the apostles tarry in the city of Jerusalem until the day of Pentecost. Then for the first time the basic facts of the gospel of Christ were preached. When the gospel is thus preached, it causes men to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Then they will want to know what they must do to be saved. Thus it was on Pentecost. "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.) These believers in Christ were told to "repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." (Acts 2:38.) This is in exact accord with what Jesus said should be preached, *beginning* at Jerusalem. Thus we have the three outstanding commands of the gospel of Christ. First, we must believe that Jesus Christ is the

Son of God (Acts 16:31); we must repent of our sins (Acts 17:30); and we must be baptized for the remission of our sins (Acts 2:38). Jesus Christ gave every one of these commands. To be saved we must obey his commandments.

If we believe the facts of the gospel and obey the commands of the gospel, we then can enjoy the promises of the gospel. Just as we have three outstanding facts and three outstanding commands, so there are three great promises to be enjoyed. First, we are promised the remission of our sins. How sweet the promise! How it is enjoyed by those who have met the stipulated conditions of pardon! Too many are wanting to enjoy the promises without obeying the commands. We learn from Acts 8 of a man who was taught the facts of the gospel, and then he obeyed the commands. What followed? "And he went on his way rejoicing." (Acts 8:39.)

God gives the Holy Ghost to them that obey him. (Acts 5:32.) The Holy Ghost dwells in the heart of every Christian. On the birthday of the church Peter held out two promises to all who would believe and obey. They were promised the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 2:38.) The gift of the Holy Ghost is not the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Even if we never did understand exactly what the gift of the Holy Ghost is, we are promised remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost if we obey the commands of the gospel. God will perform faithfully his part. We should do our part.

And we are promised life eternal. "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life." (1 John 2:25.) We shall realize the enjoyment of this promise at the end of a faithful Christian life. Jesus Christ is not only the author of the gospel, but "being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." (Heb. 5:9.) Lord, help us all to obey him.

## 4

**Lost and Found**

BY the above heading we refer to things that have been all but lost in the maze of denominationalism and sectarianism, but are found plainly revealed upon the pages of the New Testament. I believe that a careful study of a few of these things will prove beneficial.

The disciples of the Lord are called "Christians" in the New Testament; in fact, we have a specific prophecy regarding this name in Isa. 62:2: "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name." Just as soon as the Gentiles had seen the righteousness of the Lord, this new name was given. In Acts 10 we have an account of the conversion of the first Gentile, Cornelius, and then in the very next chapter we have the new name: "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." (Acts 11:26.) Again we have this name in Acts 26:28: "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Well did this heathen king know that if he obeyed the gospel which Paul preached he would be a Christian. He would not be the only Christian, but he would be a Christian only. If we obey the gospel as Paul and the other inspired preachers preached it, we, too, will be Christians only. This word "Christian" is in the New Testament once more: "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on his behalf." (1 Pet. 4:16.)

Another thing that most religious people have lost is the fact that there is but one body, or church. This is too serious a matter to take the word of any man for it, but we must take the word of the Lord for it. In Eph. 4:4 we are told in so many words, "there is one body." What is this body? Let us read the answer: "And he is the head of the body, the church." (Col 1:18.)

Once again: "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." (Eph. 1:22, 23.) The body of Christ is the church of Christ, and the church of Christ is the body of Christ; and do not lose this fact: "But now are they many members, yet but one body." (1 Cor. 12:20.)

Another "lost" thing is that faith comes by hearing the word. This we are told in Rom. 10:17: "So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God." Faith not only comes by hearing, but by hearing the right thing, and the right thing is "the word of God." The inspired John in his record of the Gospel wrote it this way: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." (John 20:30, 31.)

Upon one occasion Peter said this: "Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe." (Acts 15:7.) Thus it has been and thus it is. We "hear the word of the gospel, and believe." Too many are trying to "believe" in the absence of "the word of the gospel." This is an utter impossibility.

Repentance is produced or brought about by godly sorrow. This we are told in 2 Cor. 7:10: "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." Godly sorrow is not repentance, but it worketh repentance. We must not lose the fact that we must repent in order to be saved. Jesus said: "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13:3, 5.) On the birthday of the church, when men had been caused to believe by hearing the word of the gospel, they cried out, asking Peter and the other apostles what they must do to be saved. They were told to "repent, and be baptized . . . for the remission of sins." (Acts 2:37, 38). This made them Christians, members of the body of Christ. It will make you the same thing.

In becoming a Christian we must be buried by baptism. This is all but lost in the religious world today. How anything could be lost that is so plainly taught in the word is beyond my poor powers of comprehension. Jesus said: "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.) From such passages as Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12; and Heb. 10:22 we learn that baptism is a burial in water. These passages are too plain to be misunderstood by an honest soul who is seeking the truth.

Another thing that is all but "lost" is the fact that Christians are to eat the Lord's Supper on each Lord's day. Thus they did in the early days of the church, and thus faithful Christians are to do until time shall be no more. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them." (Acts 20:7.) What did these disciples at Troas come together for? The record says that they "came together to break bread."

The way to raise money to support New Testament religion has been lost by very many. But this has not been lost because it is not taught in the New Testament. The very first inspired statement about the church after it came into being is this: "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts 2:42.) We learn that the church at Corinth was instructed this way: "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him." (1 Cor. 16:2.) If all Christians will give as they have been prospered, we will have the money with which to do the things that the Lord wants done. Of course it could be possible that we might want to do something that the Lord does not want done.

The kind of music God wants in the church has been lost sight of by very many. Of course we would not know what kind of music the Lord wants if it were not for the fact that he has told us. Men want certain things, and they make these wants known by what they say. God wants certain things in the

church, and he has made these known by what he has said. Men have wanted for several hundred years instrumental music in the worship. God does not want this. I know he does not want it. for at least two reasons: first, he has not said that he wanted it; second, the early church, guided by inspired men, did not have it. However, God does want vocal music. How do we know this? There are two reasons: first, he says so (1 Cor. 14:15: Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16): second, vocal music was the kind, and the only kind, used by the early church. Instrumental music is a comparatively modern innovation without one syllable of authority from God's blessed Book.

Before closing this article I want to call attention to one more "lost" thing. Many of "us" have lost it. That thing is godly living. "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." (Tit. 2:11, 12.) My dear reader, do these three adverbs describe the way you are living? If God were giving your record, would he say that you are living "soberly, righteously, and godly"? And please note that this living is to be done now—"in this present world." "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. 6:2.)

### **Ten Great Bible Questions**

**1. WHERE art thou?"** (Gen. 3; 9.) This was God's first question to man. How serious! How important! How significant! Old Adam and his companion in sin were trying to hide from the presence of the Lord God; but God saw them and found them. So it is with us. The words of Hagar, Sarah's handmaid, are in place here: "Thou God seest me." (Gen. 16:

13.) We would be infinitely better off if we were to remember these words at all times. God sees us. Upon one occasion Moses said to the Reubenites and the Gadites that if they did not live up to their contract, their sins would find them out. "And be sure your sin will find you out." (Num. 32:23.) How true! How true! The blessed Christ said it this way: "For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known." (Matt. 10:26.) We may be able for a while to cover up some of our sins from the eyes of the people, but we cannot cover them from the eyes of the Lord.

2. "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen. 4:9.) This was man's first question to God. Cain and Abel had brought an offering unto God. "And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect." This made Cain mad. "Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell." Because of this wrath and jealousy he slew his brother. In a very important sense we are our brother's keeper. "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." (Rom. 14:7.) "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth. or is offended, or is made weak." (Rom. 14:21.) We should always think what effect our words and actions will have on others. "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." (Rom. 15:1.)

3. "If a man die. shall he live again? (Job 14:14.) This old patriarch who lived so long ago was interested in this question. The question has lost none of its interest. And, thanks be to God. we have the answer plainly revealed in the Bible. Jesus answered it: "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 condemnation." (John 5:28. 29.) If we do good in this life, we shall come forth to the judgment of life; and if we do evil, we shall come forth to the judgment of condemnation. The inspired Paul answered Job's question: "For as in Adam all die, even so

in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Cor. 15:22.) "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." (2 These. 4:13, 14.) Yes, the dead shall live again!

4. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26.) The Christ asked this question. This is a kind of two-in-one question. I know of no answer to this question. Suppose it were possible to gain the whole world, but while thus gaining the things of this world we lose our soul. What shall we give in exchange for our soul? Again I say: This question is unanswered and unanswerable.

5. "Who then can be saved?" (Matt. 19:25.) This question was asked by the disciples after Jesus had given them a lesson on the difficulty of the rich going to heaven. He said something about it being easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. This brought forth the above question. What is the answer? There are two answers in the New Testament. One of them is to the responsible individual who is wanting to be saved from his past sins; the other is the erring Christian. The answer can be read in many different places. Jesus answered the first in Mark 16:16. Hear him: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." This is too plain to be misunderstood. To inquiring believers on the birthday of the church the inspired Peter said: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38.) The same inspired apostle told a backsliding Christian how he could get back into the graces of God. Hear it: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God. if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee." (Acts 8:22. )

6. "Lord, to whom shall we go?" (John 6:68.) Many of the disciples went back and walked no more with Jesus. He said



unto the twelve: "Will ye also go away?" Then Simon Peter asked the question given here and answered it by saying: "Thou hast the words of eternal life." When you turn down Jesus, there is no other one to whom you can go for salvation.

7. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. 2:3.) There is no salvation for us if we neglect this great salvation. It began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed unto us by them that heard it. One can go to hell by doing nothing, but he cannot go to heaven that way. Hell will be full of people who did not intend to go there. Most rational people intend to obey God some time, but they seemingly forget that God has said: "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. 6:2.) God has not promised to save you tomorrow, or next week, or next year; but he will save you now if you will come and obey.

8. "What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God"? (1 Pet. 4:17.) I know of no better answer than that given in 2 These, 1:7-9: "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." "And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Pet. 4:18.)

9. "Who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. 6:17.) We may be taking this question out of its setting, but it is a good one for us to consider. Jesus said: "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." (Mark 13:13.) Again he said: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. (Rev. 2:10) And once again: "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.)

10. "And now why tarriest thou?" (Acts 22:16.) This is a good question with which to close this little study. This ques-

tion was asked by an inspired preacher by the name of Ananias. It was spoken to the praying, believing, penitent Saul. He was told to "arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." He did it. Will you? May God grant it.

### **Five Reasons Why You Should Be a Christian**

THERE are many reasons as high as heaven and as holy as God why all responsible persons should be Christians. Many are not Christians because they have not been caused to see sufficient reasons why they should be. In this article we want to point out a few of the reasons why we should be Christians.

### **Sinners Unfit to Meet God**

All responsible beings who are not Christians are sinners, hence are unfit to meet God. We are going to meet him, and we ought to be making preparation for this meeting. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Heb. 10:31.) From Rom. 5:12 we learn this: "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." And then in Rom. 3:23 we have this striking language: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." We cannot go to heaven in our sins. "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.) My friend, is your name written there? You are not going to heaven because you have or have had a Christian father, mother, wife, husband, or some other dear one who was a genuine Christian. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." (Gal. 6:15.)

### **God Has Provided Salvation**

God knew we were lost. God knew we needed salvation. He loved us sufficiently to provide for our salvation. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16.) The blood of Jesus Christ will save us from our sins. Nothing else under God's shining stars will do it. "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:7.) Paul told the elders of Ephesus that the church had been purchased with the blood of Jesus Christ. (Acts 20:28.) Are you within the purchased possession? If you are not, you are in a lost condition. Salvation is in Christ, not out of him.

### **God Offers You Salvation Now**

Some one has said that hell will be full of people who did not intend to go there. What does this mean? It simply means that many will put off salvation until it is eternally too late. God has not promised to save you next week, or next month, or next year, but he has promised to save you *now*: "Behold, now is the accepted time: behold, now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. 6:2.) Jesus gave this great invitation to fallen humanity: "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.) In the last chapter of the Bible we have this stirring appeal: "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.)

### **Life Is Uncertain**

Our lives here are very uncertain. We are here today, but we do not know that we shall be here tomorrow. When David was being hounded by Saul, he gave expression to his soul thus: •'But truly as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death.'" (1 Sam. 20:3.) How true! How true! In the New Testament we read it after this fashion: "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." (James 4:14.)

In Luke 12:16-21 we have a parable which Jesus spoke concerning a man who was too much wrapped up in the affairs of this life. This man was a farmer. His ground brought forth plentifully. He did not have room where to bestow his fruits. He did not know what to do. Finally he decided to pull down his old barn and build greater and there bestow all his fruits and his goods. He contemplated a happy day when he would be able to say: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." How did his plans work out? Listen: "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?" Dear reader, do not be a fool. You do not know but that your soul may be required this night. Are you ready?

### **Judgment Awaits the Christ Rejector**

It is appointed unto men once to die. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Heb. 9:27.) What is in store for those who do not obey the gospel of Jesus Christ? Hear it: "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

These. 1:7-9.) What a fearful thing to contemplate! The judgment and eternal damnation are before the individual "who dies out of the Lord.

My kind reader, if you are not a Christian, will you not think as you have never thought before? Will you not examine the five reasons here given for being a Christian and haste to obey the gospel of Jesus Christ by faith, repentance, confession, and baptism? In this way, and in this way only, can you be saved from your past sins. Then after becoming a Christian, remain one while life remains for you. and then go home to glory after awhile. Blessed consummation! Happy Christian!

## 7

### **The Making of a Christian**

A Christian is an individual who has been twice born. He has been born "again." Jesus said: "Verily, verily. I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3.) Then in enlarging upon this thought he 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.) Nicodemus knew something about a fleshly birth, but at first he did not grasp the idea of a spiritual birth. All responsible and accountable beings know something about a fleshly birth. We know that there is first a begetting and then a bringing forth. So it is with the spiritual birth. We are begotten by the Spirit and brought forth from a watery grave. How are we begotten by the Spirit? We read in 1 Pet. 1:23 after this fashion: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God. which liveth and abideth forever." And then in James 1:18 we have this: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." What could be plainer? We are begotten by the word of truth. Paul, in telling how the

Corinthian brethren had been begotten, said: "For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." (1 Cor. 4:15.)

When Jesus says we *cannot* do something, that is just the way it is. He says we *cannot* enter the kingdom without being born of water and the Spirit. But note this: If we are born again, we *can* enter the kingdom. The kingdom is in existence. and we can be entered if we comply with the divine laws of entrance.

After one has been born into the kingdom, what name does he wear? When we were born into our earthly father's family, we took his name. The divine Father has named his children. Many hundreds of years before there was a Christian on earth Isaiah wrote this: "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness. and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name." (Isa. 62:2.) We learn from this that there was a time coming when the Lord's people were to be called by a new name, and that the "mouth of the Lord" was to give this new name. We come to Acts 2 and learn about the beginning of the church, but the converts were Jews. So it was for several years. But in Acts 10 we have an account of the conversion of the first Gentile. The time had no arrived when the Gentiles had seen the righteousness of God. The time had come for God to call his people by a new name. Thus in the very next chapter we have this significant language: "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." (Acts 11:26.) Isaiah said the time would come when they would "be called by a new name, and Luke, in Acts, says they "were called."

This is a divine name divinely given to the people of God. God's people honor their Head by wearing this name. In fact, there is no salvation in any other name. "Neither, is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men. whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12.) If we are ever saved, it must be in the name of Christ. When we are saved in the name of Christ, we have a divine

right to wear his name. It is sinful to wear human names as religious designations. In the early days of the church some of the brethren at Corinth were given to wearing human names. For this they were severely rebuked. "For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?" (1 Cor. 3:4, 5.) To wear human names in religion is carnal. "Carnal" means animal, fleshly, material, temporal, worldly. It is the very opposite of spiritual. "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." (Rom. 8:6.)

We have the name "Christian" three times in the New Testament. We have already read it in Acts 11:26. Its next occurrence is in Acts 26:28. Paul had been preaching the everlasting gospel to King Agrippa. "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." The king knew if he were to obey the gospel that Paul preached it would make him a Christian. It will do the same thing today. Paul preached the death of Christ for our sins, his burial, and his resurrection. He taught people to believe in Christ, to repent of their sins, to confess the name of Christ, and to be buried by baptism for the remission of sins.

You will be interested in hearing Paul preach these things. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." (Acts 16:31.) "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent." (Acts 17:30.) "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. 10:9, 10.) "Know ye not, that *so* many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we

shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." (Rom. 6:3-5.) We have the name "Christian" once again. "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.) It we are genuine Christians, we are going to suffer some for it. Yes, it costs something to be a Christian. To be a humble follower of the humble Christ and to wear no other name but his really means something. This name is above every other name. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. 2:9-11.) May God help us to honor the name by wearing it and living up to it.

## 8

### **The Judgment**

#### **Certainty of It**

PAUL stood in the midst of Mars' Hill, in Athens, and preached to those ancient philosophers. Among other things, he said to them: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." (Acts 17:30, 31.) God hath appointed this judgment day. It is coming. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Heb. 9:27.) God made this appointment. God keeps his appointments.

#### **Who Judged?**

We have already learned from the above quotation that "he will judge the world in righteousness." All shall be judged.



Jesus said: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." (Matt. 25:31, 32.) In another place we hear him saying: "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.)

### **Basis of Judgment**

What will be the basis upon which we shall be judged? We shall be judged for the things that we did while we were in the body. "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.)

Secret things will be judged in that great day. "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel." (Rom. 2:16.) We may be able now to cover up some things from the eyes of men, but we cannot cover them from the eyes of the Lord. Secret things will be made manifest at the judgment bar of Christ. Many things that would not bear the light of open day here shall be brought to light at the judgment.

We shall be judged by our words. We say many things here that we would not say if we knew we were going to be thrust into eternity within the next hour. We are too careless in our use of words. "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." (Matt. 12:36, 37.) Is it any wonder that the wise man, Solomon, gave expression to this. "The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious: but the lips of thy words be few." (Eccles. 5:2.) "If any man offend not in

a fool will swallow up himself. The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness: and the end of his talk is mischievous madness. A fool also is full of words" (Eccles. 10:12-14.) There must be a lot of fools in the world! "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." (James 3:2.)

Another thing that will be the basis of judgment is what we did with Jesus. What we do with Jesus *now* determines what he will do with us *then*. "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." (John 3:18, 19.) Pilate had Jesus on his hands and did not know what to do with him. He knew he had to do something with him. And so do we. Pilate asked: "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?" (Matt. 27:22.) May God help us all to do the right thing with him. Of course the right thing is to obey him implicitly.

### **Who the Judge?**

Jesus will be our Judge. We have already read in Acts 17:30, 31 that God will judge the world by Jesus. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." (John 5:22.) For this we ought to be profoundly thankful. He will be a just, righteous, and merciful Judge. We shall receive our just deserts. We cannot fool the Judge. He knows all about us.

### **Issues?**

The issues of the judgment will be eternal in their nature. When the prisoner stands at the bar to receive his sentence in our civil courts, it is a serious and solemn minute. To think what it will be when we stand at the judgment bar of Christ to

receive our eternal sentence! Listen: "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 . . . And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." (Matt. 25:41-46.) "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 These. 1:7-10.)

My reader, are you obeying the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ? Have you come to him by faith, repentance, confession, and baptism? (Matt. 28:18-20: Mark 16:15. 16: Luke 24:46. 47; Acts 2:37. 38:8:26-39:22:16.)

Did you rise to walk in newness of life? (Rom. 6:3-5: Col. 2:12.)

## 9

### **Payday**

THERE are many "special" days in which folks are interested: One of these "special days is payday. The laborer looks forward to his pay envelope, and to the blessings that are made possible by it. Even preachers are more or less interested in payday! There are two paymasters. One is the Lord and the other is the devil. Our pay will depend upon which one we are working for—in whose vineyard we labor.

Payday came to Adam and Eve. God had placed them in a perfect environment. They could eat of the fruit of all the trees

of the garden, save one. Of the fruit of this tree they must not eat. God had said: "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest hereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen. 2:17.) This was a plain prohibition, but the devil came preaching a lie, saying: "Ye shall not surely die." (Gen. 3:4.) Here was a plain contradiction of what God had said. Of course the devil made his appeal through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. This appeal was too strong for the woman. She ate and gave unto her husband, and he ate.

Thus sin and death and all their woes were brought into the world. The man and the woman were driven out of the garden. Even the ground was cursed because of this sin. And so we have the thorns and the thistles. Payday had come!

Almost two thousand years later another payday came to the human family. God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth. Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. God decreed that he would destroy man from the face of the earth. Only old Noah found grace in the sight of the Lord. God told him to build an ark to the saving of his house. Noah built the ark. He and his sons and their wives entered the ark. All who were not on the ark were destroyed from the face of the earth. And so another payday had arrived. And what a day it was!

A few more hundred years roll into eternity: and then we have the history of two desperately wicked cities. Sodom and Gomorrah. God decreed to wipe them off the face of the earth. But a righteous man and his family were living within the environs of these cities. This righteous man was Lot. Some years before he had made a very unwise decision when he moved into that wicked place. But when he made this unwise decision, he was thinking too much of worldly prosperity. So many others have done that very thing. But faithful Abraham had power with God. He prayed in behalf of the righteous of these two cities. God promised him not to destroy the righteous with the wicked. Lot and his wife and their daughters were set down

outside the city and commanded to escape to the hills, and not to look back. But Lot's wife looked back; and what a look! She was turned into a pillar of salt. That was the last time she ever disobeyed God. You know there does come a last time. And so another payday had come!

And time rolls on! God's people have multiplied in Egypt. They are being led through the wilderness by that magnanimous man, Moses. They need water. God told Moses to speak to the rock. Moses did, and he did more. He smote the rock twice. And Moses said: "Must we fetch you water out of this rock?" This rebellion displeased Jehovah. God called this disbelief on the part of Moses. Belief is to do exactly what God says in exactly the way God says to do it. Moses had not done this. "And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron. Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them." (Num. 20:12.) Weary years pass. At last Israel is encamped at the foot of old Mount Nebo. The rolling Jordan lies between them and the promised land. But good old Moses did not get to go over into the earthly Canaan. From Nebo's lofty heights he was permitted to have a panoramic view of the promised land, but he could not set foot on it. So payday had come to one of God's great men!

David was a man after God's own heart. But he was a man, and men sin. David sinned grievously. He coveted another man's wife. He set things in motion so he could get this woman. He had her husband placed in the thick of the battle so he would be killed. He got his woman, but in getting her he got a lot of other things. Sin is a terrible monster. Listen to David: "For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me." (Ps. 51:3.) Payday! Be sure your sin will find you out. There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed.

Judas Iscariot betrayed God's Son for about fifteen dollars. What good did the money do him? He threw it down, and then went out and hanged himself. What a bitter payday!

When Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent, he wanted to set him free. But the Jews would not have it that way. They said let his blood be on us and our children forever. And how they have suffered! Payday!

Abraham was faithful to God. His years were spent in humble service to God. The end came. He was ready to go. Payday!

Joseph was sold into slavery. In the king's palace he had temptations hard to bear, but through it all he was true to God. He became governor over all the land of Egypt. God used him to save his people from destruction. Payday!

The first Christian martyr was Brother Stephen. The enemies could kill Stephen, but they could not kill his faith in Christ. Faithful was he unto death. They could stone his body to death, but they could not stone out his hope in Christ. "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.) He looked steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing by the right hand of God. Payday!

Perhaps the greatest gospel preacher of them all was Paul. A third of a century did he toil in the vineyard of the Master. And how he did suffer! Oftentimes was he hungry, without sufficient clothing, thirsty, and in all kinds of perils. Year after year of this did he undergo. But the last year came. The last sermon has been preached. His toils and his tears are over. Paul, how does it look as you stand at the end of life's pilgrimage and look back over your faithful life and just across the river of death? "For I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (2 Tim. 4:6-8.) Payday!

The further along the road we travel the more we are going to think about the end of the way. The race will be over soon. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 6:23.)

## 10

### **The Value of the Church**

THE church is a divine institution. Jesus said: "I will build my church." (Matt. 16:18.) He is the only one that has a right to speak of it as "my church." When men say "my church," they are not thinking clearly. We have hundreds of religious organizations in the world started by men. There is no salvation in any human institution, be it religious, fraternal, social, or political.

The church is valuable because of what it cost. It cost God his Son, and it cost the Son his blood. The church was made possible by the blood of Christ. We are bought with his precious blood. Paul told the Ephesian elders that the church was purchased with the blood of Christ. (Acts 20:28.) And the same inspired man wrote to the church in Corinth telling it that we are bought with a price. (1 Cor. 6:20.) We do value things somewhat in proportion to what they cost. Thus we should look upon the church. We have not been redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but by the precious blood of Christ. (1 Pet. 1:18, 19.) Our souls are valuable in the sight of God.

The church is valuable because salvation is in it. There is no salvation for any of us outside of Christ. There is no salvation in any other name other than the name of Christ. (Acts 4:12.) The same thing that saves us makes us members of the church. Just as fast as we are saved the Lord adds us to the church. (Acts 2:46, 47.) We are saved just as fast as we obey God. I

had a dear soul to request baptism at ray hands one time, but she said she did not want to be a member of the church of Christ. Of course she was not ready for baptism. No one is ready for baptism with such a conception of the plan of salvation. We must get it into the heads of people that when they do the things that God commands them to do, that will save them and make them members of the church. And if we do the things that will save us, it will make us all members of the same church. Doing something else will make us members of something else, but it will not save us.

The church is in the saving business. "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.) Sometimes people will say that the church never saved anyone. We may grant that, but the saved are in the church. Christ is the Savior, but he is the Savior of the body, and the body is the church. (Eph. 5:23; Eph. 1:22, 23; Col. 1:18.)

The church is valuable because it wears the name of Christ. No other organization or institution has the divine right to wear the name of Christ. He called it his church. Paul, in writing the different congregations of the church, spoke of them as the churches of Christ. (Rom. 16:16.) What a grand privilege to be in the church that honors Christ as its head and wears his name. The faithful wife loves to wear the name of her husband. The church is the bride of Christ and faithfully wears his name. The Christian wants no other name but the name of Christ. A faithful wife would wear no other name but that of her husband. So a faithful Christian wears no other name but the name of Christ. It is an honor to wear that name. We should be jealous of the name. We stand before the world as representatives of Christ. We should be careful to leave no wrong impressions. About the only impressions that some have of Christ are the impressions that they get from us. How careful we should be!

The church is the only kingdom that will stand forever. The kingdoms of men rise and fall. They are here today, but in a



few hundred years they have fallen. The God of heaven set up a Kingdom that shall never be destroyed. (Dan. 2:44.) The gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. (Matt. 16:18.)

"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." (Heb. 12:28.)

In the clashing and destruction of empires today the humble Christian can rest assured that the kingdom of Christ will stand forever. It cannot be moved. The thing for us to do is to be true and faithful to the God of heaven. He has power to take care of his own; and, thanks be to God, this he will do. We must not get discouraged too much. Every soul that we bring into the kingdom that remains faithful to God is one less for Satan and his kingdom. We must be true to the King.

We are now in the kingdom. Before the kingdom was established, Jesus taught his disciples to pray for the kingdom to come. That prayer was in order then. It is not now. The kingdom has been here for nineteen hundred years. Paul wrote to the Colossians brethren after this manner: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." (Col. 1:13.) I am sure that all will agree that it would not be possible to be translated into a kingdom that did not exist. Yes, the kingdom was in existence in the days of Paul, and folks were being translated into it.

The old apostle John said he was in the kingdom: "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ." (Rev. 1:9.) He said that he was a brother in the kingdom. It would be pretty hard to be a brother in something that did not exist! If there was no Masonic Lodge, it would hardly be possible to be a "brother" in it. Of course I use this simply to illustrate.

We are living in the last age. When Jesus comes again, it will not be to set up a kingdom, but it will be to deliver one up to the Father. (Eph. 5:27.) Christ is now reigning. Jesus is coming again; but when he comes the next time, he is coming

without an offering for sin. (Heb. 9:27, 28.) "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." (1 Cor 15:22-26.) Please note, "then cometh the *end*."

## 11

### **The Great Salvation**

THEREFORE we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation: which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?" (Heb. 2:1-3.)

Nothing of greater importance can engage the mind of a thinking person than the "great salvation." This "great salvation" is a common salvation. It is common in the sense that it is accessible to all. We read about the common salvation in Jude 3: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." This "great salvation" is an eternal salvation. "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.)

We have heard folks talk about something, "better felt than told." Whatever that may have been, it could not have been the "great salvation," because this "great salvation" "began to be spoken by the Lord." The author of this "great salvation" is Christ. That very fact would make it a "great salvation." "He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." This does not sound like universal salvation, does it? To come under the benefits of this "great salvation" we must obey the Author. You can get to heaven all right without knowing or obeying the doctrines and commandments of men, but you cannot get to heaven without obeying Christ. The very fact that one would obey the doctrines of men would keep him from obeying the doctrine of Christ; hence, would prevent him from ever enjoying the "great salvation."

It is worthy of note that it is Jesus who is the author of this "great salvation." It is not Moses, nor John the Baptist, nor Wesley, nor Knox, nor Calvin, nor Campbell, nor Russell. God does not speak to you and me by any of these, but by Jesus Christ. No, no, I do not mean to put such men of God as Moses and John the Baptist on the same plane with uninspired men, but God does not speak to any of us today by Moses nor the prophets nor John the Baptist. God did speak unto the fathers by the prophets, but he speaks unto us by his Son. Christ is the author of our salvation. "God. who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." (Heb. 1:1, 2.) You cannot find the "great salvation" in the Old Testament. You see it *began* to be spoken by the Lord.

Christ did not become the author of this "great salvation" until he was made perfect. He learned obedience by the things which he suffered. After he was made perfect, he became the author of the "great salvation." This "great salvation" was first spoken by the Lord, and then it was confirmed unto us by them that heard him. Jesus said unto the apostles: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send

in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14:26.) This was spoken to them before the crucifixion. After the resurrection and just before the ascension we hear Jesus speaking unto the apostles again, saying: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28:18-20.)

This "great salvation" is a taught salvation. The apostles were to teach and then do the baptizing. When preachers try to do some "baptizing" before folks have been taught the gospel, they are not dealing properly with the "great salvation." That does not mean that teaching is to cease at baptism. No, Jesus says to teach the baptized ones to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded. We find out what he had commanded from the writings of these inspired men. You see this "great salvation" was confirmed unto us by them that heard him. That would leave Joe Smith, Wesley, Rutherford, and the rest of them out, would it not? They did not hear him. How was this word confirmed? "God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will." (Heb. 2:4.) Some folks in our day entirely miss the purpose of "signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost." These were to confirm the word. It needs no further confirmation. Hence, the miraculous has ceased. So we hear the inspired Paul saying in 1 Cor. 13:8: "Whether there be tongues, they shall cease." There is no further use for the miraculous tongue. "But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." (1 Cor. 13:10.)

It took a great sacrifice to bring about this "great salvation." "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liv-

eth." (Heb. 9:16. 17.) "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God. that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory: that your faith and hope might be in God." (1 Pet. 1:18-21.)

## 12

### **The Family of the Lord**

THE Lord has a family. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." (Eph. 3:14. 15.) In every well-regulated family there must be a head. Christ is the head of the family of the Lord. "For the husband is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body." (Eph. 5:23.) "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.)

Authority and power are vested in the head of the family. Jesus said: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matt. 28:18.)

The first human family was brought into existence by a miracle. Adam was miraculously created, and so was his wife. The church of Christ, or the family of the Lord, was brought into existence by a miracle. We read of this miraculous beginning of the family of the Lord in Acts 2. The apostles were miraculously filled with the Holy Spirit. This enabled them to speak with other tongues. This they did. Many different national-

ities were represented on the day of Pentecost, but "every man heard them speak in his own language." (Acts 2:6.) This caused wonder and amazement.

After the first human pair were brought into existence, the laws of reproduction were set in motion. Since then all have become members of the human family by virtue of obedience to these laws. There is first a begetting and then a bringing forth. This constitutes a birth. We all become members of the human family in exactly the same way. There are not two or three or more ways of becoming members of the human family.

So it is with the family of the Lord. We all get into it exactly the same way. Jesus said: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3.) He was then talking to a ruler of the Jews named Nicodemus. Nicodemus did not understand how a man could be born again. So Jesus explained by saying: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5.)

We are begotten by the word of God. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." (James 1:18.) "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.) "In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." (1 Cor. 4:15.)

After being begotten "by the word of God" we are brought forth from the watery grave of baptism. "We are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Rom. 6:4.)

When a child is born into the family, he becomes an heir. When we are born into the family of the Lord, we become heirs of God. "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God. and joint-heirs with Christ." (Rom. 8:17.) Please note that our becoming heirs depends upon our becoming children. We are not heirs before we are born into the family. God's children are in his family. Others are not in his family; hence, are not his child-

ren. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Rom. 6:3.) "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Gal. 3:26, 27.)

When a child is born into the family, it takes the name of the head of the family. Christ is the head of the family of the Lord; hence, when one is born into this divine family, he takes the name of the head, or the name of Christ. He is a Christian. "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." (Acts 11:26.) "Then Agrippa said unto Paul. Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." (Acts 26:28.) "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.) There is no salvation in any other name. (Acts 4:12.)

Babes must have proper food. Babes in Christ are no exception. Jesus said: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matt. 4:4.) "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." (1 Pet. 2:1, 2.) There will be no question about our growth if we eat plenty of this good food. Then it will not be said of us as it was of some of the early Christians: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God: and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat." (Heb. 5:12.)

There must be discipline in the family. So it is in the family of Christ. Sometimes it becomes necessary to use stern and severe discipline upon rebellious children. "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." (2 Thes. 3:6.) I am sure that not enough discipline is being used

in the church today. We should keep the church clean and pure. Sometimes we have family reunions here on this earth. Members of the same family like to get together. Of course these gatherings have a tinge of sadness because of so many absent members of the family. God's people like to get together, but there are always many absent ones. Some are scattered far and wide upon this earth, and still others have gone to that eternal home. But, thanks be to God, we shall all be gathered home after awhile. Won't that be a grand reunion of all of God's people on the eternal plains of God? I want to be there; don't you?

### 13

#### **Some Things No Man Knows**

IN this article we want to call attention to a few of the many things that no man knows. Some men may claim to know some of them, but we know no man can know them.

#### **Length of Life**

No man knows how long he will be permitted to live on this earth. Neither does any man know when Jesus will come again. "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." (Mark 13:32-37.) "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." (James 4:14.)



God is too merciful to let us know what will be on the morrow. In view of the uncertainty of life and the certainty of death, we ought to get ready and stay ready for death and the judgment. God has not promised to save us tomorrow, or next week, or next year; but he has promised to save us now." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. 6:2.)

### **Second Chance**

No man knows that he will ever have another chance at being saved. We can read in Luke 16:19-31 about a man who died and went to a place of torment. In this place of torment he begged for mercy, but there was no mercy extended. He had wasted his life and his opportunities. 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.) When we are raised from the dead, it will not be to give us a "second chance," but either to the resurrection of life or to the resurrection of damnation.

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Heb. 9:27.) When Jesus comes again, he is not coming to set up a kingdom, but he is coming "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 glory of his power." (2 Thes. 1:7-9.) And do not forget this is at his second coming!

### **"Sprinkling" and "Pouring"**

No man knows that God will accept "sprinkling" and "pouring" in lieu of baptism. Jesus said we must be born of water and of the Spirit. (John 3:5.) The inspired Paul wrote that we "are buried with him by baptism into death." (Rom. 6:3-5.) He taught the same thing in Col. 2:12. Having a few drops

of water sprinkled or poured on us does not sound like buried by baptism, does it? When we are baptized, we have our bodies washed with pure water. (Heb. 10:22) A few drops of water sprinkled or poured on the head would scarcely be called washing the body, would it?

### **Instrumental Music**

No man knows that the use of instrumental music in the worship of Christians pleases God. We know that Jesus Christ built a church. (Matt. 16:18.) We know that this church did not use instrumental music in the worship, but they did sing. (1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Rom. 15:9.) We further know that this church went along for hundreds of years before instrumental music was introduced into the worship. We know that the use of instrumental music in Christian worship is without one iota of divine authority. We know that it came from men instead of from God.

### **Suppers, Fairs, Etc.**

No man living knows that God will accept money raised by such dubious means as suppers, fairs, etc.. to carry on the work of the church. We know that such unscriptural methods were not used in the early days of the church. God has not left such an important thing as raising money to propagate New Testament Christianity to the whims and caprices of men. No, he commands his people to give as they are prospered. This is the divine way of carrying on this part of the work. Do not risk the salvation of your soul by departing from the faith.

### **Saved Out of the Church**

No man knows that God will save any responsible creature outside of the church. The church is the body of Christ. "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1:22, 23.) "And he is the head of the body, the church." (Col. 1:18.) There is one body. This is plainly stated in Eph. 4:4. And then in Rom. 12:4. 5

we have this language: "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." We get into this one body by baptism. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." (1 Cor. 12:13.) Christ is the Savior of this one body. "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." (Eph. 5:23.) Now let us get this: The church is the body of Christ; there is one body and Christ is the Savior of the body.

In the very chapter (Acts 2) that tells about the beginning of the New Testament church we have this very significant statement in verse 47: "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." That leaves no saved out of the church. Just as fast as they are saved, God adds them to the church. The same thing that saves us adds us to the church. The saved ones are the ones who are obeying the gospel by faith, repentance, confession, and baptism: and these saved ones are the ones the Lord is adding to his church. The ones who will not obey these stipulated conditions of pardon, of course, are not being saved, hence are not being added to the church.

## 14

### **Different States of Man**

WE are born into a state of innocence, and we remain in this condition until we have attained unto the years of responsibility and accountability. No doubt some children arrive at this period of their lives sooner than others. *Some* children are naturally more precocious than others.

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezek. 18:20.) The little child has no sins. It is sinless. To illustrate the characteristics that should inhere in his disciples, Jesus called a little child unto him. "At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus,

saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 18:1-3.)

There are two ways of getting out of this innocent state of childhood. One way is to die while yet in this condition. All children who thus die are safe in the paradise of God. Parents weep not for your innocent children who have preceded you. The other way out of this innocent state is to live until we have become accountable for our deeds and actions. This brings us into the second state of our existence—the one of condemnation before God. "But the scripture hath concluded all under sin. that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." (Gal. 3:22.)

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom. 8:1.) The opposite of this would be that so long as we remain out of Christ Jesus we are under condemnation. This coincides exactly with many other plain passages of Scripture. In giving his farewell commission to his apostles, Jesus said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16.)

Thus we can get out of this state of condemnation by faith in Christ Jesus, repenting of our sins, making the confession of our faith, and being buried by baptism for the remission of our sins. In other words, we get into Jesus Christ by being baptized into him. There is no other possible way to get into Christ. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the like-

ness of his resurrection." (Rom. 6:3-5.) "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." (1 Cor. 12. 13.) "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Gal. 3:26,27.)

Thus we have already seen that there are two ways out of the state of innocence. So it *is* with the state of condemnation. We can live and die in that state, and then be eternally damned; or we can give heed to the gospel of Christ, and thus be translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

Obedience to the gospel plan of salvation brings us into a state of justification before God. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Cor. 5:17.) However, it is possible to fall from this lofty estate and be finally and eternally lost in hell. Jesus said: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. 2:10.) If Christians are not faithful until death, and even *unto* death, there will be no crown.

In 2 Pet. 1 the inspired writer enumerates seven Christian graces or virtues. Without these traits no Christian can be saved. "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. 1:10, 11.) It is no wonder Paul wrote after this fashion: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." (1 Cor. 9:27.) This great Christian fully realized that it was highly possible and probable for a Christian to become a castaway. We would to God that all members of the church thus appreciated this fearful contemplation. "Therefore we ought to give the more earn-

est heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." (Heb. 2:1.)

The ones who are in the state of ignorance are not reading this article. They are the babies and the mere children. They are safe. But we are hoping that many who are not Christians will read these words. May we urge upon you to get out of that state of condemnation and *set* into the one of justification. Every hour you live in condemnation you are living; without God and without hope. What a fearful state in which to be found! Will you flee to the outstretched hands of love and mercy while mercy lingers and the opportunity is yours? Many others will read this who are faithful members of the body of Christ. They are justified in his holy sight. May I urge you with all the power of my soul to be "stedfast, 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. 15:58.)

Every creature upon God's good earth is in the state of innocence, condemnation, or justification. When time shall be no more and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, we shall find ourselves in one of two states. It will be heaven or hell for everyone of us. While it is possible while in the flesh to pass from one state to another, there is no passing over and between the two eternal states. There is a great gulf "fixed". They that would pass from one to the other cannot. (Luke 16:19-31.)

In describing the duration of heaven and the duration of eternal punishment. Christ used identically the same word. The translators of our Common Version have given us two words— "eternal" and "everlasting." Let us give earnest heed to these solemn words of Jesus Christ: "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 finally: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." (Verse 46.)

## 15

**Remembering Jesus**

ON the night of his betrayal Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. Among other things he said: "This do in remembrance of me." (Luke 22:19.) There are reasons innumerable why we should desire to keep Jesus always fresh in our memories. In this article we want to direct your hearts to some of these reasons.

Jesus became poor in our behalf. He was rich, but for our sakes he became poor. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." (2 Cor. 8:9.) If a rich earthly friend were to give up his wealth for us, we would have no trouble in remembering our benefactor. Jesus gave up the wealth of heaven for the poverty of earth for our sakes. How poor did he become? "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." (Matt. 8:20.)

Jesus left us a perfect example that we might follow in his steps. Of course an example that was not perfect would be all but useless. Jesus not only told us how to walk, but showed us how. There is power in an example. "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps." (1 Pet. 2:21.)

Jesus died for us. How can we forget such a sacrifice? "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. 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." (1 Cor. 15:1-4.)

Jesus gave us the divine plan of salvation. He said: "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.) About ten days after this divine plan was given it was carried out for the first time in the city of Jerusalem. On the birthday of the church the gospel was preached. People heard it. They believed it. They cried out, saying: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter gave the answer he had been authorized by Christ to give. Hear it: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:37, 38.)

Jesus invites all to come and be saved. Hear his gracious invitation: "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.) We ought to remember Jesus and this precious invitation. Gentle reader, have you answered this invitation?

Jesus offers us a home in heaven. If someone were to offer us a mansion here on earth, he would have no trouble in getting us to accept it. Jesus offers us one in heaven. "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:2,3.)

Jesus is now interceding for us. He is at the right hand of God making intercession for us. "Wherefore he is also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Heb. 7:25.) Think what it means to have him in heaven interceding for us!

Jesus sympathizes with us. He knows and he cares. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feel-



ing of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (Heb. 4:15.)

Jesus is coming again. We are going to meet him. This ought to make us remember him. "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11.)

When Jesus comes, all the dead will be raised. 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. ) There is nothing in this passage, or any other one, that indicates two resurrections a thousand years or so apart, but Jesus said at the resurrection *all* shall come forth.

Jesus will judge us all. This one thing ought to be enough to cause us all to remember him. We are going to meet him at the judgment. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." (John 5:22.) "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom." (2 Tim. 4:1.) What is to take place at his appearing and his kingdom? Paul says that we are to be judged. This I believe.

Jesus will reward the faithful and punish the disobedient. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 These. 4:16. 17.) The ones who are alive shall not precede the righteous dead into the glory world. "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 These. 1:7-9.)

Our Father, help us to remember always thy Son and our Redeemer.

## 16

### The Resurrection

THE word "gospel" means "glad tidings" or "good news." The fact that Jesus rose from the dead is indeed good news. During the forty days from the resurrection till the ascension he made at least eleven different appearances unto his disciples. Five of these were on the first Lord's day.

He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. Women were last at the cross and first to the tomb, and it was to women that the blessed Christ first appeared after his resurrection: "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils." (Mark 16:9.) Jesus making himself known to this woman is one of the most human and most touching things in the New Testament. "But Mary stood without at the sepulcher weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulcher, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them. Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardner, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him thence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and our God. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her." (John 20:17, 18.)

The same morning he appeared unto the women returning from the tomb. "And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshiped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me." (Matt. 28:9, 10.) These women were returning from an empty tomb, and met the one that had so recently occupied the tomb!

And the same day he appeared unto Simon. (Luke 24:34.) How fitting that he would appear to this disciple alone! Peter's faith had wavered a few days before. Yes, he had cursed and swore and denied. Now the risen Christ, back from the tomb, appears unto Peter.

The same afternoon he appeared unto two disciples as they were going to Emmaus. Emmaus was a half dozen or so miles from Jerusalem. All Jerusalem was talking about the things which had happened there so recently. These two disciples were talking about it. While they were thus communing and reasoning, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But they did not know him. Their eyes were holden. Jesus said to them: "What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?" (Luke 24:17.) Of course they thought it was strange that he would thus talk; but listen to their testimony concerning Jesus even before he made himself known: "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people." (Luke 24:19.) You will note that they mentioned "deed" before "word." They told how he was delivered up and condemned to death. They told of the crucifixion. And then they told this

"stranger" that they had trusted that it was he that should have redeemed Israel. They said it was now the third day since these things were done. Then they told how certain women of their company had made them astonished after being at the tomb, seeing angels, and being told that he was alive. Then the "stranger" began to teach them, saying: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight." (Luke 24:25-31.) After he was gone, they talked about how their hearts had burned within them while they were walking by the way and while he opened up the Scriptures to them.

These two disciples hurried back to Jerusalem the same evening. No doubt those were happy miles. Jesus is risen! They had seen him! They had talked with him! When they came to Jerusalem, they found the eleven gathered together. Thomas was not with them. They told what had happened on the way to Emmaus, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of bread. While they were talking, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them. They were terrified and affrighted, and supposed they had seen a spirit. Jesus assured them it was he. He had them look at his hands and his feet. He told them that a spirit did not have flesh and bones. He took some broiled fish and honeycomb and ate before them. Then he opened unto them the Scriptures. (Luke 24:33-49.)

A week later he appeared unto the disciples again. Thomas was with them this time. He had said: "Except I shall see in his

hands the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." (John 20:25.) When Jesus appeared on this occasion, he said to Thomas: "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing." (John 20:27.) This was enough for Thomas. Listen to his noble confession: "My Lord and my God." Then Jesus said to Thomas: "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." (Verses 28, 29.) And, thanks be to God, we have not seen him, but we believe just as firmly as did Thomas. "My Lord and my God."

And then later we learn of Jesus appearing to seven disciples as they were fishing in old Galilee. What a sweet meeting they had with him there on the shore that morning! He had prepared breakfast for them. Read of this marvelous appearing in John 21.

Jesus appeared to eleven disciples on a mountain in Galilee. (Matt. 28:16-20.) Paul tells about his appearing unto more than five hundred brethren at once. Paul was writing of this about twenty-five years after the resurrection, but he said even then that the greater part of that five hundred were living. Of course some had fallen asleep. (1 Cor. 15:6.) And Paul said that after that he was seen of James. And then his last appearance just before he was taken up. "And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was Dashed from them, and carried up into heaven." (Luke 24:50. 51.) "While they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight." (Acts 1:9.)

But he is coming again! "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11.) "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him." (Rev. 1:7.)

## 17

**Now!**

"BEHOLD, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."  
(2 Cor. 6:2.)

"Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." (Heb. 4:7.)

There is a prevalent idea extant in the world today that there is no particular hurry about obeying God; that it is all right to take plenty of time to think it over. This is of the devil, devilish. After one knows what God will have him do, but refuses to do it, he must harden his heart to keep from doing it. This is indeed a dangerous process.

Perhaps you remember that Jesus said this to a certain man: "Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:59-62.) From this we would learn that the Lord expects us to obey immediately. There is no tarrying. There is no looking back. Nothing must take precedence over our obedience to God—not even burying loved ones and bidding farewell. Christ expected these men to follow him immediately. They knew they should follow him, so they must not harden their hearts. Every time we harden our hearts it becomes that much more difficult to follow the Lord. The time to follow him is immediately upon learning of him. To delay obedience means to harden your heart. God says do not do this.

We turn to Acts 13 and we have there the gist of a wonderful sermon Paul preached in Antioch of Pisidia. The Jews spoke against those things which were spoken of Paul, contra-

dieting and blaspheming. How did these inspired preachers meet this situation? "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." (Verse 46.) Paul preached the truth to them, they refused to hear it, and then Paul turned from them. "But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium." (Verse 51.)

Paul went to Corinth. He reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and Greeks. "And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles." (Acts 18:5, 6.) Paul thought there was no use of wasting efforts on folks who would oppose themselves and blaspheme. He turned from them, and he was clean in thus turning. Their blood was upon their own heads. We cannot make people obey the gospel. We can preach it to them plainly and kindly. If they will not obey, their blood is on their own heads, not on ours. There are those who v. ill obey, and we ought to do as Paul did at Corinth—turn to them.

If people will not obey the gospel, they are left without excuse. It is too plain to be misunderstood. The mysteries have been made plain relative to our obedience to God. "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." (Rom. 1:20.) When God says people are without excuse, it must be so.

We have a record of two men who learned the truth of the gospel, and then asked for more time. Felix needed some plain gospel preaching. He got it at the hands of Paul. Paul took for his subject, "Righteousness, temperance, and judgment to

come." The preaching was so powerful that it made this wicked man tremble. But he hardened his heart. He knew what he ought to do, but he postponed his obedience, and never did obey. "Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." (Acts 24:25) That "convenient season" never came. It never does. Quitting wickedness and sin is a very inconvenient something. When gospel preaching makes a man tremble, he had better obey right then.

King Agrippa postponed his obedience and died a miserable death. No greater sermon was even preached than the one preached by Paul to Agrippa. Read it in Acts 26. After the king had heard the marvelous sermon, he said unto Paul: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." (Acts 26:28.) Almost, but lost! He hardened his heart. He was not ready to quit sin.

In New Testament conversion all who obeyed the gospel obeyed it when they first heard it. On the birthday of the church the ones who obeyed did it on the first sermon they heard. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." (Acts 2:41.) "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did .... But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." (Acts 8:5-12.) The eunuch heard one sermon and obeyed. (Acts 8:26-40.) Paul obeyed the moment he was told what to do to be saved. (Acts 9.) Cornelius heard one gospel sermon and obeyed. (Acts 10.) Lydia heard the first sermon and obeyed. (Acts 16:13-15.) The jailer heard the gospel and was baptized the same hour of the night. (Acts 16:24-34.)

After a man hears the gospel and does not obey it, he is adding sin to sin. He begins to commit a new sin. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."



(James 4:17.) Of course this will go for members of the church too. There is no more dangerous sin than a willful sin. "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy!, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" (Heb. 10:26-29.)

And, brother, when the saints assemble and you forsake the assembly, you have "trodden under foot the Son of God" and "counted the blood of the covenant ... an unholy thing." Do not forget that the passage here quoted comes immediately after Heb. 10:25, which says: "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." You had better think of this next Lord's-day evening. Think of it every Lord's-day morning. Think of it on the midweek prayer meeting night. Think of it every night of the revival. Do not harden your heart. Do not trample the Son of God under foot. Do not count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing.

When we refuse to obey the truth as revealed by the Holy Spirit, we are rejecting the Holy Spirit. Jesus said: "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." (Matt. 12:31, 32.)

"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

## 18

**Lot's Wife**

JESUS said to those who were contemporaneous with him: "Remember Lot's wife." (Luke 17:32.) There must be reasons why we should remember that woman. Why single out Lot's wife and tell us to remember her? In this sinful age in which we are living we do well when we remember Lot and his wife.

The Bible is full of danger signals. Lot's wife is one of these. Abraham and Lot were agreeing nicely. Both were rich. Both had great flocks and herds. Finally the herdsmen fell out among themselves. Abraham learned about this, and sent for his nephew. The old patriarch said to Lot: "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we be brethren." (Gen. 13:8.) Abraham was a man of peace. He seemed to think that the very fact that men were brethren ought to be enough to keep down strife between them. And so it ought.

He made a magnanimous offer to Lot, saying: "Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." (Verse 9.) That was a big offer. It takes a big man to make a big offer. Abraham was older and wiser than Lot. How much better it would have been for Lot to have allowed Abraham to make the decision! But he had his eyes too much on the things of this world. In his anxiety to secure fine pastures for his flocks and herds, he all but forgot his girls. Girls and boys have souls to save. Flocks and herds do not. "And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord." (Verse 10.) This appealed to Lot. He chose this plain of Jordan. But the book very significantly says: "And pitched his tent toward Sodom." What a sad

"pitch" that was! And how many others have done the same thing! How many have forgotten God in their mad rush after wealth, social prestige, political ambitions, educational attainments, etc.! Had Lot's wife been as wise as a mother ought to be, she would have advised Lot to move as far from Sodom and Gomorrah as possible. It was a good place for cattle, but a poor place for girls.

Could poor Lot have seen a little way into the distance and could have seen how hard it would be to extricate himself from this wicked environment, never would he have made the choice he did. So it has been with millions of others. Our shortsightedness is pitiful.

"But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." (Verse 13.) And they got no better, but rather grew worse. Finally the Almighty decreed that these cities should be destroyed from the face of the earth. This sent faithful Abraham to his knees, pleading in behalf of these cities for the sake of Lot and his loved ones. What a spirit to manifest! In his petitions to God, Abraham said: "Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein?" (Gen. 18:23, 24.) God assured him that if there were fifty righteous within the city he would spare the city for their sake. Abraham knew the wickedness of the place. He kept pleading for the city until he had the promise of the Lord that if there were ten righteous within the city he would spare the city.

Ten righteous people would have been the physical salvation of Sodom and Gomorrah. But they were not to be found. Lot was warned by angels to flee from the city. But his wicked sons-in-law mocked him. Lot's mistake had been made in coming into this wicked place, in the first place, with those girls of his. They had married the wicked Sodomites. What a mistake it is for a pure Christian girl or boy to marry a wicked and sinful person! Finally the angels laid hands on Lot, his wife, and their two daughters and brought them out of the city, commanding

them: "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed." (Gen. 19:17.)

"But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt." (Verse 26.) And this is the last time that she ever disobeyed God! You know there will come a last time.

And Jesus told somebody to remember this woman. There are so many things that we ought to learn and remember from her. We ought to be able to see that the things this world has to offer do not compensate for the loss of a soul. We ought to put first things first. The salvation of our soul and the salvation of the souls of others ought to be our first consideration. Do not allow business, pleasure, or anything else to come before our duty to God. We should be able to see the danger of putting our children in wicked environments and under the influence of the ungodly. One of the most dangerous things is to marry outside of the family of God. Thanks be to God, it has worked out many times to the salvation of the one who was not a Christian. And while this is true, numberless are the times when it works the other way. And to think of the eternal consequences involved! Unborn generations will be influenced by these dangerous alliances.

And then we should learn from Lot's wife that when we have been delivered from the pollutions of this world we must not look back. Lot, his wife, and the girls were on their way to safety, but she looked back. Christians have escaped the pollutions of this world and are on their way to heaven, but heaven will not be reached if we look back to the sinful things of this world. Jesus said: "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:62.) Many are looking back, and some have gone back; and such are not fit for the kingdom of God.

"Remember Lot's wife."

## 19

**A Quotation from Adam Clarke**

ONE of the most able scholars that the Methodist Church has ever produced was Adam Clarke. His commentary on the whole Bible in six large volumes is a monumental work indeed. Below we are giving a quotation found in Volume 2. page 610. Read it slowly and carefully. This has added weight when we remember that it comes from one of the ripest scholars the sectarian world ever produced, and from a man who was identified with a body of people who use instrumental music in their worship.

"Did God ever ordain *instruments of music* to be used in his worship? Can they be used in *Christian assemblies* according to the spirit of Christianity? Has Jesus Christ, or his apostles, ever commanded or sanctioned the use of them? Were they ever used anywhere in the *apostolic church*? Does the use of them at present, in Christian congregations, ever increase the spirit of devotion? Does it ever appear that *bands of musicians*, either in their *collective* or *individual* capacity, are *more spiritual*, or *as spiritual*, as the other parts of the church of Christ? Is there less pride, self-will, stubbornness, insubordination, lightness, and frivolity among such persons than among the other professors of Christianity found in the same religious society? Is it ever remarked or known that musicians in the house of God have attained to any depth of piety, or superior soundness of understanding, in the things of God? Is it ever found that those churches and Christian societies which have and use instruments of music in divine worship are *more holy*, or *as holy*, as those societies which do not use them? And is it always found that the *ministers* which affect and recommend them to be used in the worship of Almighty God are the most spiritual men and the most spiritual and useful preachers? Can mere *sounds*, no matter how melodious, where no *word* nor *sentiment* is or can be uttered, be considered as giving praise to

God? It is possible that *pipes* or *strings* of any kind can give praise to God? Can God be pleased with sounds which are emitted by no *sentient* being and have in themselves *no meaning*? If these questions cannot be answered in the affirmative, then, *query*, is not the introduction of such instruments into the worship of God antichristian and calculated to debase and ultimately ruin the spirit and influence of the gospel of Jesus Christ? And should not all who wish well to the spread and establishment of pure and undefiled religion lift up their hand, their influence, and their voice against them? The argument from their use in the *Jewish* service is futile in the extreme when applied to Christianity."

Thus deposes the scholarly Adam Clarke. Read again his list of thought-provoking questions. Not one of them can be answered in the affirmative. "Did God ever ordain *instruments of music* to be used in his worship?" He did not. Here is what he has ordained to be done by Christians: "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.) "For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name." (Rom. 15:9.)

"Has Jesus Christ, or his apostles, ever commanded or sanctioned the use of them?" They absolutely have not. Jesus Christ started the church. Inspired apostles preached the gospel. The use of instrumental music in the worship was not a part of the preaching nor a part of the practice of these inspired apostles. It was left entirely out. Now listen to one of these inspired apostles: "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.) Paul and the other inspired preachers did not preach the use of instrument-

al music in Christian worship. It is not a part of the gospel that they preached and practiced. The curse of God is resting upon those who preach another gospel from the one these inspired men preached. Hear another inspired apostle: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." (1 Pet. 4:11.) Let us hear one more inspired apostle: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." (2 John 9.) If we want the Father and the Son, we must abide in the doctrine of Christ; we must not leave the doctrine of Christ and take up with the doctrines and commandments of men. Jesus said of all such: "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Matt. 15:9.)

"Were they ever used anywhere in the apostolic church?" Answer: They absolutely were not. They were not used anywhere in Christian worship for more than six hundred years after the church was started. Their use did not become common for nearly twelve hundred years after the beginning of the apostolic church. If you want to read anything about the use of instrumental music in Christian worship, you will have to go outside of the New Testament to do your reading. There is nothing in there about it.

"Is it possible that *pipes* or *strings* of any kind can give God praise?" Answer: It is absolutely impossible for *pipes* or *strings* of any kind to give God praise. "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." (Heb. 13:15.) "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." (1 Cor. 14:15.)

"Is not the introduction of such instruments into the worship of God antichristian and calculated to debase and ultimately ruin the spirit and influence of the gospel of Jesus Christ? Answer: It is. "And should not all who wish well to the spread and establishment of pure and undefiled religion lift up their

hand, their influence, and their voice against them?" Answer: Absolutely they should. We are not using our influence against them when we meet in "unity meetings," trying to bring about some kind of a compromise with the users of instrumental music in Christian worship. Of course there would be nothing wrong in attending such meetings if we would lift up our hands, our influence, and our voice against them. Some have done this, but it seems that the rank and file who attend such meetings have some kind of paralysis which prevents them raising their hands very far against such innovations and departures from the truth, and their influence has been but feebly used against them, and their voice has failed them! My brethren, we ought to be ashamed to allow a Methodist commentator to lift up his hand more strongly, and use his influence more determinedly, and lift up his voice more loudly than we do against the introduction of things foreign to the simple worship of God. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." (Eph. 6:10)

## 20

### **Three Things the Devil Wants to Do**

IN this article we want to direct the attention of the reader to three things that the devil wants to accomplish in this world.

#### **Keep You Out of the Church**

First, the devil wants to keep every responsible soul out of the church. There are many reasons for this. The saved are in the church. He does not want you to get in with the saved. While you are out of the church, you are unsaved, and well does the devil know this. If you are ever saved, at that moment the Lord adds you to the church. (Acts 2:47.) "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." The devil is not going to allow you to be added to the saved if he can help it



The blood of Christ is in the church, his body. The devil does not want you to come into the church, because that is where the cleansing blood of Christ is. The church has been purchased with the precious blood of Calvary's Lamb. (Acts 20:28.) Well does the devil know that it takes the blood of Christ to wash away sin. And he further knows that this blood is in the church, and that it is not reached out of the church. Christ shed his blood in his death. We are baptized into his death. (Rom. 6:3-5.)

It is in and through the church that we glorify God. "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end." (Eph. 3:21.) We cannot glorify God through any other organization. Well does the devil know this. He seems to know this even better than some of the brethren! He does not care how many other organizations you become a member of, just so he can keep you out of the church. You cannot glorify God through these. The devil does not want God glorified; hence, he does everything he can to keep you from glorifying God through the church.

It is by the church that the gospel of Christ is preached. "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.) If you were a part of the church, you would be helping to preach the gospel. The gospel "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." (Rom. 1:16.) The devil will do everything he can to keep the gospel from being preached. He does not care what is preached so it is not the gospel of Christ. (Gal. 1:8-10.) The devil knows that nothing else will save a man.

Jesus is the head of the church. (Eph. 1:22, 23; 5:25; Col. 1:18.) The devil does not want you in any body over which Christ is the head. Christ is not the head of the various human organizations; hence, the devil does not care if you belong to them. In fact, he is very much delighted to have you in many of them, because it would have a tendency to keep you out of

the church. Perhaps he can make you satisfied in some other body.

The devil has many and sundry ways of keeping you out of the church. He will argue that the church is not essential to one's salvation right in the face of Eph. 5:23. He will ridicule and misrepresent the church. He will do his best to substitute some human church for the real church.

### **Get You Back Into the World**

If the devil does not succeed in keeping you out of the church, then he will do everything he can to get you back into the world after you have gone into the church. And how many times he is successful in this undertaking! Paul wrote of one of the brethren after this fashion: "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." (2 Tim. 4:10.) What caused Demas to forsake Paul? It was the love of the present world. It will do it every time. "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." (1 John 2:15.)

It is a fearful thing to go back into the world. One is then in a worse condition than he was before he went into the church. "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." (2 Pet. 2:20-22.) The Christian has escaped the pollutions of the world. What an awful thing to again become entangled therein and overcome!

"For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" (Heb. 10:26-29.)

How does the devil get Christians back into the world? He does everything he can to weaken their faith. Evil companions will corrupt good morals. Many a faithful Christian has been overcome by associating with the wrong companions. Worldly enterprise and society cause many to go back and walk no more with the Lord. The doctrine of once saved always saved will cause still others to fall.

### **Render You Worthless In the Church**

If the devil cannot succeed in keeping you out of the church or in getting you back into the world, he will do everything within his power to render you useless and worthless in the church. Every Christian is a branch. Christ is the vine. The branch must abide in the vine and bear fruit. If not, it is taken away. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." (John 15:2.) "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.) "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." (James 2:24.)

How does the devil render Christians useless and worthless? He has many and devious devices. He would like for the members of the church to be spiritually ignorant and satisfied. So many refuse to study. They are ignorant. Because of their ig-

norance of the right ways of the Lord they are perfectly satisfied to remain lethargic.

Many are rendered worthless to the cause of Christ because of being stingy and covetous. A covetous person is the most unlike Christ of any mortal. Others get to be chronic critics and grouches. Nothing is right with them. The church is going to the devil, etc. *ad infinitum, ad nauseam*. And still others become adept at making excuses. An excuse maker is never a worker for the Lord. Others are rendered worthless by hypocrisy.

May the Lord help us to overcome the devil and all his wiles.

## 21

### "Son, Remember"

THE two significant words that stand at the head of this article were spoken to a poor, lost soul in Hades. He had wasted his day. "Of all sad words of tongue or pen. the saddest are these, 'It might have been'."

There are so many things we ought to remember. We ought to remember that the first man was Adam. So many "smart" men in our day do not remember that. They are "smart" beyond that which is written. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Gen. 2:7.) "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." (1 Cor. 15:45.) Yes, this is the beginning of the human family. God made the first man. This is the only satisfactory explanation of the origin of the species. Remember that.

We should remember that it was not good for man to be alone, so God made him a helpmeet. (Gen. 2:18.) And it might be well to remember that God did not make him two or

three wives, but *one*. That was God's original order. That is God's order. Let us not forget that. More than one wife at a time are too many wives.

We should remember that this man and woman were placed in a perfect environment. They had everything to make them happy. They were permitted to eat of the fruit of the garden. There was no prohibition. They must not eat of the fruit of that one tree. We should remember that God said that if they ate of this they would die. Of course it is hardly possible for us to forget that more than two hundred generations of the human family have gone down to their graves because of sin. "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.)

Let us remember that our foreparents fell through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. Yes, the fruit of that tree was pleasant to the eyes, it was good food, and a tree to be desired to make one wise. (Gen. 3:6.) The devil knew how to work the woman and man for their fall. He has lost none of his ingenuity. He is trying to drag us down to hell through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Is it any wonder that a loving and merciful Father continually warns his children of the danger? (1 John 2:15-17.)

But let us remember that our foreparents had no sooner fallen when God began the preparation for redemption. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shall bruise his heel." (Gen. 3:15.) After four thousand years of the history of this old world had rolled into eternity, God sent this seed to this sin-cursed earth. Yes, he came to bruise the head of Satan. He was miraculously conceived and brought forth of a virgin. This was all in God's plan. The devil would like even to discount this.

And no sooner had this Son come into the world than the devil tried to get rid of him, and he is still trying it—and the sad thing is that he succeeds in getting him out of the lives of so

many. But God preserved the life of his Son. He was taken into Egypt, and later God called his Son out of Egypt. And do not forget that this was all according to prophecy, and remember that he was born in Bethlehem according to prophecy. But when he was brought out of Egypt he dwelt in Nazareth. Yes, the prophets had said that he would be called a Nazarene.

And remember that he was taught to work. He was brought up at the carpenter's bench. Thus God's Son dignified honest toil. We can do the same. Do not be afraid nor ashamed to work. Jesus called honest, humble workingmen to be his apostles. Paul could make tents when it was necessary for him to do that.

And do not forget where Jesus spent his time when he visited the big city when he was *a* boy. He was found in the temple. He was sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions. He thought his parents should know where to look for him. He had to be about his Father's business even at this early period in his life. So many of our children (and older ones too!) are lost to the cause of Christ when they go to the big cities. Now thousands are moving to our great industrial cities to make "big money." Some make the money, but with all their making they forget Jesus. How sad!

But Jesus went back to Nazareth and was subject to his parents. Dear boys and girls, remember this worthy example. He left us an example that we should follow in his steps. And then when he was about thirty years of age he traveled sixty or seventy miles to do something that most of the sectarian preachers of our day treat lightly and as a nonessential. Yes, he traveled this great distance to be immersed; and let us remember that he said he was thus doing to fulfill all righteousness without submitting to this command of high heaven?

And remember that immediately after his baptism he was driven into the wilderness, and there he met the devil in open combat. And remember how he did it. Jesus put the devil to rout by the word of God. That is the only way to whip the devil.

You cannot whip him with a carnal sword, but you can with the sword of the Spirit. "Son, remember."

And do not forget that after his baptism he went about doing good. He was busy healing the sick, cleansing the leper, casting out devils, raising the dead, and preaching the gospel, telling people that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. Yes, the kingdom of heaven was at hand in the days of Jesus. He taught his disciples to pray for the coming of the kingdom. And let us remember that about fifty days after the death of Christ the kingdom came with power. Never again do we have the disciples looking forward to the coming of the kingdom after its coming on the first Pentecost after the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. We hear them talking about being in the kingdom from then on. (Col. 1:13; Rev. 1:9.)

Let us remember that Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost. Before going back to heaven he gave the law of salvation. This gospel of the kingdom was to be preached to every creature under heaven. Then the ones who would believe this gospel, repent of their sins, confess Christ, and be baptized would be saved. Do not forget that this is the law that Christ gave. (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15, 16; Luke 24:46, 47.) Remember, he gave this law to his apostles, and we can turn and read of their acts in the book of Acts, and there we learn how they understood this law. They preached the gospel of Christ, thus making believers, and these believers were told to repent and be baptized unto the remission of sins.

And remember this law is still in force and will be till time shall be no more. Remember that obedience to the gospel makes Christians only and only Christians; that to be anything but a Christian you have to do less or more than obey the gospel of Christ. Why not be satisfied to be a Christian only? Keep right on remembering Jesus, and then go home to heaven in the sweet after while. Remember to live right and worship right, and Jesus will be waiting at the end of the road to say: "Well done." Blessed consummation!

## 22

**The Two Adams**

"NEVERTHELESS death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come." (Rom. 5:14.)

Here we are told specifically that the first Adam was a figure of the second Adam. "And so it is written. The first man Adam was made a living soul: the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." (1 Cor. 15:45.)

God placed both of these Adams here miraculously. No other man ever came into this world the way Adam did. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Gen. 2:7.) This is the only satisfactory explanation of the origin of the species.

Jesus was born of a virgin. This never happened before nor since. "And the angel answered and said unto her. The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Luke 1:35.)

God named both Adams. "Male and female created he them: and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created." (Gen. 5:2.) "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS for he shall save his people from their sins." (Matt. 1:21.) "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him. and given him a name which is above every name." (Phil. 2:9.)

Both Adams married. Eve became the wife of the first Adam, and the church is the wife of the second Adam. "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." (Gen. 2:18.) "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;



and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." (Gen. 2:21-24.)

All Christians are married to Christ. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." (Rom. 7:4.) The beloved John said: "Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." (Rev. 21:9.) Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that an angel said this to John.

The wives took the names of the husbands. "Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created." (Gen. 5:2) A faithful bride always takes the name of her husband.

The church wears the name of Christ. In speaking of the different congregations of the church, the inspired Paul used this language in Rom. 16:16: "The churches of Christ salute thee." There is something in a name. Peter said: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we can be saved." (Acts 4:12.) If you expect to be saved, you must get into the name of Christ. Do not come up in the judgment wearing some other name and expect eternal life.

The first Adam became the head and ruler of the wife. "Unto the woman he said. I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception, in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children: and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." (Gen. 3:16.) Just as the man is the head and ruler of the wife. so is Christ the head and ruler of the church. "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.) "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." (Eph. 5:23, 24.) "And he is the head of the body, the church." (Col. 1:18.)

In bringing forth the woman into this world, the side of Adam was opened. To make the church possible, it was necessary for the side of Christ to be opened. "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water." (John 19:34.) "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Cor. 6:20.)

Both families grew. "And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord. And she again bare his brother Abel." (Gen. 4:1, 2.)

The church grew rapidly. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." (Acts 2:41.) That was on the birthday of the church. "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." (Acts 2:47.) In a little while we have this very significant statement: "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul." (Acts 4:32.) And in the very next chapter we have this: "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." (Acts 5:14.) "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." (Acts 6:7.)

Disobedience of the first Adam lost the earthly Eden. "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat. and gave also unto her husband with her: and he did eat." (Gen. 3:6.) And what direful results followed! "Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from

whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned *every* way, to keep the way of the tree of life." (Gen. 3:23, 24.) "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.)

The obedience of the second Adam gained the heavenly Eden. "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.) Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift!

## 23

### Four Fundamental Needs

#### Need to Know

ONE of the crying needs of the hour is more knowledge of God's holy word. God's ancient people were destroyed for a lack of knowledge. (Hos. 4:6.) When Jesus was here, he said "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32.) If people knew the truth, we would not have the religious Babel that we have today. Had the truth been taught and adhered to strictly from the days of Christ until now, what a different world this would have been! Christians are commanded to let the word of Christ dwell in them richly. (Col. 3:16.) My dear reader, does that adverb "richly" describe the way the word of Christ dwells in you?

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Heb. 4:12.) The Israelites of old were ignorant of God's righteousness, and this ignorance caused them to go about to establish their own

righteousness. The same condition obtains in the religious world today, and to a lesser extent in the church. These ancient people had a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. Their zeal was commendable, but their lack of knowledge was calamitous. Misdirected zeal becomes religious fanaticism. The happy condition is directed zeal connected with a proper knowledge of God's word to direct that zeal in proper channels.

Here is a sad verse: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." (Isa. 1:3.) What is the secret of gaining a knowledge of the word? It is not a secret! Here is how it is done: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Tim. 2:15.) "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." (John 5:39.)

### **Need to Grow**

All of us once were physical babes, but by proper food and proper exercise we grew. All Christians were once babes in Christ, but by proper food and exercise some have grown. "But grow in grace, and in knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. 3:18.) We grow in God's grace by conducting ourselves in such a way that he is pleased. We cannot grow while we are filled with malice, guile, hypocrisies, envies, and evil-speakings. What shall be done with these things? Listen: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." (1 Pet. 2:1.2.)

Some of us have our religious systems too full of poison to grow much. When we get rid of these things and then desire the sincere milk of the word, there will not be any question about our growth. Then it will not be said of us as it was said of some of the early Christians: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be

the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat." (Heb. 5:12.) We should not always remain on a milk diet.

### **Need to Glow**

Among many other things, Webster says that "glow" means to shine with an intense or white heat; he animated; light; earnestness: ardor. Are those descriptive terms not of a real Christian? Jesus said it after this fashion: "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.) Do not skip too lightly over that little adverb "so." Do not let your light "shine" by spurts and jerks, but let it shine steadily. Let it *so* shine. Here is how we do that: "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world." (Phil. 2:15.) When a Christian is blameless and harmless, he is letting his light shine. "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light." (Eph. 5:8.)

### **Need to Go**

We need to know, and we need to grow, and we need to glow, and then we shall be ready to *go*. We are saved to save. The first word in the great commission is the word "go." "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.) "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 early church took this farewell message of Jesus to his apostles seriously. The Jerusalem church was never more alive than when it was dispersed. "Therefore they that were scattered

abroad went every where preaching the word." (Acts 8:4.) We are not doing much of that going "every where." Brethren, I am not an alarmist; but if we are not mighty careful, we are going to have a class of professional preachers on our hands who will almost take the "go" out of the great commission.

Just about thirty years after Jesus gave these marching orders to the apostles we hear Paul saying the gospel had been "preached to every creature which is under heaven." (Col. 1:23.) God wants the gospel preached to every creature in every generation. At the rate we are going, how long will it take us to preach it to our generation? We have large congregations, and within twenty-five to fifty miles thousands of dear souls who never heard a gospel sermon nor ever heard of the church of Christ! My brethren, such things ought not so to be.

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Rom. 10:13-15.)

## 24

### **Practicing What We Preach**

THE inspired Luke begins the book of Acts after this manner: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach." (Acts 1:1.) Notice the order: *do* and teach. Too many today have reversed that order. They begin to teach before they begin to do. No teaching has greater weight than that which is done by doing. In other words, teaching will have but little weight unless the teacher lives what he teaches. Even the Master Teacher began to do and teach.

Upon one occasion some of the disciples of John were sent to Jesus. These two disciples of John were instructed to ask Jesus this question: "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" (Matt. 11:3.) Christ could have made many arguments in answering this question. He could have made a wonderful argument upon Gen. 3:15. He could have shown that he was the fulfillment of the prophecy here made. But he did not do it! He could have taken dozens of other prophecies from the Old Testament and shown how he was the fulfillment of these prophecies. But he did not do it!

How did he answer this question? How did he set about to prove to John and his disciples that he was he "that should come"? He used no great arguments. He simply said: "Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them:" (Matt. 11:4, 5.) Jesus proved his teaching by what he did. His works gave the weight to what he said.

We can teach in these two ways. We must teach the truth, but this teaching must be backed up by the practice. Jesus taught that men ought always to pray. (Luke 18:1.) Did he practice what he taught? To ask the question is to answer it. Who does not remember the numberless references to the prayers of the meek and lowly Nazarene? "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." (Luke 6:12.) "And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed." "He went away again the second time, and prayed." "And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time." (Matt. 26.) Not one of us can imagine Jesus saying that we ought to pray, but not practicing it himself. What gave the weight to the teaching?

Jesus taught men to be humble. He even washed the feet of the disciples to impress this lesson of humility upon them. Some of our religious neighbors have entirely missed the lesson here.

The disciples did not get the full import of the lesson at the time. Jesus said: "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shall know hereafter." (John 13:7.) Of course Peter and the other disciples knew that Jesus was washing their feet, but they missed the great lesson of humility. They got it later. It would seem that all would get it today. Would the teaching of Jesus have had weight if he had not been the very embodiment of humility?

Jesus taught love. What of his practice? "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us. in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:6-8.) Christ sealed his love with his death.

Christ taught giving. Paul told the Ephesian elders "to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35.) Jesus gave up the joys of heaven to save sinners. When he was here, he gave his very all that a lost and recreant race might be saved. He gave his very life to redeem us from our fallen state. When Jesus taught that we ought to give, he set the example by giving everything. This gave the weight to his teaching.

Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, saying: "This do in remembrance of me." (Luke 22:19.) He set the example. He ate the Supper.

Before Jesus went back to heaven he said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16:16') But before saying this he had set the example. He had been baptized to fulfill all righteousness. (Matt. 3:15.) His commandment is given added force by his example.

Many times false doctrines are given weight because the false teachers are doing some good works. How often do we meet such an expression as this. "But they are doing so much good"! The doctrine may be as false as Satan himself, but it is given



some credence by folks because the ones sponsoring the doctrine may be doing some good works. And, conversely, how often has truth been retarded because the one teaching it was not practicing it! Error would not get such a hold upon men if it were not for the fact that some good works are mixed with the false teaching. And the truth would run and be glorified much faster if the ones who teach it would live it, if they would begin to *do* and *teach*, if they would so live that others would *hear* and *see*.

Paul wrote to Timothy after this fashion: "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." (1 Tim. 4:16.) To Titus he wrote: "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." (Tit 2:11-13.)

"Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?" (Rom. 2:21, 22.)

May the dear Lord help us not to teach anything that we are not practicing, and help us to practice what we teach.

## 25

### **Spiritual Arithmetic**

THE basic operations of mathematics are addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. We cannot get far in our study of this exact science without *a.* good knowledge of these fundamental operations; and no difference how far we go in the study,

we never get away from them. So it is in our study of the word of the Lord. These principles are fundamental.

### **Addition**

Many have not learned that we dare not add to the word of God. The Bible closes with this fearful warning: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book." (Rev. 22:18.) There are awful plagues written in the book, and these are to be added to the one that adds to the word of the Lord. May none of us be guilty of adding to the Bible.

In 2 John 9 we have the same warning in a little different language. Hear it: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." We must not go beyond what is written. To do so means we do not have God or the Son.

When we obey the gospel of Christ, the Lord adds us to the church. The addition takes place in heaven. The Lord adds the saved to the church, and the saved are the ones that obey. It is impossible to be saved and remain out of the church. The same thing that saves us makes us members of the church. "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." (Acts 2:47.)

In 2 Pet. 1 the Christian is told of seven things that he must add to his faith. These are: virtue, knowledge, temperance, Patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. If we do not add these, we will fall; if we add them, we shall never fall. May the dear Lord help us to be good in *addition*.

### **Subtraction**

We must not subtract from the word. Listen: "And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out

of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." (Rev. 22:19.) It will be an awful thing to have our names out of the book of life and our part out of the holy city. We just cannot afford to have this happen to us.

There are many things we must subtract from our lives. One of these is wickedness. "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.) When we lay a thing apart, we are subtracting. And note that the Lord says "all *filthiness*." Some are willing to lay apart part, but not *all*. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Cor. 7:1.)

We should subtract all malice, guile, hypocrisies, envies, and all evil speakings from our lives. There is so much of these in the world. "Malice" means spite, ill will, grudge, animosity, malignity, rancor, virulence, venom. How much trouble has been caused in the church because these have not been subtracted entirely from our lives! "Guile" means crafty cunning, treachery deceit. What an awful thing it is! "Hypocrisy" is professing something that we are not. It is acting.

All bitterness should be subtracted. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice." (Eph. 4:31.) We ought to study our *subtraction* lesson more.

### **Multiplication**

There are many things that should be multiplied. We read this in Jude 2: "Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied." In these days of war, what a wonderful thing to think of Christians multiplying peace and love! God knows they need to be multiplied many times. Even in the church we could stand a little multiplication of peace and love!

Paul uses this lesson on multiplication in 2 Cor. 9:10: "Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread

for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness." How thankful we ought to be that when we sow good seed it is greatly multiplied!

The first congregation of the church in Jerusalem grew rapidly. When it had several thousand members, we have this significant statement concerning it: "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." (Acts 6:7.) It is a happy condition when the number of the disciples is multiplying greatly. It does seem that each faithful member of the church ought to gam one other soul during a year. That would multiply the number of the disciples each year. It does seem that each congregation could start at least one other congregation in the course of the year. That would multiply the number of congregations each year. It does seem that each faithful preacher could encourage some young man to take up the work of preaching in the course of a year. That would be multiplying the number of preachers each year. Had the church thus multiplied in ages past, what a difference there would have been in conditions today! I am afraid we are not very good in *multiplication*.

### **Division**

It takes real study to know how to properly divide. To properly divide the word of God takes study. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Tim. 2:15.) The answer will be wrong if we do not divide properly.

It takes hard work to keep from dividing the church. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (1 Cor. 1:10.) There have been many divisions in the church. These have been brought about by not speaking the same thing. If we all would speak just

what the Bible speaks, quit speaking when the Bible quits, and not quit until it quits, there would be no divisions among us.

There ought to be something done with those who cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine of Christ. What should be done? "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly: and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." (Rom. 16:17, 18.) The Lord says to mark these fellows, and we had better do it. If we do not do just what the Lord says, the divisions will continue. What do such church dividers care for the Lord Jesus Christ? They are not serving him, but they are serving themselves.

## 26

### **Four Dangerous Precedents**

FOR twenty-five years I have been traveling among the churches. During these years I have observed many encouraging things relative to the church. I have also observed some very dangerous tendencies. In this article I want to call attention to four dangerous precedents relative to the eldership.

#### **No Elders**

A few congregations have swung to the extreme of not believing in elders at all. They say that the eldership passed away when the last inspired man died. Such a position is so utterly foolish and absurd that it scarcely deserves mention. Others, when pressed for their position, will say that we cannot have elders, because we have no brethren who fill the divine requirements. That is equally absurd and foolish. With equal truth and force we could say that we have no Christians, because we have

none who fill perfectly the divine requirements for a Christian! In New Testament times it seems that it did not take many years for a congregation to develop material suitable for elders. I see no reason why it should take longer today.

Some have gotten the idea that a congregation is set in order by appointing elders and deacons. No, the congregation should be set in order, and then it is time for the appointment of elders and deacons. Paul wrote to Titus after this order: "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.) You will note that setting things in order and appointing or ordaining elders were not one and the same thing. A brother does not become qualified for the eldership by being appointed, but he becomes qualified and then is appointed. I expect we would not have too many elders if we would appoint all who are qualified! I am sure that no congregation known to me would have.

### **"The Best We Have"**

And then other brethren have swung from the dangerous extreme of "no elders" to another hurtful extreme that we must have elders even if all know that there are no brethren in the congregation who even approximate the divine requirements. I know not which is the more hurtful to the cause of Christ. Of course we should have the best we have for elders, but they must have the divine qualifications to a good degree.

God knew what he was about when he gave the qualifications. If these traits are not to govern us when choosing elders, why did the Lord so specifically give these qualifications? The cause of Christ will make much more rapid progress with this kind of men at the head of the congregation. A bishop must be blameless. He must not be under condemnation. He must be a married man with believing children. I doubt very seriously whether a married man with "a child" fills this divine requirement. A child is not children. Now, brethren, do not criticize me for say-

ing this, but read it for yourself. He must be vigilant or watchful. He must be sober and serious. He must be of good behaviour. He must be given to hospitality. He must be apt to teach. To be apt to teach, he must know the Scriptures. He must not be given to wine. He must be no striker. He must not be greedy of filthy lucre. He must be a patient soul. He must not be a brawler. He must not be covetous. He must be one who rules well his own house. His children (not his child) must be in subjection with all gravity. You know if a man cannot rule his own house, where his word is power, he could not rule the house of God. He must not be a novice. A recent convert would lack experience and knowledge. The eldership is too serious for a novice to take hold of. A novice might be lifted up with pride and fall into the condemnation of the devil. He must have a good report of them that are without. Without this he would fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. He must not be self-willed. He must be one who is not soon angry. He must be a lover of good men. He must be just, holy, and temperate. He must be one who holds fast the faithful word. If he has this qualification, he will be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gainsayers. There are many vain and unruly talkers whose mouths must be stopped. They subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. It takes real elders to stop their mouths.

Now, brethren, you know that I have not listed a qualification here but what is listed by the Holy Spirit in 1 Tim. 3 and Tit. 1. Why not just go by this when we are choosing elders? A man may be a good Christian and lack a few of these qualifications, but he cannot be a qualified elder and lack one of them. God knew what he was about. God knows what kind of men it takes to guide a congregation of disciples. It will be a pleasure for all to live and work under such elderships.

### **"Leaders"**

In some congregations in the absence of elders we have what the brethren are pleased to designate as "leaders." Now, of

course, if there are no elders, someone must take the lead; but we are fast developing a new set of "officers" in the church under the head of "leaders." The only officers in the church known to the New Testament are elders and deacons. If we cannot develop these officers within a few years, it is a sad commentary on our religious status. Some of the best brethren known to me are leaders in various congregations. What I am raising my voice against is the tendency to substitute leaders permanently instead of developing elders and deacons. If a man has the capacity to lead, but may be lacking in some of the qualifications for an elder, there is no reason under the sun why he should not use all of the capacities he has under the direction and in cooperation with scripturally-qualified elders and deacons. And I have seen a few "self-appointed leaders" who could not scripturally qualify for the eldership, but were trying to usurp the prerogatives that belong exclusively to the eldership. By doing this they may be discouraging the congregation in developing elders and deacons. My brethren, such things ought not so to be.

### **"Preacher Controlled"**

And here is the saddest condition of all. We have not a few preachers who all but set aside the elders and deacons and run the congregations to suit themselves. They may talk of "my elders" and "my deacons." And many times there is more truth than poetry in these expressions! They are the preacher's "elders" and "deacons" because they are not the Lord's. The preacher is a servant of the church, and not the church the servant of the preacher. Sometimes preachers take charge of the church when the church ought to take charge of the preacher! It is a happy condition when preachers know their place and keep it, and know their duty and do it. It is a happy condition when elders are qualified and discharge their duties as they should.

I may call down the wrath of a few brethren on my head for some things that I have written: but, brethren, I started out to



call attention to four dangerous precedents which I have observed among the churches. I have written the truth in the spirit of Christ.

## 27

### **Backsliding Preventives**

THERE are many backsliders in the world. Like many other bad things, this can be, and should be, prevented. In this study we call attention to some effective preventives.

#### **Let God Say Something to Us Every Day**

I know of no better way of preventing backsliding than by letting God say something to us every day. So many go day after day without looking into God's book. By doing this they are refusing to allow God to say something to them. God has many things he wants to say to us. We ought to be anxious to listen.

When we listen to God, then, we do not have to walk in darkness. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Ps. 119:105.) We should take great delight in listening to God talk to us. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord: and in his law doth he meditate day and night." (Ps. 1:1,2.) When we love folks, we delight in their work. Some of the noble ones of old searched the Scriptures daily to find out the truth. (Acts 17:11.) And when we search a thing, we do not give it a mere glance. And Jesus wants us to search the Scriptures. (John 5:39.) We are commanded to study. (2 Tim. 2:15.)

Did you ever know of anyone backsliding who allowed God to talk to him every day? We are far more apt to backslide when we cease searching the Scriptures.

### **Say Something to God Every Day**

Not only should we allow God to say something to us every day, but we should say something to him every day. Yea, many times a day we should pray to him and thank him for our many blessings. To do less than this is base ingratitude. Someone has said: "Prayer will stop sin or sin will stop prayer." Sin has stopped prayer in so many lives. But, thanks be to God, prayer has stopped sin in many others. Maybe our sins have separated us from God, so that he no longer hears. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." (Ps. 66:18.)

Of course if we turn away our ears from hearing the law of God, even our prayers are an abomination. (Prov. 28:9.) Real prayer avails so much. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (James 5:16.)

### **Say Something for God Every Day**

We should allow God to say something to us every day. We should say something to God every day, and we should say something for God every day. We are too prone not to speak a word for God every day. Our speech should have more of God and more for God in it. God is not speaking directly to poor, lost souls today, but we can. We can tell about the love of God for them.

Many are turned out of the way that might be turned back to the way of life if we were to talk to them about their souls. And what a glorious work that is! "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." (James 5:19, 20.)

"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ." (Phil. 1:27.) Opportunities are lying all about us for saying something in behalf of God and his great scheme of human redemption. While others are talking for error we should be busily engaged in talking for God. When we associate

in a social and business way with our friends, how fine it would be if we would drop a few words for God into the conversation! It might save a soul, and it will keep us from losing ours.

### **Do Something for God Every Day**

Our days are full of things that we do. Not enough of that doing is for God. We should look for opportunities of doing good. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." (Gal. 6:10.)

One of the greatest things we can do for God is to let our light so shine before men that they will see our good works and glorify our Father which is in heaven. (Matt. 5:16.) Powerful influences for God *are* exerted by the humble and sincere life of a humble and sincere Christian. We should not shine our lights, but we should let our light shine.

So much of what we do in this world is in vain, but not one thing of what we do for God is in vain. He takes not of every little thing we do. How sweet to know he knows! "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, 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. 15:58.)

## **28**

### **Some Plain Lessons from Rom. 12**

ROM. 12 is one of the plainest chapters in the New Testament relative to Christian living. In this study we want to call attention to some of the plain and practical lessons.

We learn from verse 1 that we are to present our bodies as living sacrifices to God. This is called a "reasonable." or a "spiritual." service. Our bodies belong to God and should be

used in his service. "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Cor. 6:20.) We have no right to use the members of embodies in any way that does not meet the approval of God. What a glorious church indeed we would have if every member of the spiritual body would use every member of his physical body to glorify God!

"And be not conformed to this world." So many of the members of the church are conforming to this world. They are fashioning themselves after this world. We are in the world, but not of the world. Christians should have no entangling alliances. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor. 6:14.) It is easy to get yoked with unbelievers in lodges, boards, business, etc. Brethren, be careful. Do not get your neck in a yoke.

"But be ye transformed." How do we do this? This is brought about by the renewing of our minds. Our minds need renewing from day to day. We ought to be so full of the word of God that our minds are constantly being renewed. We should have our minds so full of the will of the Lord that other things will be crowded out more or less.

We ought not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think. How many heartaches have been brought about by thinking too highly of self! We ought to esteem others better than self. We ought to think soberly. When we think soberly, we shall not think too much of self.

In verses 4 and 5 we learn that this body of ours has many members, but all members have not the same office or work. A man would be a fool if he were to say that he has more than one body, or that all the members of his body performed the same work. Well, in the sight of the Lord a man is a fool that will argue that there is more than one spiritual body, or church. The church has many members, but there is just one body. Each Christian is a member of that body. Different Christians have

different abilities. We should use our several abilities for the advancement and good of the body. Each member has his work to do. When he does not do it, the body is crippled to that extent. The writer of this chapter calls these different abilities "gifts." One is gifted along one line and another along a different line. When we all use our "gifts." the body moves gloriously on; and the most lowly and humble member is very necessary. "Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary." (1 Cor. 12:22.) And do not forget this: "Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it: or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." (1 Cor. 12:26.)

"He that giveth. let him do it with simplicity." This means with liberality. Too many of us members do not give with liberality. Some will spend more of their money for the foolish and sinful things of this life than they do to advance the interests of the cause of Christ. Things are worth to us just about what we are willing to invest in them. Your religion is worth just about what you are investing in it. How much are you investing in money, time, and talent?

"He that ruleth. with diligence." It seems to me that this would apply to the elders in a special sense. They are the rulers of the congregation. They watch for our souls. What a responsibility! The real elders appreciate this responsibility. They know that they are going to have to answer to God for the souls that are under them. How careful and prayerful this ought to make them! "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.) No wonder a qualified man almost shrinks from being an elder. To think of giving account to God for the souls of others is almost enough to make a man draw back.

"Let love be without dissimulation." Dissimulation is hypocrisy. The love of Christians must be the genuine thing, not pre-

tended or hypocritical. The veneer of dissimulation is too thin not to be detected by all. God knows when our love is sincere. Our loved ones know it. The brethren know it. Our friends know it.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit: serving the Lord." To be successful in any business we must not be slothful, lazy, and trifling. This goes double for the business of being a Christian. There is no such a thing as a slothful, lazy, trifling Christian. We must be fervent and earnest. We cannot serve the Lord in any other way. He will not accept a halfhearted service.

"Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer." The hope the Christian has makes him rejoice in all the trying scenes of this wicked world. This hope springs eternal in the human breast. It carries him through all of his tribulations. It is an anchor to the soul. You cannot shake the Christian because of this hope he has. It even causes him to continue instant, or urgent, in prayer.

"Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality." There are saints in whom we can and must minister. The church must take care of her own. There are always deserving saints who are in dire need. Here is an opportunity for the Christian. He would not think of turning this charitable work over to some other organization. He is full of hospitality. It does one's soul good to be around him. He makes you feel at home. He cannot do enough for you.

"Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not." The Christian is a source of blessing, not of cursing. He will even bless the ones that would persecute him. That spirit is so contrary to the spirit of the world. The world cannot even understand such a spirit. You have to be a Christian to appreciate such a spirit. Christ had this spirit. If we are his, we have it.

"Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep." Some have cause for rejoicing. That makes the Chris-

tian rejoice with them. Others are weeping. And what a consolation to have the Christian weep with them!

"Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men." This is too plain to be misunderstood. We must return good for evil. We must not retaliate. And a Christian is the very personification of honesty. His honesty is never questioned by those within or without. All know he is honest.

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you. live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves. . . . Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink. . . . Overcome evil with good."

## 29

### **The Devil's U-Boats**

TODAY we are hearing much about the U-boats of the enemies of our nation. Of course these U-boats are bent on sinking and destroying our ships—and they are succeeding in this to an alarming extent. The old ship of Zion is not without its enemy U-boats. The devil has been trying to sink this old ship for nineteen hundred years, but. thanks be to God, this he cannot do. For every U-boat of the enemy there is a depth charge! We can sink every one of these U-boats of the devil if we know how and where to place the depth bomb. Let us study together some of these dangerous "boats" and how the Christian can destroy them.

Pride has caused many individual Christians to sink. "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." (Prov. 16:18.) The proud and haughty are riding for a terrible fall. Many of us have seen the truth of this proverb demonstrated over and over again. One of the things that the Lord hates is a proud look. (Prov. 6:17.) When the Lord hates a thing, we

do well by hating the same thing. "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." (1 Pet. 5:5.)

When this boat of pride gets into waters near us. we had better send down a depth bomb and destroy it before it destroys us. Here it is: "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up." (James 4:10.) When one has the Lord with him, he can win over all the devices of the enemy of our souls. Likewise without humility the devil will win over us in a walk. Without humility we have lost our usefulness. Many who could be useful soldiers in the army of the Lord have been overcome by pride. The really great and influential in the church of the living God are the truly humble. And we must not fake humility. This is the worst kind of hypocrisy. Some are proud and boastful of their "humility."

Another dangerous U-boat is *hypocrisy*. Hypocrisy is a terrible enemy. "For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?" (Job 27:8.) Yes, the hypocrite may make some seeming gains over the truly righteous, but what has he gained when the Lord taketh away his soul? Then all he has gained, and much more, is lost because of his hypocrisy. "An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour; but through knowledge shall the just be delivered." (Prov. 11:9.) The hypocrite can do untold damage with his mouth!

When the righteous see the hypocrites seemingly prospering, here is something worth remembering: "Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon earth, that the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment?" (Job 20:4, 5.) The wicked may triumph temporarily, but just for a short time, and the joy of the hypocrite is fleeting.

Here is another sneaking U-boat of the devil. It creeps up on unsuspecting souls before they are aware. That is one of the great troubles with these boats of the devil. They hit without a moment's warning. This one is called "*unbelief*." Even Chris-



tians are sometimes hit by it. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." (Heb. 3:12.) When this evil heart of unbelief enters in, it causes one to depart from the living God. While we are sailing over life's stormy sea we are never out of reach of the devil's U-boats. We have to be prepared for an attack from any and all quarters. This one is destroyed by faith. We can sink this depth bomb and send unbelief to the bottom of the ocean. But how do we get this faith? "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Rom. 10:17.) "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb. 11:6.)

Not all that came out of Egypt by Moses entered the promised land—in fact, just two of the original men who left Egypt entered in. Their carcasses fell in the wilderness. What caused them to fall? What caused them not to enter? What will cause us to fall? What will cause us not to enter the heavenly Canaan? Listen: "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." (Heb. 3:19)

Here is a depth bomb for this enemy: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." (Heb. 2:1.)

Christians are being "sunk" every day by *worldliness*. The devil surely hits the mark with this in so many cases. Christians lay themselves open to attack when they get to flirting around with worldliness. If we would obey this Scripture, we would be in no immediate danger from this source: "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Rom. 12:2.)

Christianity and worldliness will not mix. Some members of the church try to mix them, but in the end one or the other is going to triumph. The sad part is that so many times the worldliness in the Christian predominates and he is overcome. "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." (John 2:15-17.) You will note that God says that if we love the world the love of the Father is not in us. How sad!

What should these worldly Christians (?) do? "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing: and I will receive you." (2 Cor. 6:17.) Brother, if you do not or will not come out of these worldly things, you have a mighty dark future. Before this submarine gets you, you had better drop a depth bomb. Here it is: "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." (Col. 3:2.) This one "bomb" will drive all the worldliness out of you. Just set your affection on heavenly things, not on earthly things.

There is entirely too much evilspeaking among us. Brethren speak evil of others without any basis for it. "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." (1 Pet. 2:1. 2.) Here is a good depth charge: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." (1 Pet. 1:22.) If this does not get this devil's U-boat, send down another charge. "Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law. and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law. thou are not a doer of the law. but a judge." (James 4:11.)

Here is one that is sure to get us when we are just drifting about. It is called "*indifference*". "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion!" (Amos 6:1.) This gets so many of the members of

the church. They are just at ease in Zion. They do not seem to be much concerned about the lost. They go to meeting occasionally, sing a little, pray a little, commune a little, listen to the sermon a little, give a little (not much). Here is a bomb that might waken some up: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (Phil. 2:12.) Do not forget that God says our salvation must be worked out, not "eased" out. Paul said: "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:13, 14.) Brethren, watch out for the devil's U-boats!

**30****"On Jordan's Stormy Banks" (No. 1)**

ONE of the most famous rivers in the world is the Jordan. It is also one of the most loved. Many songs and poems have been written about the Jordan. There are many things which contribute to the fame of a river. Some rivers are famous because of their great length. If there were nothing else to recommend it, the length of our own Mississippi would make it famous. But the Jordan is not a lone; river. We have creeks in America as long as the Jordan. Other rivers are famous because of the great volume of water which they carry. The Jordan is not a big river. Other rivers have great cities built on their banks. There are no cities on the banks of the Jordan. Some rivers carry great boats of commerce on their waters. There are no commercial boats on the Jordan.

The Jordan is in a class by itself. It is fed by the melting snows of old Mount Hermon. Little streams come together forming the Waters of Merom, a little lake. This little lake is at sea level. It is on a level with the Mediterranean Sea thirty miles to the west. In other words, the Jordan rises where other rivers empty. This lake is just a few miles across. We go on down the river about a dozen miles and come to dear old Lake Galilee. Around this body of water the blessed Christ did so many of his works. He made Capernaum his headquarters during his earthly ministry. This was on the northwestern shore of Galilee. This lake is almost seven hundred feet below sea level. It is about a dozen miles in length and not quite so wide.

The Jordan flows out the southern end of Galilee and meanders on its way to the Dead Sea. Here it empties. This sea is about thirteen hundred feet below sea level. Thus the Jordan flows its entire course below the level of the sea. The Jordan valley is some ten to fourteen miles wide, nestled between low-lying mountains. These peculiar physical characteristics contribute to the fame of the Jordan.

But the Jordan is famous to all lovers of the Bible because of the great events that have transpired in its waters or on its banks. After Moses had led the children of Israel for forty years through the wilderness, they came to the Jordan. They were encamped on the plains of Moab on the eastern side of Jordan. Moses was not permitted to cross over the Jordan to the land of promise. Back yonder in the wilderness he had made a mistake God had told Moses to speak to the rock to bring forth water. Moses smote the rock twice. God called this unbelief. Doing what God says is belief. Doing something else is unbelief. Today we show belief in God by worshiping him exactly as he says. We show unbelief by doing something else. When we sing, that shows belief in God. When we play with the singing, that shows unbelief.

Because of this transgression on the part of Moses, God would not permit even this magnanimous man to lead his peo-

ple into the promised land. (Num. 20:7-13.) However, God did allow him to view the land before he went hence. From old Nebo's lofty height Moses was permitted a panoramic view of the land of promise. What a view it must have been from Mount Pisgah! "How beautiful heaven must be." So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab; and God buried him and never told a man where he was buried. Moses was one hundred twenty years old when he died. "His eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." (Deut. 34.) Servant of God, well done.

Here is something significantly sad. Of the original number of men (above twenty) who left Egyptian slavery, just two (Caleb and Joshua) were permitted to enter Canaan. They had fallen in the wilderness. We must be careful or many of us will never reach the heavenly Canaan. "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." (Heb. 2:1.) "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." (1 Cor. 9:27.)

After a long and hard journey, Israel had come to the Jordan. Their future home was just across the river. They must cross that river, and it was a turbulent stream indeed! But thanks be to God, he would take them safely across. After we have come to the end of our earthly pilgrimage, we too have a Jordan to cross. Our eternal home is over on the other side of this mystic river of death. It looks like a dark, cold stream indeed. It would be fatal to try to cross without help from on high. Our earthly friends and loved ones cannot cross with us; but if we have been faithful to the Lord, he will be there to transport us. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." (Psalm 23:4.)

Stephen came to the Jordan. His enemies, or rather the enemies of the Lord, were stoning him to death. "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.) That was a beautiful crossing.

And after thirty-odd years of strenuous labor in the vineyard of the Master, Paul came to the Jordan. He was ready. "For I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course. I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (2 Tim. 4:6-8.) And thus we are going down the valley, one by one.

Thirty days were spent in mourning for Moses. Joshua is the new leader. God said to him: "Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan." (Jos. 1:2.) God told him just how they were to pass over. The Levites, the priests, bore the ark of the covenant. There was a space of two thousand cubits between them and the people. Just as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests touched the waters of the Jordan the Lord opened up a path through the river. These priests stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan. (Josh. 3.) Thus they stood "until all the people were passed clean over Jordan."

Before the Lord closed up the river he commanded Joshua, saying: "Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man, and command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones, and ye shall carry them over with you." (Josh. 4:2. 3.) What was this all for? Listen: "That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? Then ye shall answer them. That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones

shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever." (Josh. 4:6, 7.)

And, brethren, do not forget that we have a memorial, and we had better explain to our children time after time the significance of this memorial.

But this is enough for this time. In a future article we want to study some more about the Jordan. These things were written for our learning. (Rom. 15:4.)

### 31

#### **"On Jordan's Stormy Banks"**

##### **(No. 2)**

IN our previous study of the Jordan we closed with God's people safely across the Jordan and planted in the land of Canaan. There they were confronted by the enemy. They had to fight for every foot of the country. So it is with us. To reach the heavenly Canaan we must exert ourselves. We cannot be "carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease, while others fight to win the prize and sail through bloody seas." God will give us the victory over every enemy if we will work in conjunction with him.

People are prone to forget God. Thus it ever has been. Even these Israelites, who had been delivered from cruel, galling bondage and delivered into a country which was their own, gradually turned away from God. After a few hundred years had rolled into eternity, they had become very largely a nation of idolaters.

There was one old prophet who stood out for the old paths. So far as he knew, he was the only one left contending for the right way of the Lord. He was somewhat mistaken in this, but it does show the caliber of the man who would stand up for the

truth even if he had to stand alone. A man who will not do this is not fit for the kingdom of heaven. There can be no compromise with error. There must be no sacrifice of truth.

Finally the enemy made it so uncomfortable for Elijah that he fled to the rocky fastnesses of old Mount Horeb. The Lord asked: "What doest thou here, Elijah?" (1 Kings 19:9.) The prophet's reply is pathetically sad. Hear it: "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." (1 Kings 19:10.) When God's people forsake his covenant and dig down his altars, there is not much hope remaining.

In our day the average religionist has forsaken the covenant of the Lord. They know very little about what the Lord says, and seemingly care less. They would almost slay the true servants of God. But, thanks be to God, there is a great host who have not bowed their knees to Baal, even as there was a remnant of seven thousand in the days of Elijah. There are many true Christians in this old sinful world who would die rather than recant.

And so Elijah stood firm! And when his time came to leave this old world, he was highly honored. The Lord took him up to heaven in a whirlwind. He and Elisha were at Gilgal. Elisha would not leave the old prophet, saying: "As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth. I will not leave thee." (2 Kings 2.) So the two prophets went together to Bethel. Here Elijah said to Elisha: "Tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me to Jericho." But Elisha would not leave him, and went with him to Jericho. When they came to Jericho, Elijah repeated his former words, saying: "The Lord hath sent me to Jordan." But Elisha would go on.

And so the two prophets came to Jordan. "And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went



over on dry ground." And so they marched over Jordan, where the Israelites had marched over on dry ground more than five hundred years before. They walked on together. Elijah said unto Elisha: "Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee." What an answer Elisha gave! Hear it: "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." In answer to this request, Elijah said: "Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so." And they walk on across the plain of Moab. A whirlwind comes tearing along. "And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder: and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces. He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan." With this mantle he smote the waters of the Jordan, and again old Jordan divided her waters, and he went over on dry ground.

Hundreds of years later another prophet came in the spirit and power of the ancient Elijah. God's Old Testament closes with the prophetic declaration: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." (Mal. 4:5, 6.)

And about four hundred years after this prophecy was made, this Elijah, who was John the Baptist, came; and where did he begin his mighty works? "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea." He was preaching along the banks of old Jordan where it had been crossed by the Israelites nearly fifteen hundred years before. He was preaching where the river had opened for Elijah and Elisha nearly nine hundred years before. That section of country around the

mouth of the Jordan was called the wilderness of Judaea, extending up the river for a few miles.

John preached, saying: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 3:2.) The kingdom was not set up in the days of John, but it was "at hand." And you will please note that John knew nothing about a "vestibule to the kingdom," but "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Some would have us to believe that the kingdom was set up in the days of John the Baptist, but John was dead and buried before the kingdom was set up. In fact, John was dead and buried before Jesus said: "I will build my church." (Matt. 16:18.) Even then the kingdom was yet future. So John was never in the kingdom. And so Jesus could and did say concerning John: "He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." (Matt. 11; 11.) Even the very least in the kingdom has blessings, privileges, and opportunities which John had not, because he lived his life before the kingdom was established.

But there was no greater prophet than John the Baptist. He was absolutely fearless. He could stand before the religious hypocrites of his day and say: "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" (Matt. 3:7.) He could stand before an adulterous king, who was living with another man's wife, and say to him: "It is not lawful for thee to have her." (Matt. 14:4.) Yes, he had the spirit of the Elijah of old. And this kind of preaching caused him to lose his head. God's preachers are an unpopular bunch—and they always have been, and they always will be!

But John was as humble as a little child. When God's Son came from his home sixty-five or seventy miles up the river demanding baptism, John said: "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" (Matt. 3:14.) But Jesus assured him that it was necessary for him to be baptized to fulfill all righteousness. And so down the banks of the old Jordan they go. What a scene as God's Son is lowered beneath the liquid wave! And thus were the waters of Jordan broken again, and

God said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3:17.) And, dear reader, do not expect God to be well pleased with you until you have done what that Son commands you to do, and one of the things is: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16:16.)

## 32

### **He Left Us an Example**

THERE is great power in an example, either for weal or woe. The population of heaven will be mightily increased by the fine examples of Christian living that are being set by noble Christians. On the other hand, many dear souls are led down to hell by the bad examples which have been set before them—and sometimes these bad examples have been set by professing Christians.

How thankful we all should be for the perfect example which was left us by Jesus Christ! "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps." (1 Pet. 2:21.) In the trying circumstances of life it is well to ask ourselves this solemn question: What would Jesus do? Did he set us an example for this particular situation?

### **An Example of Humility**

Jesus was the very personification of humility. Many of our troubles today are caused by a lack of genuine and sincere humility. There is too much mock humility. Some seem to be even "proud" of their humility. "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. 2:8.) The humility of Jesus Christ led him to the cross and to death. "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so

opened he not his mouth: in his humiliation his judgment was taken away." (Acts 8:32, 33.)

It will be a happy day for us when we follow this perfect example of humility. May we follow his steps just here. "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Mic. 6:8.) When the Lord requires a thing of us, we cannot afford to pass it lightly by. The Lord requires us to walk humbly with him; in fact, if we are not humble, we cannot walk with the Lord.

### **An Example of Patience**

And how patient the Christ was! "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." (1 Pet. 2:23.) We would be infinitely better off if, when we were reviled, we would not revile again; and when we are made to suffer, if we would not threaten. Certainly if Jesus could afford to commit himself to him that judgeth righteously, we should do so.

Too often patience is not sufficiently developed in us. We are to run with patience the race that is set before us. (Heb. 12:1.) And it will take patience to run the race. The trying of our faith worketh patience. (James 1:3.) The Lord wants us to be patient toward all men. (1 Thes. 5:14.) This patience will include patience with the members of our family, with the brethren, and with lost souls. May we patiently walk in the steps of the Master in this virtue.

### **An Example of Work**

When we think of Jesus, we think of work. He knew the value of time. Too many of us do not. He knew that the time was short in which he had to work. "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." (John 9:4.) Only the dear Lord knows how soon the night of death may overtake us. We should keep our

work well done. Nothing brings greater happiness than work well done. After we have really worked, we can enjoy rest. The daily laborer goes home to rest at the end of a hard and faithful day of work. The faithful Christian goes home to rest after his life's work is done. "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.)

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast. immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. 15:58.) "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (Phil. 2:12.) Our salvation is something that must be worked out, and this life is the time in which it must be done. May we emulate the Lord in the example of work which he set.

### **An Example of Courage**

We must not think of the Lord as a compromiser and a weakling. He was anything but that. He had the courage to stand up to the religious leaders of his day and denounce in the most scathing terms their hypocrisy. "But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and

faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness, . . . Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matt. 23:13-33.)

Do these words sound like the words of a "sissy." a compromiser, a "pussyfooter," and a backslapper? And brethren, when you talk about "the spirit of Christ," do not forget that he had just as much of the Spirit when he was denouncing sin and hypocrisy as at other times. And his true disciples today are not to be railed upon as devoid of the spirit of Christ because there are some things so corrupt that they cannot help but cry out against these sins.

We need more of this courageous preaching today. We have some in high places which devour widows' houses, and then for a pretense make long prayers. Instead of making elders or deacons or preachers out of such, we had better give them some plain, positive preaching. They are in danger of hell-fire, and should be warned.

And we have some who compass sea and land to make a proselyte to their peculiar ideas and dogmas; and after he is made, what have you? Yes, and some omit the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; but they are indeed very punctilious about the mint, anise, and cummin! Lord, we thank thee for the fine example of courage which thou hast left us, and help us to develop the same trait.

## 33

**We Know**

WE have folks in the world who do not know, and do not know that they do not know. They are to be pitied. We have others who do not know, but know that they do not know. They should be taught. And then we have others who know, and they know that they know. They are safe teachers. To them we should listen. There are many things we can know beyond the peradventure of a doubt. In this article we direct your attention to a few of those things.

"And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." (1 John 2:3,4.) From this we know two things: first, if we keep God's commandments, we know that we know him; second, if we say that we know him, but do not keep his commandments, we are liars. The world is full of "religious" liars. They claim to know God, but refuse to keep his plainest commandments.

"But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him." (1 John 2:5.) According to this criterion, many who think they are in him are not in him.

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." (1 John 3:1.) Some seem surprised that the world does not know us. We should be surprised and alarmed if the world knows us too well. We are in the world, but we are not of the world. The world knows and loves its own. Christians are not of the world. They do not engage in worldly things. The world did not know Christ. Because of this lack of knowledge they crucified him.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall ap-

pear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (1 John 3:2, 3.) We do not know just what we shall be like in that future state, but we shall be like him! Blessed consummation! Do you have this hope? If so, God says you will purify yourself. Those who are impure either in word, thought, or deed do not have this glorious hope. This hope is an anchor of the soul.

"Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." (1 John 3:13-15.) Yes, the world has very little time for the true Christian, and he may be hated. Do not marvel at this. We know we have passed from death unto life. How do we know this? Because we love the brethren. Many must not have passed from death unto life, because they do not love the brethren. They hate their brethren. They are abiding in death. We can love the brethren without loving the sins of the brethren; in fact, if we love a brother, we shall try to get him to correct his sins. This pure love for the brethren prompts us to try to help them overcome the sins that may hinder. Murderers cannot go to heaven. Brethren who hate brethren are murderers.

"For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." (1 John 3:20, 21.) Brother, have you done, or are you doing, things for which your heart condemns you? If so, remember that God is greater than your heart and that he will condemn you. Do you have that confidence toward God that comes from a clean, Christian life?

"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments



are not grievous." (1 John 5:2, 3.) We are not left in doubt as to whether we love the brethren. We love the brethren when we love God and keep his commandments. God's commandments are not grievous. They can be kept. They must be kept. In keeping his commandments there is great reward and great joy.

"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." (1 John 5:14, 15.) Real Christians have real confidence in their heavenly Father. They know that he hears them. They know that he will answer their prayers. Of course our prayers must be in harmony with his will. When our earthly children make their requests known to us, we grant the request, if in harmony with our will. God is anxious to hear us and grant our every request according to his will. We ought to have enough faith in him to ask him to withhold anything and everything from us that is not in harmony with his will and that is not best for us and the ones for whom we pray.

"We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." (1 John 5:18.) Those who are born of God do not sin—that is, they do not habitually sin. It is not physically impossible for them to sin, but it is incompatible with their profession. The child of God keepeth himself. He walks according to the commandments of God. While thus doing, the wicked one toucheth him not.

Thus we have gone through the five short chapters of First John, calling attention to a few of the many times that the beloved disciple uses the words "we know." He was old, nearing the century mark. For more than sixty years he had been a quiet and devoted follower of the Lamb of God. With sixty years in the service of the Master behind him, he spoke unhesitatingly and with confidence. His faith abounded more and

more. Thus it is with us. The longer we follow after the Master the stronger our faith becomes. We know who he is. We know whose we are. And thus we journey on toward the setting of life's sun. Amen!

## 34

### **Seven Things We Should Keep**

THERE are many things God expects his people to keep. In this article we wish to call attention to a few of them.

#### **Hearts**

We should keep our hearts. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." (Prov. 4:23.) This was spoken by wise King Solomon. Again, in Prov. 23:7, we have this significant statement: "for as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." We are very largely products of our thinking. It is impossible to think wrong thoughts and live right lives. If we do not think as we should, we will not live as we should.

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." (Phil. 4; 8.) God expects Christians to think on the things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. If we have our minds full of such thoughts, there will be no room for the thoughts that are vulgar and impure.

#### **Bodies**

We must keep our bodies under control. This is not always an easy thing to do. Paul said: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." (1 Cor. 9:

27.) That does not sound like some of the cocksureness we hear in our day. That does not sound like "once in grace, always in grace." No, if we do not keep our bodies under, we ourselves shall be cast away. Some otherwise good preachers have failed miserably in keeping their bodies under. They have allowed the lusts of the flesh to be their utter ruin and undoing. "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." (Heb. 2:1.) It is so easy to drift away. Unless we keep our bodies under, we shall drift into bell. It takes a live body and one under perfect control to go upstream. A dead and lifeless body can drift with the current. The members of our body will war against the Spirit: hence, they must be brought under subjection and kept under.

### **Keep Pure**

We must keep ourselves pure. Impurity denotes weakness. Paul, in writing to the young preacher, Timothy, said: "Keep thyself pure." (1 Tim. 5:22.) We must keep our hearts pure, our words pure, our lives pure. A real Christian is the purest person on this impure earth. "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart: who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully." (Ps. 24:3, 4.) Are our hands clean? Are our hearts pure?

Jesus said: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." (Matt. 5:8.) The pure in heart enjoy God: the impure in heart do not enjoy the things of God. God is pure in all of his attributes. His words are pure. "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." (Ps. 12:6.) All of his statutes and commandments are pure. "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." (Ps. 19:8.) The wisdom of God is pure. "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and

easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." (James 3:17.)

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (1 John 3:2, 3.)

Peter thought that he should stir up the pure minds of the brethren. "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance." (2 Pet. 3:1.) In both of his Epistles he was stirring the pure minds of the brethren. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Cor. 7:1.)

### **Keep Unspotted**

Christians must keep themselves unspotted from the world. We are in the world, but we are not of the world. I heard an old preacher, who had once worked in a mine, telling about some young ladies coming to visit the mine. They asked whether they could go into the mine dressed in white as they were. The old preacher told them they could go in that way, but they could not come out that way. Yes, it would be possible to enter a coal mine dressed in white, but it would be impossible to come out that way. The garments would be soiled and contaminated. It might be possible for a Christian to enter a dance hall, a road-house, dens of vice and corruption, but he cannot come out an unspotted Christian. His garments of righteousness have been soiled. He has become contaminated with the things of the world. "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.) And, brethren, the farther we travel toward heaven, and the

more we become like Christ, the less attraction worldly things will have for us.

### **Keep the Word**

We must keep the word of God bound up in our hearts. We should be thinking on it continually. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord: and in his law doth he meditate day and night." (Ps. 1:1, 2.) Jesus said: "Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." (Luke 11:28.) Of course, if we hear, and do not obey, it will profit us nothing. "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." (James 1:22.)

### **Keep the Unity of the Spirit**

One thing badly needed among us today is the unity of the Spirit. We should keep the unity enjoined by the teaching of the Spirit. There is no more prolific source of infidelity in the world today than the divided condition existing in the religious world, and brethren in Christ are divided and alienated. My brethren, such things ought not so to be. "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Eph. 4:3.)

### **Keep Commandments**

Our Master said: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15.) This is the crucial test of our love. If we do not keep his commandments, the reason is that we do not love him. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." (John 14:21.) "If a man love me, he will keep my words." (John 14:23.) It ought not to be hard from these simple declarations to know whether we love the Lord. Are we keeping his commandments? Lord, help us to do this very thing.

## 35

**Calling Names**

WE have some "softies" among us today who seem to think it is an almost unpardonable sin for a preacher or writer to call the names of false teachers and hypocrites; but it seems to me we have some mighty good precedents for this in the New Testament. However, the motive back of the name calling might enter into it. Our motives should be absolutely pure in every act and word. If we call names simply to ridicule or get "smart" or something of that kind, of course that would be sin; but if we are trying to save souls, why not point out the erroneous teaching and who it is that teaches that? But some will say that just preaching the truth would be sufficient, and that we should leave others alone. The preachers and writers of the New Testament days did not thus act. They preached the truth and then contrasted error with the truth.

John the Baptist was very personal in his preaching. King Herod was living with another man's wife. He was living in adultery. John knew this. He knew that it was not lawful for the king to live this way. I suppose John could have preached on a hundred other things without offending Herod and the woman with whom he was living. But why preach on other things and refuse to preach on the very thing the king needed? So John just "approached" a bad situation and told the king in plain words. Of course for this plain preaching he lost his head. Some today would lose their heads if they were to tell some in "high places" of their sins, and not just hint at them. Sin is sin, and should be condemned in the severest terms. If we know of members of the church who are living in open adultery in defiance of the laws of God and the laws of man, we ought to tell them. We ought to let them know that such characters cannot enter the kingdom of God. These dirty situations will not right themselves. It takes the gospel of Christ to do it.

Christ called names. Two of the most bigoted sects of his day were the Pharisees and Sadducees. They were religious hypocrites. Time after time Jesus told them this, calling their names. Read his scathing denunciation of them in Matt. 23. Would Jesus have been true to his trust if he had refused to have *so* spoken? Did he do wrong in thus calling their names? By doing this, all knew of whom he spoke. He did not speak in uncertain terms.

On the birthday of the church Peter was preaching to the betrayers and murderers of God's Son. He told them so. He did not preach a "soft" sermon on sin and tell them that there were some murderers in the world, and that it was not becoming to live that way. Listen: "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.) Earlier in the sermon, when he was "approaching" them, he had said: "Him, delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." (Acts 2:23.) That kind of preaching brought results. They could see that the innocent blood of God's Son was upon their souls; it was dripping from their hands. What were the 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.) What brought them to a sense of their lost condition? The truth had been preached and the application made. Peter let them know that he was preaching to them. So many today preach "pretty" little sermons, and folks go to sleep and do not know of whom the preacher is preaching. And the preachers seem just a little timid for fear some might find out!

Simon, the sorcerer, thought he could buy the gift of God with money. Listen to the inspired preacher: "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." (Acts 8:20-23.) I guess Simon would not have much trouble understanding where he stood in the sight of God. Peter boldly preached the truth and made a personal application. From that kind of preaching Simon would not get the idea that his sin was not so bad after all. And it brought results! "Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me." (Acts 8:24.) After all, we are trying to get sinners to repent when we preach to them. This they will never do until they are brought to a realization of their sinful condition.

And one time Mark got discouraged a little too easily and turned back when the going became difficult. Paul did not think much of this. So on another trip he refused to take Mark with them because he had not gone with them to the work. The contention between Paul and Barnabas over this was sharp. Mark had done wrong in turning back. Paul rebuked him sharply for this. God thought enough of this to make it a part of the divine record. Read it in the latter part of Acts 15.

Peter ate with the Gentiles; but when certain of his Jewish brethren came on the scene, he separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. Even Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation. Did Peter do right in this? No, he was to blame, and Paul told him so. And that is a part of the divine record, recorded in Gal. 2. Paul withstood him to the face. That is where it should be done, not behind the backs of the ones who should be withstood to the face.

Paul wrote to the church at Corinth. He had some bad reports concerning them. Paul told them where he got the report. "For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you." (1 Cor. 1:11.) Paul seemed to think it was the right thing to do to tell where he got his information.



Paul talked about some who had made shipwreck. This is the way he wrote about two of those fellows: "Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme." (1 Tim. 1:20.) My, is not that plain? These brethren had been delivered to Satan until they would learn not to blaspheme. Paul did not think it would be all right for them to go elsewhere preaching their pernicious doctrine. They must be stopped.

"This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes." (2 Tim. 1:15.) Pretty personal, do you not think? "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." (2 Tim. 4:10.) This brother had forsaken the old apostle, and Paul said so, and gave the reason why Demas had forsaken him. And listen to the peerless apostle just before he lies down to rest: "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words." (2 Tim. 4:14, 15.) Almost with his dying breath the apostle was warning Timothy against bad men and false teachers. Did he do wrong in this? Of course not. He loved the church. He was jealous over it with a godly jealousy. And so should we be. We should mark and name them that cause division. (Rom. 16:17.)

## 36

### **The Kingdom First**

JESUS said: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6:33.)

What a transformation would be wrought in this wicked old world if all would do that! Yea, what a transformation would be wrought in the church if all the members of it were to put the

kingdom ahead of everybody and everything! Christians do that. Nothing takes precedence over the church with them.

When we put the kingdom of God first, we attend all the services of the church. We do not forsake the assembly. (Heb. 10:25.) We do not allow our business engagements and social affairs to keep us from assembling. Our religious duties have the right of way. If anything must suffer, it will be our business relative to the affairs of this life. The kingdom must come first. We know that all of our physical necessities will be taken care of when we put the church first. When we put the kingdom of God first, we will meet with the disciples to break bread. (Acts 20:7.) We will not meet to worship a preacher, but to worship God. The worship will be the thing uppermost in our hearts. We would not think of allowing anything to keep us from the worship. We will not be found going on pleasure jaunts when the saints are assembling for worship. We will not be going visiting at the hour of worship. We will not be found at home entertaining some of our relatives and friends.

When we put the kingdom first, we will give as we have been prospered. (1 Cor. 16:1, 2.) We will abound in the grace of giving. (2 Cor. 8:7.) So many times we put the grocery bill, the clothing bill, the rent bill, the fuel bill, the insurance bill, the pleasure bill, and other bills ahead of the church. Yes, we must have food, clothing, and shelter; but these we shall have when we put the kingdom first. We can spend most of our income for the things of this life, but we do not do that when we put the kingdom first. Real Christians find real pleasure in giving their means for the spread of the gospel, alleviating suffering, etc. The only money that we are really saving is what we are laying up in the bank of heaven. Some brethren in these war days are "investing" ten per cent of their incomes in war bonds. Brethren, listen: If people can do that to perpetuate a worldly government, why can we not give as much or more to save souls? We can. We will when we put the kingdom of God first.

Most of us make great sacrifices to get an earthly home. We are not afraid of a debt of a few thousand dollars. We want a little place that we can call our own. That is right. And then when we get that house, we want comfortable furniture in it. We want it to be neat and attractive. We do not like dirty houses. And that *is* right. But sometimes brethren will have nice houses well furnished, but where the saints meet to worship the Most High God is a shame and a disgrace. The house is anything but neat. The furniture is not comfortable. The lawn is unkept. The song books are torn and dirty. Copies of the Bible are scarce, and what few there are may be dirty and torn. When I see conditions such as this. I know that the brethren are not putting' the kingdom first. They are putting their own homes and their own comforts ahead of the Lord. One brother will go in debt five thousand dollars for a home for his family, but twenty brethren cannot go in debt ten thousand dollars for a neat and commodious place in which to meet to worship God.

And oftentimes the meeting house is on some back street or alley where even the poorest of the brethren would hesitate to live. Why should not the meetinghouse be well located? Why should we have to apologize to strangers for the meetinghouse and its location? If we would put the kingdom first, it would save us a lot of embarrassment and a lot of needless apologies. Yes, we can worship without a house at all. "The groves were God's first temples." But not often would it be good sense to meet in the groves. Our climate precludes that in most sections. I understand that theatres in our land are very commodious and comfortable. I have noticed that they occupy prominent sites. Why are they not stuck in some back alley and made desolate, cold, and uninviting? The children of the world seem to be wiser in some ways than we are.

It is a rare thing that I go into a home without one or more newspapers coming to that home. Even the very poorest have a newspaper with the "funnies." Brethren think nothing of stopping on their way home from meeting and paying ten cents or

more for a Sunday paper. Our very best religious papers cost less than four cents a week. And they are filled with worthwhile reading matter. Reading them draws you closer to God and to the brethren. We have thousands of homes in the brotherhood without any gospel paper coming regularly to that home. We cannot plead poverty. If any are so poor that they cannot raise four cents a week for a good gospel paper, there are many brethren who would gladly donate them the paper. Oftentimes filthy magazines are allowed to come into the home. When I see these lying around Christian homes. I know that I am in another home that does not put the kingdom of God first. The environment is not right. The atmosphere is not conducive to Christian living.

When we put the kingdom of God first, we find time for daily Bible reading. Yes, we are busy and crowded for time: but we must not get so busy that we have no time left for God. We read about some folks being more noble than others because they searched the Scriptures daily. (Acts 17:11.) And you will please note the word "searched." A hurried glance into the sacred volume would scarcely come under the head of "searching the Scriptures." We know what it means to "search" for other things. When we lose something and search high and low for it, we know what that means. We should take time to search the Scriptures. There are to be found the brightest jewels and the greatest wealth. No other searching will pay dividends comparable to that which comes from searching God's word. May the Lord help us to put the word of the kingdom first.

And some brethren get so busy in worldly organizations They are in this, that, and the other thing. And how they do work! They will give time, talent, and money to these worldly things—yes, time, talent, and money that should be expended in working for the Lord. When we put the kingdom of God first, we shall not have time for these other things. And I am about ready to say that we will not have any desire for them. We are so busy going about the Master's business. Our meat is

to do the will of God. Of course worldly people cannot understand this, but we have meat to eat that they know nothing about.

I have been going about preaching the word for twenty-five years. It has been my personal observation that the more brethren get tangled up in the affairs of this life the less they enjoy the work of the Lord and the less real influence for good they exert. I have seen brethren so busy with worldly things that their attitude toward the church was just about like it was toward their fire insurance policy—just "in case"! Christianity is more than taking out a fire insurance policy against the fires of hell. It is a life to be lived so that a crown may be won.

May the good Lord help us to put first things first—yes, may we seek "first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." And the Lord will take care of the other things he knows we need.

### 37

#### **To Our Boys In the Armed Forces**

MANY a dear Christian boy has been taken from his home to enter the service of his country. I have one boy. He has been taken. It is easy for me to sympathize with other parents in these perilous times. Our boys need our every help and encouragement. One of the best Christian boys known to me is John L. Nosker, 3454 Noble Street, Bellaire, Ohio. In this article I am quoting a few paragraphs written by him to my boy. I want to add a few comments to what Brother Nosker has written.

It seems a long time since it has been my privilege to see and know you. Since that time you have developed into manhood, and now you have been called to assume the duty of

responsibility of a citizen of a country at war. May God ever keep you, and grant that you may never be called upon to violate the principles and doctrine of the mighty Ruler who said: "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."

It seems but yesterday since my boy was a babe in his mother's arms; but how soon our little boys develop into manhood! May God keep you, my son, and every other son of the Master. A Christian is not at liberty to violate the principles and doctrine of Jesus Christ. Too many of us who are not in the armed forces violate these principles and this doctrine.

Regardless of the course of events in this natural world. Bill, and how far separated we may be in our walks of life, I shall always have a definite interest in you. Your father and your family have meant so much to me in an inspirational way that I will ever stand a willing and anxious friend to any of you. We know not what may lie ahead. The army is waiting for me, and unless the war ends suddenly I shall eventually enter its forces. The navy will, no doubt, take you to many distant fields: but we will always have in common the most precious possession entrusted to man—faith in the Lord Jesus. Let us stand fast in that faith, so that we may return to our loved ones as pure as we left them, and be prepared to meet the Saviour when this life is over.

How true it is that we do not know what lies ahead! And what a blessing this is! "But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." (Job 23:10.) You boys will be subject to tests of which you have never dreamed. May the Lord grant you the strength of character to withstand all the wiles of the evil one. Your faith in the Lord

Jesus Christ will be tried. Remain true to him, and, whether you live or die, it will be well with your soul.

Many of you have left home and loved ones as pure as the new-fallen snow. God grant that thus you may return when these awful days have passed into history. You will want to be able to look mother and father in the eyes, knowing that you have been true to them and the teaching imparted by them to you. Some sweet Christian girl will be waiting your coming. Her future and yours will be wrapped up in your return to a normal life. Keep that body pure and clean. Keep your mind clean. Keep your lips clean. Try to find time each day to read a portion of God's eternal word. Breathe a prayer to him every few minutes. Remember there are loved ones at home praying for you. Do not fail them.

None of us knows the day nor the hour when we shall go the way of all the earth. Some of you will not return to your earthly homes. But you can so live that you may go to the heavenly home. In that home there are no wars; in that home there are no separations; in that home there is no pain; in that home there are no tears; in that home there is no homesickness. Yes, you long for home and loved ones. We are longing for your return. We are praying for your return. The prayers of the righteous avail much. (James 5:16.) The prayers of the righteous will have more to do with the termination of this awful conflict than any will ever know. God's ears are always open to the cries of his people. Dear boys, remember that the Lord knows each one of you. He cares. He knows you are the victims of circumstances over which you have precious little control.

No, Billy. I did not start to preach to you, but just felt that I wanted you to know that I am back of you one hundred per cent in all of your undertakings, and especially concerned about your spiritual well-being. We know that life in the armed forces is not conducive to religious advancement, but we all will

have to do our best to rely completely upon God to care for us and finally bring us "peace that passeth understanding."

Son, no doubt you have already felt the need of having real Christians back of you. You have felt the need of having the prayers of the saints. Think of your father and mother on their knees pouring out their petitions to the Father in your behalf. And, son, this does not happen just once in a long time, but it is a daily occurrence. Many miles may separate our bodies from each other, but we are near in spirit. Remember those happy days at home. Perhaps even happier days are in the future— and those happy days may be even nearer than many of us think.

If God brings you safely through this, may you be just as willing to show him the appreciation due him by serving nobly in his cause. We ought to lay down our lives if need be for the blessed Christ. We may not be called upon to die for him, but we are called upon to live for him. Earthly governments call upon us to make great sacrifices in their behalf. So it is with the government of Christ. Had all the brethren in all the ages since the establishment of the church been willing to sacrifice more in behalf of the kingdom of Christ, I am sure these awful days would not have come on the world. Sin is the cause of it all. Sin will ruin any life. Sin will ruin any nation. Sin ruins the world. We can drive the sin out of our lives.

These are dark days, but behind the clouds the sun is still shining. The darkest time is just before the dawn. Some rain must fall; some days must be dark and dreary. But the sun will shine again. And when that glorious day of peace comes, may you be in position to enjoy it. And so, my son, I say again? Keep yourself clean. Be pure. Be holy. Pray and sing. Read and pray. Meditate upon these things. Give yourself wholly to them. Pray when you lie down and pray when you rise up.



## 38

**Following Paul**

"BRETHREN, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample." (Phil. 3:17.)

"Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me." (1 Cor. 4:16.)

"Be ye followers of me. even as I also am of Christ." (1 Cor. 11:1.)

The above citations from the writings of Paul teach us that we should follow him. It is right to follow any man so long as he follows Christ. Thus would Paul have his brethren do.

Paul was living close to Christ when he penned these words. He had not always been a follower of Christ. He hated the church with a vengeance. He thought it should be put down. "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.)

But when he saw and learned that he was wrong, he changed immediately. He did not confer with flesh and blood. If we are going to follow Paul, we must abandon error just as soon as we see it. And if we know the truth, we must obey it at all hazards. If we have loved ones who are opposed to the truth, that will not deter us in our determination to obey God. It is hard to get away from our early religious training, even if that training has been erroneous. But Paul dropped the religion of his fathers and took upon himself the obligation of Christianity. This marked him as a sincere man. He was sincere even when he was

persecuting the church and wasting it. He never violated his conscience. He lived in all good conscience before God. Our consciences can lead us far afield. We must be educated in the Scriptures.

In following Paul we will not be ashamed of the gospel of Christ. Too many in our day are ashamed of the gospel of Christ. Even some members of the church offer apologies for part of the gospel of Christ. Error must be condemned in no uncertain terms. This is part of the gospel that Paul preached. He made no compromises with sin and error. The gospel should be preached in no uncertain terms. It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. (Rom. 1:16.)

If we are following Paul, we are striving to please God. We are not striving to please men. The real Christian has but one thought uppermost in his mind. He is trying to so think, speak, and act that his every thought, word, and act will be well pleasing to God. "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." (Gal. 1:10.) This does not mean that we are trying above everything else to please God. This is the real test of greatness in the sight of God.

If we are following Paul, we will be kindhearted. "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." (Eph. 4:32.) Many dear souls perish for lack of kindness. Kindness costs so little and is worth so much. Hearts are broken by unkindness. Homes have been broken by lack of kindness. Congregations have been retarded in their work because of a lack of kindness. Best of friends have been alienated because someone lacked kindness. We should be firm, but kind to all, even our enemies.

To follow Paul will entail much sacrificing on our part. Very few of us know the real meaning of sacrifice. We make very little sacrifice for the cause of Christ. We make but little sacrifice of time for the cause of the Master. We plead a lack of time when we refuse or neglect to do the things that are in-

cumbent upon all Christians. We sacrifice but little money so that the gospel may be preached to every creature under heaven. We spend our money for things that profit us little, and then neglect the really big things. Folks will go to worship without making any real preparation to give in proportion to their prosperity. We contract other bills and pay them, and then allow the cause of our dear Redeemer to go begging.

We should read and reread of the great sacrifices that Paul made, recorded in 2 Cor. 11. Here he speaks of his abundant labors in the vineyard of the Master. Do we really labor for Christ? Do we become physically and mentally tired because of our abundant labors for Christ? He was in stripes above measure. Oftentimes he was in prison because of his following Christ. Of the Jews five times received he forty stripes save one. Think of it! It is no wonder that he bore in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus. These marks had been received in the line of duty. Three times he was beaten with rods. What punishment was inflicted upon this great man of God! One time he was stoned until his enemies thought he was dead. He was shipwrecked upon more than one occasion. A night and a day he had been in the deep. Oftentimes was he wearied by journeyings. He was in perils among robbers, by his own countrymen, among the heathen, in the city, in the wilderness, in the sea, and, perhaps the worst of all, in perils among false brethren. Time after time was he in weariness and painfulness. The world's greatest preacher knew hunger and thirst. He knew what it meant to be cold and naked. He knew what the care of all the churches meant.

Brethren. I am talking about sacrificing for Jesus. When we stand by the side of this veteran of the cross, our sacrifices look small indeed. Did God require more of Paul than of us? Are we following Paul as he followed Christ? Many of the trifling-things that trouble us today would disappear if we were more interested in following the great apostle to the Gentiles.

Yes, there are great sacrifices to be made; but these endure but for a little while. After about thirty years of gospel preaching. Paul comes to the end of his earthly journey. You and I are coming to it as fast as the unlocked wheels of time can bear us on. Soon our journey will be over. When we stand on the brink of eternity, it will be a great consolation to us if we can look back upon lives that have been devoted to truth and righteousness. Then we can look forward to that crown of life which the Lord has in store for his faithful ones.

Paul summed up his Christian experience in three short, terse sentences: "I have fought a good fight." That is the kind of fight we would expect a good soldier to fight. The battle was about over for him. He had been in the thick of it. "I have finished my course." He had been running a hard race. He had had no time to stop until he came to the end of the race. There is no stopping for the Christian in this life. "I have kept the faith." He had not kept *a* faith, but *the* faith. There is but one true faith. Paul had kept it. The world is full of people who are willing to keep *a* faith, but who rebel at *the* faith. If we are going to follow Paul, we will keep the faith.

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (2 Tim. 4:8.)

### 39

#### **The Gospel Mirror**

"BUT be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and

straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." (James 1:22-25.)

Man is interested in mirrors. Man always has been interested in mirrors. No doubt the savage is interested in his reflection in the water when he drinks from the crystal stream. We are living in an age of mirrors. We have all kinds of mirrors for all kinds of purposes. Man was not satisfied with mirrors that show the outside of the body, but we have that mysterious X-ray that explores the insides.

But no mirror made by man will show the soul. God gave us the gospel mirror for this purpose. In the quotation given above this mirror for the soul is called "the perfect law of liberty." Nothing made by man is perfect. Everything made by God is perfect. The mirror for the soul is perfect. "That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. 3:17.) "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.)

This divine mirror shows the origin of the soul. It is the only source from which we get this desired information. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Gen. 2:7.) This is the only satisfactory explanation of the origin of the species.

Not only does the gospel mirror furnish us with information relative to the origin of the soul, but it shows the ills of the soul. A mirror shows the dirt on the body. The gospel mirror shows the "dirt" on the soul. This may be one reason why so many do not use it. Mirrors help us to see ourselves as others

see us. The divine mirror helps us to see ourselves as God sees us.

The drunkard looks into God's mirror and sees this: "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." (1 Cor. 6:9, 10.) A lot of church members ought to get this part of God's mirror where they could get a square look at themselves! I have been told that there are a few preachers who need to take a squint at this. God says that folks who are guilty of the above shall not inherit the kingdom of God. This I believe and teach. When we look into a mirror and see dirt on our face, we turn from the mirror and wash the dirt off; when we see dirt on our souls, we had better get rid of it before it is eternally too late.

The gospel mirror tells of the origin of the soul and the ills of the soul, and it also tells us of the destiny of our souls. Jesus spoke so often of heaven and hell. To one of these places we are going. Listen: "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. 25:46.) Listen again: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." (Matt. 25:46.) Remember, these are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ.

How should we use God's mirror? How do we use other mirrors? Do we not use them frequently and regularly? Do we not use them daily? Is it not a fact that we look into them about the first thing of a morning and the last thing of a night and many times between? Can we afford to look into the gospel mirror just once a week for a few minutes? God spoke about the Bereans being more noble than those of Thessalonica. Where did this nobility lie? "They received the word with all readiness

of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17:11.) "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." (Ps. 1:1, 2. ) Do you, my friend, delight in the law of the Lord? Do you meditate upon it day and night?

We should become skilled in the use of God's mirror. This takes careful, diligent study. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Tim. 2:15.) Every member of the church ought to know how to use the word skillfully. We ought to be ashamed if we are not able to do this. Unless we study daily, diligently, and systematically we will not know how to handle the divine mirror aright.

We should study obediently—that is, we should approach the study of God's word with an honest desire to know his will concerning us. We should have the mind that characterized the good man, Cornelius. After he had been instructed to send for Peter, who would tell him what he ought to do, and Peter had arrived, Cornelius said: "Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee or God." (Acts 10:33.) A man like that is bound to learn the will of the Lord. He wanted to hear all things that were commanded of God. The doctrines and commandments of men will damn our souls for time and eternity if believed and obeyed. "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Matt. 15:9.) "And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." (Matt. 15:14.) The doctrine of Christ believed and obeyed will save our souls for time and eternity. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." (Rom. 1:16.)

## 40

**"The Lord's Prayer"**

THE prayer that is usually called "the Lord's prayer" is not in reality one the Lord prayed, but rather one that he taught his disciples to pray. This, of course, was on the other side of the cross. We want to study together for a little while this disciples' prayer.

Jesus prayed much, and he taught his disciples to pray much. In fact, the great men and women of the Bible were praying men and women. So it is today. The really influential Christians are given to much prayer. They do as Jesus teaches in Luke 18:1: "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint." The inspired Paul said: "Pray without ceasing." (1 Thes. 5:17.) It is very wrong to pray to be seen and heard by men. "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward." (Matt. 6:5.) Of course when we do things to be seen and heard of men, and we are seen and heard of men, we have received our reward and do not need to look to the Father for any further reward.

There are at least three things that will cause one to pray. First, a great need will cause us to pray. "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." When we fully realize our utter dependence upon God for everything we have and need, we will pray more. Second, a great faith in God will cause us to pray. In fact, we can measure our faith pretty much by our prayers. It is a fairly safe criterion. If we have much faith in God, we will pray much; if we have little faith in God we will pray but little: if we have no faith in God, we will not pray at all. Third, great sorrow will cause us to pray. We all pray when the calamities of this earth overtake us.

The prayer Jesus taught his disciples to pray is short. We should not think that we are heard for our much speaking. Je-



Jesus said: "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking." (Matt. 6:7.) Jesus prayed a short prayer in the garden in the face of the cross. I am fully convinced that our public prayers should be short. Jesus continued in private prayer all night. It would be good for some of us to do likewise.

In Luke 18:9-14 Jesus tells us of two men and their prayers. One of the prayers was a little lengthy. It took the man a good while to tell God how good he was! "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are. extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." The man who parades his own virtues will bear watching. Some are even *proud* of their humility! The other prayer was brief and to the point. Hear it: "God, be merciful to me a sinner." This prayer was the more efficacious of the two. The Christ said: "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall he abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

This prayer that Jesus taught his disciples was not only short, but it was simple. Most of the words are monosyllables. They are easily comprehended even by the unlearned. The very simplicity of it is powerful.

"Our Father which art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name." Here we have superb adoration. When Moses approached the burning bush, God called to him, saying: "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." (Ex. 3:5.) When we approach God in prayer, we are on holy ground. The only time we have the word "reverend" in the Bible is in connection with God's name. "Holy and reverend is his name." (Ps. 111:9.)

"Thy kingdom come." Of course we cannot pray for the kingdom to come. It has already come more than nineteen centuries ago. When Jesus taught his disciples to pray. "Thy kingdom come," that was about three years before its coming. Paul said

he was in the kingdom. "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." (Col. 1:13.) Of course the kingdom was then in existence, or Paul and others could not have been translated into it. This was written about thirty years after the establishment of the kingdom. John said he was in the kingdom. (Rev. 1:9.) This was sixty or more years after the establishment of the kingdom. We can pray for the spread and advancement of the kingdom.

"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." If God's will were being done on this earth, it would be an entirely different world. There would be no wars. Just as fast as people come into the kingdom of Christ they learn war no more. What a transformation it would work in the business and social world if all would do the will of the Lord! Yes, and what a difference in the religious world! "Thy will be done."

"Give us this day our daily bread." When the Israelites were in the wilderness. God gave them their daily bread. When we work in cooperation with divine laws, we have our daily bread. "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." (Ps. 37:25.)

"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." That would be a dangerous thing for many of us to pray if the Lord would answer. Too many want God to forgive their sins, but are not willing to forgive those who may sin against them. Jesus, in commenting on this, further says: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." We should stay far away from our temptations. We should not allow ourselves to be led into temptation. Wise is the individual who knows his weakest point. Watch those weak points. "A chain is no stronger than its weakest link." A Christian is no stronger than his weakest point.

## 41

**A Few New Things**

GENERALLY speaking, the "new" things in religion are not true and the true things are not new. However, the Bible speaks of many new things. In this study we want to direct attention to a few of these new things.

Hundreds of years before the New Testament was given God had promised to make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah." (Jer. 31:31.) This language is used by the writer of the Hebrew letter. (Heb. 8:8.) Why a new covenant? "For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second." (Heb. 8:7.) "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect." (Heb. 10:1.)

We enter into the benefits of the new covenant by a new birth—that is, a second birth. Christians are people who have been twice born. All of us were born into the earthly family by a fleshly birth. To enter the divine family we must have a spiritual birth. Jesus said: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. (John 3:3.) And then in enlarging upon this thought he 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.)

In the fleshly birth there is first a begetting and then a bringing forth. So it is with the spiritual birth. We are begotten by the word of truth, and then brought forth from the waters of baptism. Peter expressed it this way: "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.) And from James we have it this way: "Of his own will begat he us with

the word of truth." (James 1:18.) And the peerless Paul wrote to the church of God at Corinth after this manner: "For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." (1 Cor. 4:15.)

When one is born again, he is thus a new creature—the old things have passed away. "Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Cor. 5:17.) "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom. 8:1.) "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." (Gal. 6:15.)

When we enter the new covenant by a new birth, thus becoming new creatures in Christ Jesus, we should have on new clothing. "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." (Col. 3:10.) "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." (Rom. 13:14.)

This new creature, or new man, requires new food. The food that the "old man" feasted on will not now do. "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." (1 Pet. 2:1,2.) This sincere milk of the word will cause such rapid growth that it will not be long until we can handle the meat of the word. Some never make this desired growth. "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat." (Heb. 5:12.) It is no disgrace to be on a milk diet when we are babes, but it is a disgrace to remain on one. The only time a full-grown man needs to be reduced to a milk diet is when he is sick. There are entirely too many sickly among us. Jesus said: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matt. 4:4.)

The new creature in Christ has a new name awaiting him just as soon as he is born into the family of Christ. This is a family name, belonging exclusively to the family of Christ. We wear the name of the head of the family. The earthly father is the head of the earthly family, and the children born into his family take his name. Thus it is with the family of Christ. He is the head of this family, and every one that is born into this family takes his name.

Hundreds of years before there was a Christian on the earth God said this through the prophet Isaiah: "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name." (Isa. 62:2.) God was going to give this new name when the Gentiles saw his righteousness. Just as soon as the church had Gentile members, this new name was given. Cornelius was the first Gentile convert. We read of his conversion in Acts 10. In the very next chapter we have this significant statement: "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." (Acts 11:26.)

After Paul had preached to King Agrippa, the king made use of this language: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." (Acts 26:28.) The king knew that if he became obedient to the gospel that Paul preached, he would be a Christian. Thus it is today. The gospel preached and obeyed makes Christians only and only Christians. It takes something different from the gospel of Christ to make anything different from a Christian.

This new creature, wearing new clothing, eating new food, and wearing a new name, is now ready for new employment. He is ready to really work in the Master's vineyard. He is now working out his own salvation with fear and trembling. (Phil. 2:12.) He cannot afford to forget to be "stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord," knowing that his "labour is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. 15:58.) The blessed Christ said: "I must work the works of him that sent

me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." (John 9:4.)

Faithful Christians are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, where in dwelleth righteousness." (2 Pet. 3:13.) This old earth will pass away. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea." (Rev. 21:1.) May God help all of us to so live that we may enjoy that new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2) and be permitted to join in with the singing of the new song (Rev. 14:3; 15:3.)

## 42

### **The Friend of God**

No greater praise could be given to any mortal man than to say he is the friend of God. This is no ordinary encomium. Three times in God's book is Abraham called the friend of God. "Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?" (2 Chron. 20:7.) "But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend." (Isa. 41:8.) "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God." (James 2:23.)

In this study we want to trace out some of the predominant characteristics which inhered in Abraham's life. No doubt these same traits transferred to our lives will cause us to be God's friends. Christ said: "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." (John 15:14.)

### **Faithful**

When we think of Abraham we think of faith. He was the father of the faithful. In that great catalogue of ancient worthies mentioned in Heb. 11 we have mention made of Abraham's faith. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (Heb. 11:8-10.) We have an account of this call of Abraham in Gen. 12. The key word is *obeyed*. The test of our faith comes in our obedience.

"By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure." (Heb. 11:17-19.) We read of this acid test of Abraham's faith in Gen. 22. Abraham did not stagger at the promise of God. "Abraham believed God." May we have the faith of Abraham.

### **Prompt**

Abraham not only obeyed God, but he obeyed promptly. Mankind is given to procrastination. To be a friend of God one must not only obey, but must obey promptly.

### **Devoted**

We can follow up the history of Abraham and we find him to be devoted to God always. Here is a sentence that gives us an insight into his devotion: "And there he builded an altar unto the Lord." (Gen. 12:8.) We need to build more altars. There should be an altar in every home. We should find time to worship around this family altar. We need more altars in our places of business. Christians should carry their devotions into the

various walks of life. Others ought to be able to see in us that we have been with Christ and have learned of him.

### **Peaceful**

Abraham was a man of peace. When there was strife between his herdmen and Lot's herdmen, he said unto Lot: "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren." (Gen. 13:8.) He continued after this manner: "Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." What magnanimous spirit! Would to God that all members of the church would imbibe more of this spirit! "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." (Matt. 5:9.) "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." (Rom. 12:18.) There are some men with whom it is not possible to live peaceably, but do not forget this: "*as much as lieth in you.*"

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. 12:14.) "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." (2 Cor. 13:11.) God is still the God of love and peace.

### **Hospitable**

It is refreshing to read of the genuine hospitality of Abraham as recorded in Gen. 18. He ran out from his tent door to meet three strangers, inviting them to come and rest under the tree, and that a little water was to be brought to wash their tired and weary feet. Then into the tent he went to have Sarah prepare some cakes on the hearth. To the herd he went to get a calf tender and good, and gave it to some young men to dress, and he took butter and milk and set the refreshments before them. What a lesson in hospitality for us!



"Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality." (Rom. 12:13.)  
 "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." (Heb. 13:2.) "Use hospitality one to another without grudging." (1 Pet. 4:9.)

### **Unselfish**

Abraham was always thinking of others. When God revealed unto him that he was going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, this drove this grand old patriarch to his knees, pleading earnestly in behalf of the righteous. Ten righteous people would have been the physical salvation of ancient Sodom and Gomorrah. Of course they could not be found. There are teeming millions on the earth today who know not God. We cannot afford to be indifferent to this condition. We should arise in the strength of Israel's God and "preach the gospel to every creature. The salvation of souls should weigh heavily upon the heart of every true follower of the meek and lowly Nazarene. By thus doing we shall be able to save some.

"And he was called the Friend of God." Amen!

## 43

### **Some Marks of a Real Christian**

IN this brief study we want to learn of some of the outstanding characteristics of a real Christian. To be most helpful we should make a personal application of these lessons. In other words, am I a real Christian?

A genuine Christian is given to prayer. He spends much time in prayer. He makes no important decisions without a season of prayer. One of the very shortest verses of the New Testament is 1 Thes. 5:17. Here it is: "Pray without ceasing." That was written to Christians. We have this language in Luke 18:1: "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint." Jesus said we ought to pray. Let us do what he said we ought to do.

A real Christian is a careful and diligent student of the Bible. Paul wrote to Timothy after this manner: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Tim. 2:15.) We ought to be ashamed to do less than this. Unless we study the word we do not have the approval of God. We cannot know how to rightly divide the word of truth unless we study to this end. In speaking of the Old Testament, Jesus said we ought to search it. (John 5:39.) The inspired Paul taught the same thing in Rom. 15:4 when he said: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."

A real Christian lives what he teaches. The power of a Christian life is beyond computation. We cannot all be great preachers or great singers, but, thanks be to God, we can live a humble, devoted, and faithful Christian life. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Cor. 5:17.) Jesus taught his disciples this: "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.) Paul wrote to the brethren at Rome after this manner: "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?" (Rom. 2:21.) To a young preacher the old preacher, Paul, wrote: "In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned, having no evil thing to say to you." (Tit. 2:7, 8.) May God help all Christians to so live "that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed."

A real Christian is constantly on the lookout for the salvation of others. He has been saved to save. Every Christian must be a soul winner for Jesus. The preachers cannot reach so many. The godly life of a Christian, coupled with his sound teaching,

will bring multitudes to the Lamb of God. "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." (James 5:19,20.)

When the church assembles, you will find the real Christians there. They will not be staying at home, visiting, running around, or doing other things that will keep them from the assembly. "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.) From the divine record we learn this about the church at Troas: "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread. Paul preached unto them." (Acts 20:7.) Never was there a greater preacher than Paul, but the thing that brought the brethren together at Troas "upon the first day of the week" was the breaking of bread. The same thing draws all Christians together today "upon the first day of the week."

Real Christians have strong convictions founded upon the teaching of God's word. For these honest and scriptural convictions they earnestly contend. We must not confuse our opinions with the word. We must know the truth and contend for it. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32.) "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." (Jude 3.)

Real Christians are interested in the poor. The poor have been with us always. The poor will be with us always. The very salvation of our souls depends somewhat upon our attitude toward the poor. Jesus said that one of the proofs of his divinity was the simple fact that the poor had the gospel preached to them. God wants the gospel preached to the poor. We ought to read and

seriously consider Matt. 25:31-46. There we are told by Jesus himself what will become of the ones who neglect the poor.

Real Christians give as they have been prospered. Thus they are taught to do. (1 Cor. 16:1, 2.) Thus they do. It ought not to take much preaching and teaching to get Christians to give in proportion to their prosperity. They are thankful to be prospered, and they are just as thankful to give as they have been prospered. They abound in this grace also. (2 Cor. 8:7.) If we were to abound in all other things and then fail to give as we have been prospered, our souls would be lost.

Another mark of a real Christian is his distinctive faith. He has implicit faith in God and in God's word. He knows that without faith it is impossible to please him. (Heb. 11:6.) He steps out upon the living word of the living God.

Real Christians do not try to dodge their individual responsibility. They have duties to perform and burdens to carry. They gladly perform their duties and meekly carry their burdens. "For we are labourers together with God." (1 Cor. 3:9.)

## 44

### **To What Is the Church Comparable?**

THE church is a great flock with a great Shepherd and many undershepherds. In 1 Pet. 5 we have mention of the flock and the great Shepherd. The elders are the undershepherds. Shepherds have many fundamental duties. They are to feed the flock. "Feed the flock of God which is among you." (1 Pet. 5:2.) One of the qualifications for a scriptural elder is "apt to teach." (1 Tim. 3:2.) It would be a mighty poor shepherd that would not feed the flock under his care. Paul, in talking to the Ephesian elders, said: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20:28.)

Another duty of a shepherd is to shelter and protect the flock. He will do this even at great cost and inconvenience to himself. So it is with the faithful shepherd over God's flock. He will protect the sheep. Paul said further to the Ephesian elders: "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." (Acts 20:29, 30.) Wolves care nothing for the sheep. The good shepherd is always on the alert for these wolves. Many a flock has been ruined because wolves got in among them. The good shepherd would lay down his life for the sheep.

Another duty of the elders is to be an example to others. They are not to be lords over God's heritage, but ensamples to the flock. Some of them are mighty poor examples. It is no wonder that the scriptural qualifications for elders are so high and holy.

The church is a great school with a great Teacher. A good teacher gives every student a glad welcome. The great Teacher gives us a warm invitation to enter his school. Hear him: "Come unto me, all ye that labor 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.) "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.) If we do not enter the great school of Christ, it will not be because we are not wanted and are not welcomed. The great Teacher has done all he can to get us to matriculate.

To have a good school we must have students who are desirous of learning and who will study. So it is in the school of Christ. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of

truth." (2 Tim. 2:15.) "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." (1 Pet. 2:2.)

To have a good school we must have obedient students and strict discipline. There are too many disobedient ones in the school of Christ. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." (Heb. 13:17.) When students are disobedient, they must be disciplined. "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us " (2 These. 3:6.)

The church is a great family. Christ is the absent elder brother. He went away, but he is coming again. He said: "I will come again." (John 14:3.) The angels said that he would come as he went. (Acts 1:11.) We are always anxious for an absent member of the family to return. We long and look for his return. We are so glad to see him. Christians ought to be longing to depart and be with the Lord. We ought to be looking forward fondly to that meeting.

The church is a body. Christ is the head of that body. The members of the body must harmonize. There should be no friction in the body. "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." (1 Cor. 12:27.) The members of the body should have the same care one for another. The members of the body must obey the head of the body.

The church is a bride. Christ is the bridegroom. "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. 5:25-27.) What a beautiful picture of the bride of Christ!

A faithful bride wears the name of her husband, and honors that name. So it is with a faithful Christian. He will wear no other name, and he is jealous of that name. He honors the name of Christ. A faithful wife bears her husband's children and helps to bring them up right. A faithful church has additions regularly and trains those babes in Christ in the way that they should go. I have been told that a faithful wife takes the characteristics of her husband. I know this is true of a faithful Christian. They become more and more like Christ. "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." (Eph. 5:30.)

The church is the pillar and support of the truth. "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: but if I tarry long, that thou mayst know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God. which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." (1 Tim. 3:14, 15.) The members of the church are living epistles, known and read of all men. Every member of the church should adorn the doctrine.

We should support the truth by sermon. God wants the gospel preached to every creature under heaven. We are supporting the truth when we are supporting men who are preaching the truth. Their hands must be held up while they preach. We are supporting the truth when we walk in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord blameless. What a great support this is! Too many times our efforts at winning souls are weakened because we are not supporting the truth by keeping it ourselves. We are supporting the truth when we are rendering service in the name of Christ to our fellow man. We are not supporting the truth when we render this service in some name other than the name of Christ. "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.) "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end." (Eph. 3:21.)

## 45

**Worldliness**

ALL thinking people are agreed that there is too much worldliness in the church of our day. Too many members are trying to be in the church and in the world at one and the same time. It cannot be done. In that great intercessory prayer the Son of God poured out his heart to God in these significant words: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." (John 17:15. 16.) Jesus recognized that there is evil in the world. Disciples of Christ should be no more of the world than Christ was of the world. We are in the world, but we are not of the world. While we are in the world, the evils of the world will be constantly before us: but we must not partake of these evils.

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." (1 John 2:15-17.) God tells us here not to love the world and the sinful things of the world. When a man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. The devil puts many temptations before us through the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life. These things are not of the Father: they are of the world. These things are going to pass away. The ones who do the will of God will live forever. The more we love God, the less will be our love for the world: and, conversely, the more we love the world, the less will be our love for the Father.

"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.) It is a terrible thing to be listed in heaven as God's enemy. Broth-



er, if the world and worldly people are your friends, you are the enemy of God. We must make a choice between God and the world. We cannot be on friendly terms with both. Of course, if you do not go to the places the world goes and do the things the world does, they will speak evil of you. "For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you: who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead." (1 Pet. 4:3-5.)

There are many things today that are lascivious. And drinking is common. The modern dance comes under the head of "revellings." You cannot frequent the modern dance and remain a Christian. Parents are making one of the biggest mistakes of their lives when they allow children of tender age to go to the high school and college dance. Nothing could be more dangerous. Such reveling and banqueting are an abomination to God. Do not forget that we shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. Young men and women who do such things should be taught better, and older ones ought to know better, and I believe they do know better.

I remember hearing one of our old preachers, who had been a coal miner, tell about some young ladies dressed in white coming to visit the mine. They asked him if they could enter the mine dressed in their white dresses. He assured them they could go into a coal mine dressed in white, but that they could not come out that way. And so it is. Innocent boys and girls and pure men and women may begin to dance, but if they keep up such for a very long period, they will not continue to be pure and clean. The baser elements of our nature would be stirred in the modern dance. No Christian can afford to take such a chance. Preachers and elders are falling down and failing when they cease to warn night and day with tears along such lines. Many elders and a few preachers, because of ungodliness in their

own lives, are in no position to rebuke the worldliness of others. All such "elders" ought to clean up or clear out, and such preachers ought to repent or quit preaching.

Paul said something about the world being crucified unto him and something about him being crucified unto the world. (Gal. 6:14.) Many members of the church today are not crucified unto the world; rather, they are married unto the world. They want to participate in about every worldly thing that the world participates in. They go to about the same places, read about the same literature, talk about the same. If we want to go to heaven, we must crucify the world. Those worldly instincts must be put to death. I suppose very few worldly church members will read these lines. Most of them are not sufficiently interested in their souls to read religious books.

The real Christian is going to be hated by the world, but he has this consolation: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." (John 15:18-20.)

You can keep the world from hating you, but to do this you will have to sacrifice your very soul. This is too great a price to pay for the friendship of the world. You can be on friendly terms with the world by doing what the world does. This may sound strange to some, but it will not sound strange to those who are drawing the line between the church and the world deep and wide. Refuse to see the dirty shows that the world goes "*crazy*" over; refuse to go to their dances; keep away from their mixed bathing pools and "wild" parties; refuse to drink with them at their "innocent" parties; abstain from their card parties, lodges, etc., etc., and you will learn the meaning of sacrificing the friendship of the world. And the strange part of it is that some of the brethren do not want the sins of modern times exposed.

They want the preachers to always prophesy smooth things. Brethren, come out of the world and worldly entanglements, and stand firm for pure doctrine, pure living, pure talking, and pure thinking.

I do not mean to leave the impression that Christians cannot have a good time. But their meat is to do the will of God. They find their greatest pleasure in living close to the Lord. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord: and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season: his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the ungodly shall perish." (Ps. 1.)

## 46

### **Laborers In the Vineyard**

"FOR the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard." (Matt. 20:1.)

The Master used so many commonplace things to teach spiritual lessons.

This householder went out to *hire* laborers. He offered an incentive to get men to work in his vineyard. He did not try to scare men into the vineyard. A scared man would be a poor workman. We should not try to scare men into the church. They would get over their scare, and then be all but worthless. This householder did not try to force men into his vineyard. Neither should we try to force men into the church. The Lord is calling

for volunteers. He drafts no one into his army. Every Christian is one because he wants to be.

This householder agreed with the laborers to give them a decent wage if they would work in his vineyard. What does Jesus offer us to get us into his vineyard? Listen: "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.) What greater inducement could he offer? We can find rest unto our souls. There is no rest now or hereafter for the souls that are out of Christ. "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.) To get into the vineyard of the Master we must do his commandments, and to get into heaven we must continue to do his commandments.

We would like to emphasize the fact that this householder went out to hire *laborers*. He did not want loafers and shirkers. He wanted men who would work. There is no place for a lazy 'man in the kingdom of Christ. When we are baptized into Christ, we promise to work. The Lord himself set us the example of hard work "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." (John 9:4.) The night of death will soon overtake each of us. We must work now. The opportunity to work will be gone before long.

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. 15:58.) We may do much work on this earth in vain, but we never do any work for the Master in vain. The most lowly act that we perform because we are disciples is recognized by him. Giving a glass of water because we are disciples will bring its reward. There is no place in the life of a Christian for discouragement We must remember for whom we are working.

"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (Phil. 2:12.) This was written to Christians. Christians are not eternally saved yet, but they are busy working out their salvation with fear and trembling. You cannot loaf it out. but you can work it out. You cannot shirk it out. but you can work it out.

"What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?" (James 2:14.) No, we cannot be saved by faith only. "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." (James 2:17.) There is a lot of dead faith. "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." (James 2:26.) We know how dead a body is when the spirit has gone out. and that is just how dead faith is without works.

This householder went out to hire laborers into his vineyard. It does make a difference where the work is done. The work must be done in the right vineyard. Many are doing a lot of good work, but they are doing it in the wrong place. Some seem to have the idea that just so they work, it does not make much difference where they work. If you were a farmer and hired a man to work on your farm, you would not think you owed him anything if *he* worked on your neighbor's farm. He may have done some mighty fine work, but he did it in the wrong place. We must look to the one for whom we work for the pay. If you are expecting a reward from Jesus Christ, you must work where he tells you to work, and that place is in the church.

"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.) What we do in word or deed is just about all that we do. is it not? To do a thing in the name of the Lord Jesus is to do it by his authority. My reader, if you are doing things that you cannot do in the name of the Lord, you had better quit doing those things. We can do everything that the Lord wants us to do in his name.

"Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." (Eph. 3:21.) We render glory to God in the church, not in something else.

Men went to work in this vineyard of the householder at different hours of the day. Some went early in the morning, while some others did not go until late evening; but all went at the first opportunity. They went at the first call. They did not turn down the invitation. If you have heard the gospel once, but turned it down, you did not act as these men acted. Sometimes when someone comes into the church late in life, some are heard to say that he came in at the "eleventh hour." This does not necessarily follow. He came in at the "eleventh hour" if he had never had an opportunity of coming in before: but if he had heard the gospel time after time and turned it down, he is not an "eleventh hour" man. This is not written to discourage any old person in obeying the gospel, but it is written to encourage every one, both young and old, to accept the Master's call at the very first opportunity. Many have been taught the way of the Lord, know what they must do to be saved, but have refused to come into the church. There will be many such souls in hell. They fully intended to go to work at some time in the vineyard, but they just postponed their obedience until it was eternally too late.

Let us remember these four great lessons: (1) The householder went out to *hire* laborers: (2) he went out to hire *laborers*; (3) he went out to hire laborers into *his vineyard*: (4) the laborers went at the *first* opportunity.

## 47

### **Foolish Hobbies**

THESE are many hobbies in this old world of ours. Some are useful, some useless, and some foolish. The brethren are not immune to some of these foolish hobbies. In this article we want to point out a few of these foolish hobbies.

### **Human Helps**

One brother says he is against all "human helps" in the study of the Bible. Brother, you must read the Old Testament in the original Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek. Our English translations would come under the head of "human helps." You had better make no references to chapters and verses. The Bible was not divided into chapters and verses for hundreds of years after the book was written. These are "human helps," and mighty good helps they are. Do you use songbooks where you worship? These are "human helps." Yes, and they are uninspired, and would come under the head of "literature." When your preacher preaches, he is making uninspired comment About ninety per cent of his sermon would be his oral comments, and all of it would be uninspired. What change would it make if he were to write these comments instead of giving them orally? The only difference I can see is that he might take more time and thought in the preparation of the written comments. Does your preacher ever use the blackboard or charts? Those are all "human helps." And they are uninspired! The chances are that your preacher will use "human helps" to show that he is against "human helps"! All preachers use "human helps" in the preparation of their sermons. I have seen many a Bible study (?) all but ruined because the teacher (?) had not made preparation. I am sure the class would have derived much more benefit from the lesson had they had some carefully prepared "human helps" to have guided them.

### **Bible Study**

And still other brethren are opposed to a systematic study of the Bible on Lord's-day morning. Sometimes they will deny that they are against Bible study, but they are against the Sunday school. I do not think much of using the term "Sunday school," because of the association in the mind of the average person. I am sure the term "Bible study" is to be preferred. Some say that they are against dividing into classes. Brother,

you do not need to do this; the Lord has taken care of that little matter. We are already divided into classes. The little child is not in the same class with the mature Bible student. We must adapt our teaching to the one being taught. I am sure this cannot be done so effectively when we have the little child and the adult in the same class before us. Sometimes I think the honest brethren are not so much opposed to the "class system" as they are to the confusion that is often found where two or more classes are being taught in the same room. All of us should be opposed to this noise and confusion. Very few rooms are large enough to have two or more classes going at the same time without too much noise and confusion. But why have this condition? Why not provide rooms for each class? The cost would not be prohibitive. And this would also do away with a lot of the trouble that we have about "classes." Surely no sensible person is going to oppose the teaching of the Bible to a group who have come together for the express purpose of studying the Bible.

And Lord's-day morning would be one of the most convenient times to thus assemble. Why not spend some precious time before the regular hour of worship in a careful study of the Bible? I am sure this would be more profitable than lying in bed on Sunday mornings or reading the "funnies." And we could gather in many children and others from sectarian homes and from homes that make no profession of religion and teach them the word of God. Why let the sectarians gather in the children while we sit supinely by?

### **"Baptisteries"**

Some good, honest, and sincere brethren think it is wrong to baptize in artificial pools. I would be afraid to take that position. My reason for thus being afraid is that I would be afraid to add an opinion to the word of God and bind that opinion on others. The book teaches plainly that we must be baptized to be saved. This baptism must take place in water. There the book



stops. I am sure it is wise for us to stop where the Bible stops, but do not stop until it stops. When we say that the water must be in a certain place or contained within certain limits, we have gone beyond what is written. We are speaking where the Bible does not speak. If there were to be any importance attached to the container of the water, I am sure the Lord would have said • so. Someone is ready to say that all of the cases of New Testament baptism which are recorded took place in streams of running water. This no one knows. In what stream or streams were the three thousand on Pentecost baptized? We know they were baptized, but I am equally sure that we do not know exactly where the water was. The Bible does not say. In what stream was the Philippian jailer baptized? The Bible does not say. It does say that he was baptized, but it does not say where he was baptized. He may have been baptized in a stream, but this cannot be proved by the Bible. It takes water in which to perform a scriptural baptism. It takes enough of it to bury the candidate in. When we meet these requirements, we have done exactly what the Bible says to do.

### "Cups"

In some quarters we hear much talk about using more than one cup. I am sure that none of us believe in more than "one cup"; but when we begin to confuse the "cup" with the vessel in which the "cup" is contained, we are confusing the issue. The vessel is not the cup. Jesus gave thanks for the cup. "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." (Matt. 26:27-29.) What was it Jesus took? The cup! For what did he give thanks? The cup! What did he tell the apostles to drink? The cup! What did Jesus call "my blood of the new testament"? The cup! What did Jesus call "this fruit of the vine"?

The cup! The cup is what we give thanks for; it is the blood of the new testament; it is the fruit of the vine.

And sometimes brethren who are so against the use of "individual cups" will use two or more right along! Can we not see that such a position is not only foolish, but absurd as well?

"And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said. Take this, and divide it among yourselves." (Luke 22:17.) What is the antecedent of the pronoun "it"? Of course it is "cup." What were they to divide? The cup! Of course no one thinks they were to divide the vessel and drink it! The thing that was to be divided was "the cup." Sometimes I think a lot of trouble could be avoided and confusion in the congregations prevented by dividing the fruit of the vine after the giving of thanks. I go many places where this is done. It takes but a few minutes. And if we are in a worshipful frame of mind, this gives us a few quiet minutes for meditation. And complete unity is worth a few minutes of our time. And noise is not worship after all.

## 48

### **The End of a Great Man**

WE are always interested in great men; and when God places his stamp of greatness upon a man, our interest in him is enhanced. No doubt Paul is the most influential man of the Christian era. A study of his last days is intensely interesting to all true Christians and to all Bible lovers. He has given us a glimpse of these last days in the last chapter of Second Timothy. Here we are told of his last days in the prison at Rome. His last words are addressed to his son in the gospel, Timothy. It will do our souls good to study this lesson.

Paul gives Timothy a serious charge. In verse 1 he says that Christ will judge the living and the dead, and that this judgment will come when he appears. This does not sound like Paul thought that Jesus was coming back to this earth to reign here for a thousand years or so. No, he is coming to judge us all.

Paul's charge to Timothy, and to all other gospel preachers is this: "Preach the word." The gospel preacher has no choice in the matter. He is hedged in and circumscribed by the gospel of Christ. This he must preach if the heavens fall. He must "be instant in season, out of season." He must preach when there is an opportunity; and if there is no opportunity, he must make one. He must "reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." He must reprove kindly and rebuke sharply. And the warm exhortations that a true preacher of the gospel can give! And we must not forget to be long-suffering and kind.

Paul talks about a time coming when folks would not endure sound doctrine. We do not need to be told that the time has arrived, and has been here for hundreds of years. "After their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears." Yes, there are always some ready to preach what folks want preached! "Like people, like priest." "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no Driest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children. As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I change their glory into shame. They eat up the sin of my people, and they set their heart on their iniquity. And there shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings." (Hos. 4:6-9.)

Paul tells Timothy in this farewell chapter to endure afflictions. And how Paul had been afflicted! He had been in stripes above measure, often in prison, three times he had been beaten

with rods, stoned once, in perils of waters, robbers, by his own countrymen, by the heathen, in the city, in the wilderness, in the sea, among false brethren; often had he been weary and in pain; he knew hunger, and thirst, and cold, and nakedness; he knew what it meant to have the care of the churches to burden his soul. (2 Cor. 11:23-33.) He wants Timothy to know what is in store for a faithful minister of Jesus Christ. There are no "soft" places in the army of the Lord. Our Master has said: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." (Matt. 8:20.) Being a preacher means hardships, privation, and toil. It is no sinecure.

"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." Servant of God. well done! He had been a good soldier. For a third of a century he had obeyed his Captain implicitly. That Captain has never lost a battle, and, thanks be to God, he never will. He does not even lose a soldier. Every soldier of us will come to a victorious end if he is true to his marching orders. He had finished his course. The race must be finished. Paul had come to the end of his earthly race. He had kept the faith. There is just one true faith, and Paul had kept it.

Paul, as you stand on the edge of the grave and the brink of eternity, what can you see by the *eye* of faith? How does it look from that vantage point? What of the future? "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." After the cross, the crown! After death, life!

In his last days he longs for Timothy. "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me." Timothy, I want to see you. I want to talk with you. I want your comfort and encouragement. "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." De-

mas was in love with the world. We cannot love the world and the Lord at the same time. We must forsake the one or the other. Brother, do not try to love the world and the Lord at the same time.

Other faithful workers had gone to other places. "Only Luke is with me." It seems that the beloved physician stayed with the old soldier of the cross until the very last. It is gratifying that Luke was with Paul to comfort and help.

"Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry." What a fine spirit! There was a time when Paul thought Mark was not as profitable for the ministry as he ought to have been, but that time has passed. Paul had rebuked him sharply. He would not take him with him on a missionary tour. But Mark is now back in the good graces of Paul. Bring him with you, Timothy. I want to see him. He will do me good, and he is a profitable servant.

And, Timothy, "the cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments." This is really pathetic! The world's greatest preacher is in jail. He feels the need of a coat that he had left at Troas. Maybe the jail was damp and cold. He thought of the cloak he had left with Carpus. Timothy, bring it. It does not sound much like some of our "big" preachers today! I want my books, and especially the papers. Perhaps they were papers that Paul had written himself. He wanted to peruse them once more before he crossed the silent river.

"Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works. Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words." Paul did not get "soft" at the last. Here was a dangerous man. Paul warned Timothy against him. He had withstood Paul's words, and he would withstand Timothy's. He might even take undue advantage of a younger preacher. No, there was no hatred in Paul's

heart; he was perfectly willing to let the Lord do the rewarding, but he felt his responsibility to warn against false teachers. And so should we!

At Paul's first answer, no man stood with him, but all men forsook him. But Paul imitated his Master by saying: "I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." Many of the early Christians were thrown to the lions, but Paul escaped this dreadful fate.

Paul was looking to the eternal kingdom. "And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." "The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit."

## 49

### **"The Days of Our Years"**

"THE days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon shut off, and we fly away." (Ps. 90:10.)

The days of our years are our most valuable possession, but how we do waste them! Benjamin Franklin (printer) said:

"If time be of all things the most precious, then wasting time is the greatest prodigality."

In the above verse we should place great emphasis on the word "soon." God wants us to know that our lives are very brief periods. They are soon cut off. Even if we attain unto three-

score and ten (and not many of us will), they are soon cut off. Now let us hear another verse: "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." (Verse 12.) May the Lord help us to do some numbering. These precious days with their precious opportunities will be gone forever soon. How we should hoard them! We can do so much by the right use of our time. If we live out our threescore and ten, the ten would be the sum of the Lord's days in such a span. What a great thing to think of ten years of Lord's days spent in worship and service to him! And we cannot afford to take one of these Lord's days off.

"Go to now, ye that say, Today 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." (James 4:13-15.) We talk glibly about what we are going to do tomorrow, or next week, or next month, or next year; but we know not what a day may bring forth. "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" (Luke 12:20.) We do not know the day or the night when we shall quit the walks of men and *go* to render an account to Him who gave us all our days.

Jesus said: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." (John 9:4.) The night of death will soon overtake us, and what a night it will be if we have not used our days in the work of the Lord. Better for us had we not been born than that night should overtake *us* unprepared.

One of the saddest verses in the Bible is Jer. 8:20. Hear it: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." What a bitter end! Reader, look ahead to the end of the harvest and to the end of the summer of life. In view of it all,

accept Jesus Christ as your Savior, repent of your past sins, be baptized for the remission of those sins, and from the watery grave of baptism rise to walk in newness of life. The days you spend in the service of the King are sweet days and the end everlasting life.

"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. 6:2.) The devil would try to persuade us that there is plenty of time. He is a liar and the father of lies. This is one of his diabolical lies. There is not time enough yet. Our time is short. God has promised to save you now—not next week nor next year, but *now*. The Bible is not full of meaningless phrases, but of pregnant truths.

Here is some striking language addressed to Christians: "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." (Rom. 13:11.) Our salvation is much nearer than when we first believed. Some of us first believed many years ago. Our salvation draws near. How near, only God knows.

"And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." (1 Pet. 1:17.) Too many of us are not fearful enough. We seem to be too easily satisfied with our attainments. We are not going to be saved in droves. We are not going to be saved by families. We are not going to be saved by congregations. God is going to judge every man's work—not every family's work nor every congregation's work, but every man's work. Every other member of the family may be a good Christian, but that will not save us. What are we? Every other member of the congregation may be a good member, but what are we? Conversely, every other member of the family may be anything but a Christian; but if you are faithful to the Lord, you will be saved. Even if every other member of the congregation should be a hypocrite, you can be saved by loving, humble obedience to God. Salvation is an individual something.



All the hypocrites on earth and all the demons in hell cannot keep a Christian out of heaven.

We are living in perilous times. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." (2 Tim. 3:1-5.) We know that this is a divine record of our times. Men are lovers of their own selves, covetous, and boasters. So many are proud and blasphemers.

Was there ever a time when there was more disobedience to parents? The children almost rule the parents instead of the parents ruling the children. And so many are unthankful. God is so good in giving us such rich blessings, but how many are truly thankful? Men are at the throats of others instead of on their knees in thanksgiving to God for his wonderful blessings to the children of Men; and unholiness is rampant.

Natural affection becomes more rare as the days come and go. And the trucebreakers! Nations and individuals look upon solemn agreements as mere "scraps of paper," and they are fierce.

And the really good are despised, and sometimes they are despised by those who even profess to be good. Traitors are in our midst on every hand. Brethren even betray brethren; and so many are heady and highminded; and the world, and many church members, are pleasure *crazy*. Fortunes are squandered on races and games. Men and boys and women and girls are physically and morally ruined by the so-called pleasures of the world. Some members of the church will stand in broiling sun or wintry blasts by the hour to witness some demoralizing game, and these same brethren will absent themselves from

prayer meeting, Lord's-day evening services, and complain at a sermon that goes beyond thirty minutes! And doubly complain if the sermon is aimed at modern sins and ungodliness! And again I say: We are living in perilous times.

"My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me. Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: save me for thy mercies' sake. Let me not be ashamed, O Lord; for I have called upon thee: let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave. Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous." (Ps. 31:15-18.)

## 50

### **Benedictions**

SOMETIMES the most impressive part of a letter is the closing phrase. One is more apt to pour out his heart in this than in the body of the letter. Some of the finest things in the New Testament are Paul's closing phrases in his letters to the churches and individuals. We want to direct your attention to a few of them, hoping that we may thus receive a blessing.

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began. But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: to God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen." (Rom. 16:24-27.)

A very common expression with Paul is "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." How concerned he was for the mercy of

God and divine favor to be bestowed upon all of God's children! How badly we all stand in need of this mercy and divine favor! Paul wanted these Roman brethren to be established in the faith. He wanted them to be stable, firm, and fixed. How we need those characteristics in these perilous times! Paul said this happy condition is brought about by preaching Jesus Christ. It is riot brought about by speculation and vain imaginations

"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen." (1 Cor. 16:22-24.)

From this we would at least gather that Paul did not have much use for false teachers, for the man who does not love the Lord Jesus Christ. Let them be cursed. That does not sound much like we ought to throw our arms around them and "love it out" with them! No, we cannot afford to "brother" those who will not "brother" our Lord Jesus Christ. The devil does not care how much folks talk about "loving" our Lord Jesus Christ if they will not respect his teaching. There is a lot of sentimental nonsense mistaken for love. Here is how we show our love for our Lord Jesus Christ: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." (John 14:21.)

"From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen." (Gal. 6:17, 18.)

Listen to the old soldier of Jesus Christ. He had marks on his body that he had received for Jesus' sake. "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned." (2 Cor. 11:24. 25.) He was not ashamed of these marks. "If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities" (2 Cor. 11:30.) Those "light afflictions" did not move that brave old soldier. Lord, give us more such.

"Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." (2 Cor. 13:11.)

"Be perfect." What does that mean? Here are some things that Webster says the word "perfect" means: "Having all the properties naturally belonging to it; complete; sound; right; faultless; righteous; sure; well-informed." Certainly a Christian should have all the properties naturally belonging to a Christian. He must be complete, sound, and right. It is not too much to expect him to be faultless and righteous. He ought to be sure. Most certainly he must be well-informed. When we have these qualities well developed, we come under the scriptural meaning of "perfect." Do not confuse this with so-called "sinless perfection." We do not attain unto "sinless perfection" here.

"Be of good comfort." What does it mean? "State or feeling of having relief, cheer, or consolation; freedom from pain, want, or anxiety." The Christian has great relief. He has been made free from past sins. He has been saved from his past sins; and if he continues faithful unto the end, he will be eternally saved. What could bring more cheer and comfort and consolation? The Christian has nothing about which to be anxious. God will take care of him in time and eternity.

"Be of one mind." What "mind" should we have? We must be of *one* mind. We must have the mind of Christ. We have an expression of his mind in the New Testament.

"Live in peace." God is a God of love and peace. "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Rom. 10:15.) My brother, do you "preach the gospel of peace"? or does division follow in the wake of your preaching? "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. 12:14.) Christians are peaceful. They live in peace.

"The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen." (Col. 4:18.)

How much is expressed by these three words, "Remember my bonds"! Do not forget the old prisoner who is a prisoner for Jesus' sake.

"O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen." (1 Tim. 6:20, 21.)

The old preacher wanted the young preacher to "keep that which is committed to thy trust." What a great charge to all preachers! It is important to avoid "profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called." We have so much "profane and vain babblings" in the world today. So many treat sacred things with contempt, disrespect, and irreverence. And what sins have been committed in the name of science! The Bible is not a scientific treatise, but it is not out of harmony with true science, but with "science falsely so called."

"Grace be with you" all.