

77

**SERMON
OUTLINES**

By Frank L. Cox

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**Firm Foundation Publishing House
Austin, Texas**

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J. C. WATKINS

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"DO NOT SIN AGAINST THE CHILD"

GEN. 42:22

The brethren were planning to kill Joseph, but Reuben was pleading, "Do not sin against the child." As it was in the days of just and gentle Joseph, so in our days the child is an object of unjust treatment, even by many who have the tenderest feeling toward him.

So, we shall consider:

I. *How we may sin against the child.*

1. By selling him into slavery. (Gen. 37:27, 28.) Joseph is not the only child that has been sold into slavery. Many are sold into economic slavery.

2. By spoiling him. (See 1 Sam. 3:13; 2:22-24.) He who indulges the child, paves the way to his sin and sorrow.

3. By provoking him. (Col. 3:21.) By continual fault-finding, the child's spirit may be broken. A broken spirit is fatal to youth.

4. By neglecting the means of his salvation. (Eph. 6:4.) He who allows the child to starve, sins against him.

5. By setting before him the wrong example. The child is weaving the garment of his own character; do not give him the wrong pattern. Like parent, like child.

II. *Why we should not sin against the child.*

1. As parents, we are responsible for the child's existence. We have no right to

bring him into the world. then sin against him.

2. Because he is a child. His dependence should be his protection. (See Lev. 19:14.)

3. By so doing, we may wreck his entire life. The mistakes we make with growing life are the most permanent mistakes, therefore our most serious mistakes.

4. To do so is to betray God, who entrusted the child unto us for safe keeping. (See Psalm 127:3; 1 Pet. 4:10.)

5. A sin against a child is a sin against Jesus, who identifies himself with the child. (Matt. 18:5.)

6. If we do so, we shall have the debt to pay—a debt of sorrow. (Prov. 10:1; 17:211.) The memory of the sin will torment us, even as it did the brethren of Joseph.

THE SACREDNESS OF HUMAN LIFE

Ex. 20:13

Human life is sacred—

I. *Because of its origin:* It came from God. (Gen. 2:7; Acts 17:28.)

II. *Because of its nature:* It was made in the image and in the likeness of God. (Gen. 1:26, 27.)

III. *Because of its capacity.* It can achieve with hand, with mind; it can construct. Man has never reached the limits of his capacity in the material world.

IV. *Because of its spiritual possibilities:* It can grow, it can serve, it can attain fellowship with God.

V. *Because of its destiny:* It can ascend upward to God and a happy eternity.

"A ROARING LION"

JUDG. 14:5-9; 1 PET. 5:8

Taking the experience of Samson as a basis of our lesson, we shall make the following observations.

I. *The journey.* He journeyed from Zorah to Timnah, a distance of about ten miles. Likewise, the journey of life is brief. (Psalm 39:5.) It is a continuous journey. We make it but once.

II. *The lion in the way.* Just as Samson met a lion on his journey, we meet lions on our journey—temptations which threaten both body and soul.

1. Like a lion, temptations are often unavoidable—couched by the roadside.

2. Like the lion, they are often sudden in appearance—"In a moment of time." (Luke 4:5.)

3. Like the young lion, they come in full strength. As the king of beasts in his youth.

III. *The conflict.* (Verse 6.) One of three courses was open to him: Flight, which would have meant certain death; non-resistance, a hopeless course; a conflict, with a ray of hope.

1. He chose the last course—he fought. Let us "stand," "wrestle," "fight." (Eph. 6:10, 12, 14; 1 Tim. 6:12.)

2. The Lord helped him. He is our helper. He encourages us with his presence. (Heb. 13:5.) He gives us grace. (2 Cor. 12:9.) He provides a way for our escape. (1 Cor. 10:13.) He supplies us with armor. (Eph. 6:11.)

3. Samson won with ease. Temptations are easily overcome if we trust in God and exert ourselves.

IV. *The honey.* (Verses 8, 9.) Samson was rewarded for his victory. There is always a reward for the winner: There is fruit (Rev. 2:7b); a crown (James 1:12); a throne (Rev. 3:21). Concerning the reward of Samson, we can say two things:

1. It was delayed—about a year after the victory. Between the seed-time and harvest, there may be a period of many days. (Gal. 6:9; 2 Tim. 4:7, 8.)

2. It was shared. When we overcome, those who know us and love us taste the sweetness of our victory.

Jesus met the roaring lion. (Matt. 4:1ff.) He was tempted in all points. He overcame in all points. With him we may conquer. (Heb. 2:18.)

BUILDING THE TEMPLE

1 KINGS 6; 1 COR. 3:16

Some pertinent moral and spiritual lessons may be learned from the building of Solomon's temple. Let us make a few observations.

I. *It rose in silence.*

1. All parts of the building were prepared before being brought to Mount Moriah. There they were fitted together without noise. (1 Kings 6:7.)

2. In the natural world God works in amazing silence. The powerful forces are the silent forces: the sun, the seed, the seasons.

3. Growth in Christian character is a silent process. Without the fussiness and

clamor of the world, the temple of character is erected.

II. *It was erected according to God's plan.*

1. Though Solomon was the wisest of kings, he was not allowed to build the temple without divine guidance. (1 Chron. 28:11, 19; Heb. 8:5.)

2. True character is built according to the divine plan. Without this, the wisest of men cannot successfully build. (Psa. 127:1; Prov. 9:1; 2 Pet. 1:5-7.)

III. *God dwelt therein.*

1. When the temple was finished, God took up his abode therein. (2 Chron. 7:1-5.) Within the holy of holies were visible symbols of his presence: The mercy seat; the ark of the covenant; the winged figures covering the ark.

2. When Jesus was born of Mary, God took up his abode in him. (Matt. 1:23; Jchn 1:1, 14; 1 Tim. 3:16.)

3. When a man becomes a Christian, God dwells in him. (Isa. 57:15; John 14:23; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20.) In the heart of the Christian dwell the mercy of God, the truth of God, the holiness of God.

HAPPY DAYS

PSA. 34:11-14

This is a precious portion of the Bible. As an indication of its eternal value, it is quoted from the New Testament (1 Pet. 3:10-12). Happiness is the grand subject.

Genuine happiness is that for which we sigh, for which the heart hungers. It does not come by accident, or unbidden. It must

be planted, watered, cultivated. "He that desireth life, and loveth many days" must do certain things, namely:

I. *Lend his ear*: "Hearken unto me: I will teach you," etc. The Master said, "Take heed therefore how ye hear." The first admonition lays emphasis on "what" you hear, the second on "how" you hear. We are to hear God's voice, the source of true knowledge; we are to hear his voice attentively, sympathetically.

II. *Rule his speech*: Oh the misery that is caused by careless, uncontrolled speech!

1. "Keep thy tongue from evil." The evils of the tongue are almost innumerable: The evil of falsehood; of vulgarity; of profanity; of fault-finding; of slander; of telling half-truth; of sowing discord. (Matt. 7:1; Prov. 6:16-19.)

2. "And thy lips from speaking guile." This is deceit, flattery, pretense, insincerity. "What a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive."

III. *Order his conduct*. Contentment and disorderly conduct do not go together. Note the admonition:

1. In the negative: "Depart from evil." "Evil" includes every transgression of the divine law.

2. In the positive: "And do good." God has so ordered things that happiness comes only to those who, like the Lord Jesus, go about doing good. (Acts 10:38.) Happiness comes only to those people who make others happy.

IV. *Promote peaceful relationships*: "Seek peace, and pursue it." (See Matt.

5:9; Rom. 14:19.) Peace comes not to those people who stand and wait for it; but to the people who seek for it in all earnestness, who pursue it. It is an elusive thing; those who find it must be alert, aggressive.

Happy days will come when we listen to the Lord, when we rule our tongues, when we order our conduct, when we give our lives to the noble work of making peace.

A SLANDER DETECTOR

PSA. 101:5

Evil tales are told. Some are false. Some are true. Whether false or true, the victims suffer untold injury. Should there not be some way for the hearer to separate the chaff from the wheat, to distinguish the false from the true, to the end that the divine law of justice may prevail? Should innocent people be branded as criminals? shunned as criminals? tortured as criminals? There is a way to detect a slanderous report, to unveil the slandermonger. When a tale-bearer comes to you with an evil report, casting a shadow over the good reputation of a neighbor, ask him to submit to a *slander detector*. This is not a mechanical device, but a series of pointed questions, namely:

I. *Were you an eye-witness of the evil deed of which you speak?*

II. *Are you willing to assume the responsibility for the tale you tell, committing the same to writing over your signature? Are you willing for this writing to be exhibited at any time, at any place?*

III. *Can you support the tale you tell by*

the evidence divinely required—the testimony of two or more witnesses? The testimony of only one witness is insufficient. (Deut. 19:15; John 8:17; 2 Cor. 13:1; 1 Tim. 5:19; Heb. 10:28.)

IV. *Do you not know that a man should be considered innocent until he is proven guilty? that he cannot be proven guilty in the absence of supporting evidence?*

V. *Are you willing to tell me the same tale in the presence of the person you accuse, giving him an opportunity to defend himself?*

VI. *Do you not know that the telling of an ugly tale is very much like the endorsing of a check? If it proves to be faulty, you are under obligation to supply the cash!*

VII. *Were you motivated by love, guided by "the golden rule" in accusing your neighbor? (Matt. 7:12; 22:37-39; Rom. 10:10.)*

VIII. *Have you earnestly endeavored to rescue the person you accuse? Have you prayed for him? lovingly admonished him? in gentleness tried to restore him? (Luke 19:10; Gal. 6:1, 2.)*

IX. *Do you not know that, under God, only the stainless has a right to hurl a stone? Are you stainless? (John 8:1-7.)*

By evading these questions, the tale-bearer reveals the weakness of his own character, and lack of confidence in his own tale. Neither the tale-bearer nor his tale is worthy of your confidence.

Slander, tale-bearing and such like are rooted in the soil of a sinful heart—a heart of envy, of jealousy, of sensuality. Not

infrequently men have been found guilty of the very crime of which they accuse their brethren. A David, whose offense is major, has no patience with a man whose offense is minor. (2 Sam. 12:1-9.) The man whose soul is poisoned by personal sin is harsh and hypercritical in his dealings with his fellows.

Men of noble hearts do not hurt—they heal; they do not inflict wounds—they bind up wounds; they do not destroy—they restore; they do not slander—they endeavor to save.

THE DIVINE PRESCRIPTION CASE

PSA. 107:20

Many are the ailments of the soul of man; but the great Physician has a remedy for every ailment. Let us approach him in faith and follow in fullness his directions. Note the prescription for the following:

Care: "In nothing be anxious," etc. (Phil. 4:6.)

Fear: "There is no fear in love," etc. (1 John 4:18.)

Greed: "Seek ye first his kingdom," etc. (Matt. 6:33.)

Pride: "Gird yourselves with humility," etc. (1 Pet. 5:5.)

Lust: "Walk by the Spirit," etc. (Gal. 5:15.)

Selfishness: "Whosoever would save his life shall lose it," etc. (Matt. 16:25.)

Heart trouble: "Believe in God, believe also in me." (John 14:1.)

Loneliness: "I will in no wise fail thee," etc. (Heb. 13:5; Matt. 28:20b.)

Despair: "Hope thou in God." (Psa. 42: 5.)

Coldness: "Keep yourselves in the love of God," etc. (Jude 21.)

Weakness: "They that wait for Jehovah shall renew their strength," etc. (Isa. 40: 31.)

Heaviness of guilt: "Repent ye, and be baptized . . . If we walk in the light." (Acts 2:38; 1 John 1:7.)

THE HIDDEN WORD

PSA. 119:11

Let us ask:

I. *What is the thing hidden?* "Thy word." It is the word of God that liveth and abideth. (1 Pet. 1:23.) It is a treasure worth hiding. No thief can steal it, no moth corrupt it. It enriches the life of every man who hides it, keeps it.

II. *Where is the hiding place?* "In my heart." The seat of affections, the center of the moral being, the source of influence that sways the career, that determines the destiny. This is the right place to hide the word. (Prov. 4:23; Mark 7:21-23.)

III. *What is my reason for hiding it there?* That I might have a rich fund of ideas to talk about, to exhibit before my fellows? That I might be able to confound in argument all my opposers and silence them? That I might make a show of my superiority, thus feeding my pride? The psalmist cared for none of these things. He had a horror of sin; he knew the terror of it; he knew that the greatest safeguard against sin was the word of God. So, he

said, "That I might not sin against thee." It was the word of God in the heart of the Son of God that saved him from sin. (Matt. 4:1-11.)

HOW TO OVERCOME SPIRITUAL DEPRESSION

PSA. 119:25-32

I. *By scriptural quickening*: "Quicken thou me according to thy word." (Verse 25.)

II. *By sincerely stating our case to the Lord*: "I have declared my ways," etc. (Verse 26.)

III. *By seeking divine instruction*: "Teach me . . . make me to understand." (Verses 26, 27.)

IV. *By spiritual strengthening*: "Strengthen thou me according to thy word." (Verse 28.)

V. *By separation from evil*: "Remove from me the way of falsehood." (Verse 29.)

VI. *By walking the way of unwavering trust*: "I have chosen the way of faithfulness," etc. (Verse 30.)

VII. *By cleaving to the right*: "I cleave unto thy testimonies," etc. (Verse 31.)

VIII. *By seriously purposing to obey*: "I will run the way of thy commandments," etc. (Verse 32.)

THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

PSA. 122:1

This beautiful little Psalm, from which our text is lifted, is ascribed to David, the

sweet singer of Israel. The grand theme is the house of the Lord. Let us note:

I. *The blessed place*: "The house of the Lord." In this particular instance, before the temple was erected, the house of the Lord was the city of Jerusalem. Later, the temple became to the devout souls of Israel the house of the Lord. And still later, in the Christian era, the church became the house of the Lord. (1 Pet. 2:5.) The assembly of the saints, no matter where they assemble, is the house of the Lord.

II. *The proposal*: "Let us go unto the house of the Lord." It is interesting to study the approach of the proposers:

1. They did not say, "It is your duty to go," though a duty it was. They did not say, "We will send you," as though men should be driven to worship.

2. The proposers were gentle and persuasive in their manner: "*Let us go*," etc. Also, they were willing and ready to go with the psalmist: "*Let us go*," etc.

3. Our efforts to help others serve the Lord are more effective when we set the example, show a willingness to assist, make use of persuasive words. (Note some of the "let us" passages: Rom. 14:13, 19; Gal. 6:9, 10; Heb. 4:1, 14-16; 6:1; 10:22-25; 12:1.)

III. *The reaction to the proposal*.

1. The psalmist did not say, "I was offended when he said," etc. He did not make excuse when the proposal came.

2. But his heart welled up with gladness and genuine delight: "I was glad," etc.

He was ready to join the happy throng of godly people on their way.

3. The things that gladden our hearts reveal the kind of people we are. (Note some of the "glad" passages: Psa. 126:3; Prov. 10:1; Acts 11:23; 21:17; 2 Cor. 12:15.)

Let there be more people to say, "Let us go unto the house of the Lord." (Heb. 10:24, 26.) And let there be more people to say, "I was glad when they said unto me," etc.

OUR LITTLE TEACHERS

PROV. 30:24-28

Man is wise—the wisest of God's creatures. Yet, he can learn great lessons from creatures below him. May we be humble enough to accept a lesson of life from any source. The "four things" of our text are "little but wise." Each has a lesson to present. (Verse 24.)

I. *The ants.* (Verse 25.)

1. From them we learn the lesson of industry and foresight. "They provide their food." This is industry. "In the summer." This is foresight. They know the time of their opportunity and make the most of it.

2. Every person has his summer. In a special way is youth the summer of life. During the summer of life, preparations should be made for the winter of maturity, of death, of eternity. (See Prov. 6:6; John 9:4; Jer. 8:20; Matt. 25:1-13.)

II. *The conies.* Verse 26.)

1. Concerning these little creatures two things are said: They are "a feeble folk," and "they make their houses in the rocks."

Knowing their weakness, they do not trust in themselves. When danger threatens, they flee to a refuge. Knowing their infirmities, they dwell in a strong house.

2. A sense of our own weakness should drive us to a rock that is higher and stronger for shelter. (Psa. 46:1; Matt. 7: 24-27.)

III. *The locusts.* (Verse 27.)

1. They have no king, but each one of them has a bit of kingliness in himself. Though small and weak, they accomplish wonders when they work together! (See Joel 2:2-11.)

2. How very weak are we when we stand alone! But we can work wonders when we work together. (Ex. 17:8ff; 2 Cor. 6:1.)

IV. *The lizard.* (Verse 28.)

1. This little creature finds its way into Eastern homes, poor and rich. By determination and continued effort, they reach the desired place.

2. From the lizard we learn the lesson of perseverance. From a study of the Bible, we learn what is right. Having learned what is right, we should never give up until the task is accomplished—until we reach the palace of the King. (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 15:58; John 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 5:16, 17.)

THE HIGH AND HOLY ONE

ISA. 57:15

There are three questions we usually ask concerning a person with whom we are not so well acquainted: What is his name? Where does he dwell? And what is his

work or occupation? In the language of the text we have replies to the questions if made concerning the Supreme Being.

I. *What is his name?* His "name is Holy." He is infinitely above the highest of beings, human or angelic. In the hearts and lives of the best of people, there is some evil; but not so with God. (1 Sam. 2:2.) Unto him holiness of character is ascribed. (Isa. 6:1-5.)

II. *Where does he dwell?*

1. He "inhabiteth eternity." He has always been. He is ever to be. His name is found in the first chapter and the last chapter of the Bible. Not even one moment of the eternal ages has been without or will be without this Inhabitant.

2. "In the high and holy place." This is heaven, the habitation of his throne. (Psa. 123:1.) We pray, "Our Father who art in heaven."

3. "In a contrite and humble spirit." He is so great as to fill immensity, yet so condescending as to dwell in a penitent soul. Like the soul of the prodigal (Luke 15), of Simon Peter (Luke 22:61, 62), of the publican (Luke 18:9-14). God is never satisfied until he finds a home in the human soul. There is only one place where he does not dwell—in the heart of the proud, the impenitent, the self-righteous.

III. *What is his work or occupation?* He revives "the spirit of the humble" and "the heart of the contrite." (Luke 15:20-24.) When he enters a broken heart, he begins to revive it, to refresh it, to comfort it. (See Psa. 40:1-3; Matt. 11:28-30.)

COMFORT

ISA. 66:13

Let us consider:

I. *The world's great need of comfort.* Sorrow is universal: The sorrow of sin, of shame, of disappointment, of sickness, of bereavement. Hearts are broken. Bodies are broken.

II. *Motherly comfort:* "As one whom his mother comforteth." When in sorrow and trouble, the child instinctively turns to mother for comfort. The child is not disappointed. Mother understands, sympathizes, heals.

III. *The motherly comfort of God:* "So will I comfort you." God understands, comforts, binds up the broken heart. This is done—

1. Through the Lord Jesus. He was and is a comforter. (John 11:17ff; 2 Thess. 2:16, 17.)

2. Through the Holy Spirit—"another comforter." (John 14:16; Acts 9:31.)

3. Through the Scriptures. (Rom. 15:4.)

4. Through his people. (1 Thess. 4:18; 5:11, 14.)

IV. *The place where God comforts:* "In Jerusalem," the city of God, the place where God and his people met. Jerusalem is a symbol of God's people, his family, his church. In the family of God we find this comfort. He can only comfort those people who have receptive hearts. (Psa. 34:18; Isa. 57:15; Matt. 5:4.)

A MAN

JER. 5:1

This passage points out:

I. *The amazing dearth of men:* "Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem," etc. A man was difficult to find. Diogenes, a cynic of ancient Greece, having lighted a lantern, ranged the streets peering about as if searching for something. Being asked what he was looking for, he replied, "A man, an honest man." God's people have always been few in number. (Matt. 7:13, 14.) Yet, comes the happy thought that God and one man are on the side of right and ultimate triumph.

II. *The qualities of a man:*

1. He "doeth justly." He is not a swindler, or an extortioner, or an oppressor. (Mic. 6:8; Matt. 7:12.)

2. He "seeketh truth." He loves the truth, believes the truth, abides by the truth. By the truth he is made free. (John 8:31, 32.)

III. *The value of one man:* "And I will pardon her," that is, the city of Jerusalem. God would spare Sodom for "ten righteous." (Gen. 18.) He would spare Jerusalem for one. One man with pure character, will avert woe—in the family, in the church, in the community. Oh the power of one holy person! One prayerful man may call down divine mercy on many. One zealous Christian can set fire to the hearts of many. We see, also, in the lesson the mercy of God—offering to pardon a large city for the sake of one righteous man. The power of one good man! The infinite

mercy of God! Let these two personalities be remembered.

CHANGE OF HEART

EZEK. 18:31, 32

Let us ask—

I. *What is the heart?* The entire intellectual, moral and spiritual being of man. It includes—

1. The intellect. The heart thinks (Gen. 6:5); understands (Prov. 8:5); believes (Rom. 10:10.)

2. The emotions. The heart desires (Rom. 10:1); loves (Matt. 22:37); trusts (Prov. 3:5.)

3. The will. The heart intends (Heb. 4:12); purposes (2 Cor. 9:7); obeys (Rom. 6:17).

II. *What is the condition of the heart?*

1. In early life, it is pure (Matt. 18:2; 19:14.) (Illustrate. Exhibit a glass of clear water, representing the innocence of childhood.)

2. When sin enters, the heart is poisoned. (Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:23; 2 Cor. 4:4.) The intellect, the emotions, the will, all are corrupted. (Illustrate. Into the glass of pure water pour a solution of *phenolphthalein*, representing temptation; then a solution of *sodium carbonate*; this turns the water red, representing the effect of sin upon the heart.)

3. Therefore, the heart needs to be changed. Without a change of heart, there can be no salvation. (Matt. 5:8; John 3:7; text.)

III. *What does the change of heart involve?* The change of every faculty of the heart.

1. The change of intellect, or understanding with reference to sin. Blind eyes need to be opened. (Acts 26:18.)

2. The change of the affections. (Matt. 6:21; 22:37.) The heart must hate sin and love righteousness.

3. The change of the will. The heart must yield to Jesus, instead of sin and Satan. (See Acts 22:10a—before, it was "what I am going to do." Now, "what wilt thou have me do?") This is repentance. (Matt. 21:28, 29.)

IV. *What is the power that changes the heart?*

1. The heart has no power to change itself. (Jer. 13:23.) An outside power must enter and operate, driving out the poison, changing the heart's color. (Illustrate. The red water has no power to change itself. It is purified by something that is poured into it, namely, a solution of *tartaric acid*.)

2. God, who made the heart, can and does change the heart. (Isa. 1:18.) What is God's power or solution?

3. God's power is in his word (John 15:3; 17:17; Rom. 1:16.) Does not the Spirit change hearts? Yes, through the agency of the word. (Eph. 6:17b.)

4. The heart that accepts the word by faith is changed, purified, made new. (Acts 15:9; Gal. 5:6; 1 Pet. 1:23.) The man is saved and gets visions of God.

ROBBING GOD

MAL. 3:7-12

This language teaches:

I. *That man should honor the Lord with his substance.* (See Prov. 3:9; Lev. 27:33; 1 Cor. 16:1, 2.) This is right for several reasons, namely: We belong to God (1 Cor. 6:19, 20); our substance belongs to him (1 Cor. 10:26); he never ceases to give to us (Jas. 1:17); by giving, we deliver ourselves from hurtful snares. (See Mark 10:23; Luke 12:16; Jas. 5:1.)

II. *That the man who withholds his substance from the Lord's treasury robs the Lord.* (Verses 7, 8) The divine ownership of all things is clearly taught in the Bible. The man who withholds his substance is guilty of the sin of misappropriation.

III. *That the man who robs God brings upon himself a curse.* (Verse 9) He who takes that which belongs to God and uses it to pamper his flesh "shall reap corruption." (Gal. 6:6-10.)

IV. *That the man who honors the Lord with his substance will be honored by the Lord.* (Verses 10-12.) (See 1 Sam. 2:30b.)

1. In a positive manner. (Verse 10.) Blessings will flow like pouring rain. (See Luke 6:38; Acts 20:35; 2 Cor. 9:8ff.)

2. In a negative manner. (Verse 11.) Evil will be withheld.

3. The blessings will be so pronounced that others shall see and recognize them. (Verse 12.)

Are you robbing God of your time? of your talent? of your strength? of your

means? How horrible the crime of robbing men! How very horrible the crime of robbing God! And how very tragic the thought, after robbing God, to face him in judgment!

MARKS OF GOD'S PEOPLE

MAL. 3:16

According to this verse from an Old Testament prophet, God's children have three marks, or distinguishing characteristics, namely:

I. *They fear the Lord.* They hold his name, they speak his name with reverential awe. They tremble at his word. (Psa. 111: 9b.)

II. *They speak one to another.* This implies fellowship, cooperation, mutual helpfulness. (See Heb. 10:24, 25; 2 Cor. 6:1; Phil. 4:3.) Those professed Christians who are not on speaking terms, who do not work together, do not bear the marks of God's true children.

III. *They think on his name.* This implies meditation, devout worship. Their thoughts are fixed on him. (See Psa. 1:1, 2; 27:14; 46:10; 2 Tim. 2:15.)

Note the blessings that fall upon them: "Jehovah hearkened, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared Jehovah, and that thought on his name." God does not forget his people. (See Phil. 5:3; Heb. 6:10.)

THE SERVICE WE SHOULD RENDER

MATT. 4:10

There is no room for compromise, no, not for a moment. God and God alone has

the rightful claim on man—his body, his affections, his reason, his will. Man should worship the Father in spirit and truth. (John 4:24.) Neither our worship nor our service should be divided between God and the devil. Our service to God should be—

S-incere. (Josh. 24:14.)

E-nergetic. (Eccl. 9:10.)

R-everential. (Col. 3:22-24.)

V-oluntary. (Col. 3:23.)

I-n Jesus' name. (Col. 3:17.)

C-ontinual. (Luke 9:23.)

E-fficient. (2 Tim. 2:15.)

THE GOLDEN RULE

MATT. 7:12

I. *The golden rule in thought:* Whatsoever ye would that men should *think* about you, even so *think* ye also about them.

II. *The golden rule in word:* Whatsoever ye would that men should *say* about you, even *say* ye also about them.

III. *The golden rule in deed:* "Whatsoever ye would that men should *do* unto you, even *do* ye also unto them."

WHAT IS PRAYER?

MATT. 9:37, 38

Prayer is the recognition of certain fundamental facts, namely:

I. *The lordship (ownership) of God.* "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest," etc.

II. *The power (ability) of God to bring things to pass.* To "send forth laborers," etc.

III. *The providence (care) of God.* The

admonition to pray implies God's willingness to listen, to hear man's cries and pleadings. God is the heavenly Father; the righteous are God's children.

IV. *The weakness (dependence) of man.* When man prays to God, he says in effect: "I am weak. I am obliged to look to a higher power." He who never prays is boastful. He says in effect: "I am strong. I do not need help. I can stand alone."

THE GOOD CONFESSION

MATT. 10:32, 33

C-hrist—the person we should confess. (Matt. 10:32.)

O-ral by nature—"with the mouth." (Rom. 10:10.)

N-eutral, we cannot be. (Matt. 12:30.)

F-ollowed by immerson. (Acts 8:36-38.)

E-xpecting to be confessed. (Matt. 10:32b; 16:16, 17.)

S-incerity is divinely required. (Josh. 24:14; Col. 3:23.)

S-alvation, the end in view. (Rom. 10:10; Matt. 10:33.)

I-nfluencing others. The power of an example!

O-penly made. "Before men," said the Savior.

N-ever renounce him. (Rev. 2:10b; 2 Cor. 5:10.)

THE GREAT CONFESSION

MATT. 10:32, 33

Let us ask:

I. *Whom should we confess?* Not a dogma, not a religious party, but a person.

"Confess me," said Jesus. (Matt. 16:13-17; 2 Tim. 1:12.)

II. *Before whom should we confess him?*
"Before men," said the Master. Before good men that their strength in him may be strengthened. Before evil men that their unbelief may be shaken.

III. *How should we confess him?*

1. With mouth. (Rom. 10:10.) Many acknowledge the moral principles he taught, but refuse to confess him. They confess the teaching, but deny the Teacher.

2. With life. The oral confession is vain unless the life is obedient. Some confess with lips, but deny with conduct. (Luke 6:46.)

IV. *Why should we confess Christ?*

1. He is our greatest benefactor. The recipient should gratefully acknowledge the gracious Giver. (See Matt. 10:29-31.) "Every one therefore," etc.

2. That we may be confessed. The confessor of Christ will be confessed by Christ. (See Matt. 16:17a; Rom. 10:10.)

3. He who denies the Lord (i.e., fails to confess him) will be denied by the Lord. (See Luke 9:26.)

A SOWER

MATT. 13:1-9, 18-23

In this well known parable spoken by the Master by the sea, the teacher is presented under the figure of a sower—one who sows or plants precious seed.

Let us ask:

I. *What does he sow?*

1. Knowing that seed produce after their kind, the wise sower will sow only the right kind of seed.

2. Knowing the far-reaching influence of the doctrine he teaches, the wise teacher will teach only the pure word of God, which is the seed of the kingdom. (Luke 8:11.)

II. *Where does he sow?* Wherever he finds an open field, receptive hearts. The opportunity at hand should receive prime consideration. In all of his work as a teacher, Jesus always used the opportunity immediately before him.

III. *How does he sow?*

1. Impartially. He slights or neglects no soils. The wayside, the rocky ground, the thorny ground, the good ground, all are covered. Not a soul is neglected or slighted. Every kind of hearer is given an opportunity to receive the word.

2. Patiently. In spite of opposition and obstacles and indifference, he continues his work. He murmurs not. He never gives up. He sows at every step, until the field is covered, until the close of day.

3. Hopefully. He has faith in the seed he sows. He does not expect a harvest as soon as he sows. He knows there must be a waiting period, but he believes that a golden harvest will follow the sowing, just as the day follows the night. (See Isa. 55: 10, 11.)

4. Cheerfully. He knows that he is doing God's work, that a rich reward will come. So, he goes forth with a song. How very cheerful is the sower! He has a morning face—a face radiant with expectation.

"YOUR EYES"

MATT. 13:16

The eye is always looking, looking, looking. The eye usually sees what it wants to see. What it wants to see is an index to its character. "The eye is the window of the soul."

Let us consider:

I. *The evil eye.* (Mark 7:22.) The evil eye looks for evil things. It looks for evil because it is evil. Because it is so intent on finding evil, it is blind to much that is good.

1. The envious-eye. (Matt. 20:15.)
2. The adulterous-eye. (Matt. 5:27, 28; 2 Sam. 11:2; Job 24:14; 2 Pet. 2:14.)
3. The critical-eye. (Matt. 7:3, 4.)
4. The covetous eye. (Prov. 28:22; Acts 8:18, 19.)
5. The eye of prejudice. (Acts 28:27.)

II. *The good eye.* (Text.) The good eye looks for good things. It looks for good things because it is good. Because it is so intent on seeing good, it is blind to much that is evil.

1. The eye of faith. (Heb. 12:2.)
2. The compassionate-eye. (Luke 10:33; 15:20.)
3. The tearful or sympathetic-eye. (Luke 19:41; John 11:35.)
4. The diligent-eye. (Matt. 26:41; Heb. 12:15.)
5. The hopeful-eye. (Tit. 2:14; 2 Pet. 3:12; Heb. 11:10.)

What the eye sees determines our course

of life—we move toward the object of our sight. Our course determines our destination.

“YOUR EARS”

MATT. 13:16

Let us learn:

I. *That the ear should hear.* “He that hath an ear, let him hear.” When our faculties and powers are used as intended, God’s will is done.

II. *That the ear should take heed what it hears.* Numerous voices are speaking unto man. He should not hear them all. He cannot hear them all. A selection must be made. Happy is the man who hears “what the Spirit says.” (Matt. 17:5; Mark 4:24; 1 Tim. 4:1.)

III. *That the ear should take heed how it hears.* Many people take heed how the speaker speaks; they should take heed how they hear. (Luke 8:18.) They should hear—

1. Discerningly. (1 John 4:1; Matt. 7:15, 16a.)

2. Candidly. Prejudice is blinding. (Acts 17:11a; Matt. 13:15.)

3. Frequently. (Psa. 1:1, 2; Acts 17:11.)

4. Believingly. (Heb. 4:2.)

5. Submissively. (Acts 10:35.)

IV. *That the ear is blessed in hearing.* (Mark 4:24, 25.) The more we listen, the more we can hear. The ear of the musician can hear melodies which the untrained ear cannot hear. By hearing aright, the

finer qualities of the soul are developed. (Rom. 10:17; Rev. 1:3.)

V. *That a failure or refusal to hear dulls the sense of hearing.* The powers or faculties we neglect to use are gradually and surely taken from us. The eye that dwells in darkness loses the power to see. The finger that never touches will lose the power to feel. The ear that is listless to God's voice will lose the power of appreciation, or understanding. (Mark 4:24, 25.)

THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF THE CHURCH

MATT. 16:18

I. If you desire forgiveness of your sins, this unspeakable blessing may be found in the body of Christ which is the church. (Eph. 1:7, 22, 23.)

II. If you are looking for wholesome society, remember that the church is God's society—not a perfect people, but the best people on earth.

III. If you desire to look up to your Creator and Preserver in worship and adoration, remember that the church assembles with regularity in order that worshipful souls may find an avenue of expression.

IV. If, in your sympathetic soul, there is an urge to speak helpful words and render noble deeds in service to humanity, remember that the church is the proper sphere for your activities. "Whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." (Col. 3:

17.) Christ is the head of the church. Col. 1:18.)

V. If you are interested in your soul's eternal security, you can find salvation in the church: for Christ is "the savior of the body." (Eph. 5:23.)

THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

MATT. 16:24

The greatest of privileges belong to Christ's disciple; but in order to be his disciple and to enjoy these privileges a price must be paid. What is that price?

I. *Self-repression*: "Let him deny himself," said Jesus. This does not mean that one should torture his body or refuse life's joys, but to curb the lower self, to exercise self-restraint.

1. Of what? Ungodliness and worldly lusts. (Tit. 2:11, 12.)

2. Why? This is not a heartless restraint imposed by an arbitrary power. Self-denial is a law of development; he who disregards it does not grow. (1 Cor. 9:25.) It is a law of protection; he who ignores it does injury to his health. (1 Cor. 9:27.) The Lord denies us of sin for the same reason that a mother denies the child of poison.

II. *Self-sacrifice*: "And take up his cross." There are three words which express the darker experiences of life, namely:

1. "Burden"—the inevitable cares and strain of daily life.

2. "Thorn"—a weakness or infirmity, mental or physical, which makes life mis-

erable and duty difficult. (2 Cor. 12:7-10.)

3. "Cross"—the pain we voluntarily suffer on behalf of others. Jesus' cross meant that. (2 Cor. 11:24-28.) Man must bear his burden and endure his thorn, but the cross may be escaped. But without the cross, there is no crown.

III. *Self-expression*: "And follow me," said Jesus. The life of a Christian is not only repression, but also expression; not only restraint, but also activity. It is the cultivation of the higher self. Let us ask—

1. How? We follow him "by faith." (2 Cor. 5:7; 1 Pet. 2:21-23.)

2. Why? We cannot direct our own course. (Jer. 10:23.) He is the way, the truth, and the life. (John 14:6.)

3. Whither? To the Father's house. (John 14:1-3.)

Let us reverse our text and consider the cost of not following him: The joy of obedience (Acts 8:39); the sense of forgiveness (Heb. 8:12); the privilege of prayer (John 15:7); the welcome plaudit (Matt. 25:21). It costs a great deal less to follow him than not to follow him. (Matt. 10:35; 2 Tim. 2:12; 2 Pet. 2:1.)

CONCERNING A PERSONAL GRIEVANCE

MATT. 18:15-20

The nature of the sin contemplated: A private sin—between brother and brother; it is not a strife where both are equally guilty—the fault is all on one side.

When your brother sinned against you, a fine relationship was strained or broken. If possible, this relationship should be re-

stored, an adjustment should be made. But how are you to adjust the matter?

By overlooking the trespass? By avoiding your brother? By withdrawing from him or the church? By retaliation? Each of these questions should be answered in the negative.

The Master's method is the only true one. He has outlined for you four steps to take.

I. "*Go, show him his fault between thee and him alone.*" As strange as it may seem, the Master places the offended brother on the initiative.

1. "Go" to him. Do not wait for him to come to you with an apology.

2. "Show him his fault." Do not merely tell him that you are hurt, but that he has hurt himself. (The offender hurts himself more severely than he hurts the offended.) Your object is to save him, not merely to satisfy your feelings. (See Gal. 6:1, 2.)

3. "Between thee and him alone." Let him be the first to hear your complaint.

4. "If he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother"—for thyself, for the Lord. (Jas. 5:19, 20.)

5. He may not hear you. "If he hear thee not," there is a second step.

II. "*Take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established.*" Why take "one or two more"? To observe the spirit you and your brother manifest. To witness the justice of your claim—the offense may be more fancied than real. If they find him in error, to bring him to repentance. But he may not hear them. "If he refuse to hear them," there is a third step.

III. "*Tell it to the church.*" This is the group of disciples with whom you and your brother meet. The church should hear the case and place the blame. If the church decide that he is guilty, it should call him to repentance. If he refuse to hear the church, there is but one more step to take.

IV. "*Let him be unto thee as a Gentile and a publican.*" The Jews had no religious dealings with the Gentiles and publicans. So, you should withdraw fellowship from the brother who sinned against you. The decision of the church in the matter is final—it is bound or upheld in heaven. (Verse 18.)

When your brother sins against you, do you follow your own plan in an effort to adjust the matter, or do you follow the Lord's plan? His plan is safest and best.

CLOSED DOORS

MATT. 25:15

I. *The door that shuts the Lord in*—the door of prayer. (Matt. 6:6.) Literally, this means to pray behind closed doors. This does not forbid prayer in the open, or encourage cowardice. It does forbid prayer for display. When we pray we should shut out interferences and interruptions, placing all thoughts upon God. Jesus said: "Pray to the Father."

II. *The door that shuts the Lord out*—the door of lukewarmness, of indifference. (Rev. 3:20.) Note the context. Christ had been on the inside, but now is on the outside. He had been crowded out by the lukewarmness of the Laodicean Christians.

But he knocks, seeking admittance again. Has he been crowded out of your heart by lukewarmness? Why not admit him and commune with him?

III. *The door that shuts man in*—the door of preparation. God shut Noah and his family in, i.e., made them secure from the ravages of the flood, because they were prepared. (Gen. 7:16.) The Lord shut the door for the five wise virgins—the virgins who were on the inside by reason of their preparation—against the dangers and darkness of the outside. (Matt. 25:10.)

IV. *The door that shuts man out*—the door of negligence, or lack of preparation. The same door that shut Noah and his family in, also shut the wicked world out. And the same door that shut the wise virgins in, also shut the foolish virgins out. (Matt. 25:11; see also Luke 13:25.)

OPPORTUNITIES

MATT. 25:14-40

A talent was a weight of money used in ancient Greece and Rome; it varied in value at different times and in different countries. In the parable before us, it represents an opportunity.

We note:

I. *Opportunities given.* (Verses 14, 15.) The Lord is the giver of opportunities—opportunities to evangelize (2 Cor. 2:12), opportunities to serve, opportunities to develop our powers, opportunities to advance toward the house of joy.

II. *Opportunities used.* (Verses 16-23.)

Opportunities used bring heaven's commendation. Opportunities used are multiplied. Opportunities used admit men into the house of joy.

III. *An opportunity buried.* (Verses 24-30.) An opportunity buried is lost—that which men do not use is taken from them. An opportunity buried brings a curse—the dismal darkness of the outside.

BAPTISMS OF THE BIBLE

MATT. 28:19

The word "baptism" means a dipping, a plunging, an immersion. A number of baptisms are mentioned in the Bible. Let us open the sacred Volume and take note of them.

I. *The baptism of Moses.* (1 Cor. 10:1, 2a.)

II. *The baptism of John.* (Matt. 3:5, 6.)

III. *The baptism of suffering.* (Luke 12:50; Mark 10:35-39; Acts 12:2.)

IV. *The baptism of the Holy Spirit.* (Matt. 3:11.)

V. *The baptism of fire.* (Matt. 3:11, 12.)

VI. *The baptism of the great commission.* (Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 2:38.)

THE INNER CIRCLE

MARK 5:37

There were three circles of Jesus' friends: The outer circle, including the seventy, Mary, Martha, Lazarus and others; the middle circle, including the twelve;

the inner circle, including Peter, James and John. (Mark 5:35ff; 9:2ff; Matt. 26:36ff.)

Among the friends of Christ in our day there are three circles. Every disciple is a member of one of the circles. Our present interest is in the members of the inner circle.

Let us ask:

I. *Who are they?*

1. Those who, like Peter and James and John, have left all to follow. (Matt. 16:24.)

2. Those who, like the trio, have given the most diligent heed to his doctrine.

3. Those who, like the trio, have come to a deeper understanding of the Master's mission and work.

4. Those who, like them, are sympathetic with the plans and purposes of the Lord.

II. *What are their privileges?*

1. Like the three, they go with him into the inner chamber and see a demonstration of his power—his spiritual power.

2. Like the three, they go with him to a mountain apart to pray and behold the glory of God.

3. Like the three, they go into the garden of sorrow—they are granted the honor of suffering with him and for him. (Phil. 1:29.)

III. *What do they become?* By reason of the intimate relationship those who are unstable in character become adamant against the forces of evil (John 1:42), and

the "sons of thunder" become sons of love and compassion.

During the earthly ministry of our Lord the inner circle was small. It is small now. Not that the Lord desires that it be so: rather he is longing that it may include all humanity; but it is small because his people are satisfied with small spiritual attainments. Let us walk with him and talk with him to the end that we may become members of the inner circle. In every thing let us submit to his will.

"Have you heard the voice of Jesus
Whisper, I have chosen you?
Does he tell you in communion
What he wishes you to do?"

"Are you in the inner circle?
Have you heard the Master's call?
Have you given your life to Jesus?
Is he your all in all?"

THE TRAGEDY OF SIN

MARK 7:20-23

We shall study:

I. *The meaning of it.*

1. It is missing the mark—God's target.
2. It is a fall—a drop from a higher position. (Acts 1:25.)
3. It is iniquity—a zigzag course, a departure from the straight line.
4. It is transgression—crossing God's boundary. (1 John 3:4.)
5. It is unrighteousness—an ungodly way of living. (1 John 5:17.)
6. It is a failure to do good. (Jas. 4:17.)

II. *Three kinds of sins.*

1. The sin of ignorance. Saul of Tarsus (1 Tim. 1:13). The Roman soldiers (Luke 23:24).

2. The sin of weakness. The sinner has no rebellion in his soul; he sins through the weakness of the flesh. David (2 Sam. 11).

3. The sin of presumption. This is the sin of pride, of arrogance. The sinner has the spirit of rebellion in his heart. He has no reverence for God or his holy law. (Psa. 19:13.)

III. *What sin does:* It "defileth the man." (Text.) Sinful thoughts defile the mind; sinful words defile the lips; sinful looks defile the eye; sinful deeds defile the members of the body. The body is God's temple; so, when we sin we defile God's temple. (1 Cor. 4:16, 17.)

IV. *Salvation from it.*

1. God is willing to save, yea, anxious to save. (1 Tim. 2:4.)

2. God is able to save. (Heb. 7:25; 2:18.)

3. God has the saving remedy. (Rom. 1:16; Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 16:30-33.)

NEAR THE KINGDOM

MARK 12:28-34

The apostle Peter spoke of those people who were "afar off" (Acts 2:39)—the Gentiles, or those people who knew not God, God's Son, God's word. In the text the Savior spoke of a scribe who was near the kingdom. What kind of a man was he? What were his traits?

I. *He believed in God.* (Heb. 11:6.)

1. In the lordship of God: "The Lord cur God." (Acts 17:24; 1 Cor. 10:26.)

2. In the oneness of God: "The Lord is one." (Acts 17:23.)

II. *He knew his duty to God.*

1. To love him affectionately: "With all thy heart."

2. To love him fervently: "With all thy soul."

3. To love him intelligently: "With all thy mind."

4. To love him energetically: "With all thy strength."

III. *He knew his duty to man:* "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself..

1. Loving himself, a man will do himself no injury; he will work that which is good for himself—his body, his character, his good name.

2. Loving his neighbor as he loves himself, he will do his neighbor no injury, he will work that which is good to his neighbor. (Rom. 13:8-10.)

IV. *He possessed a proper sense of spiritual values.* He did not misplace the emphasis.

1. He placed love to God first.

2. He placed love to man second.

3. He placed moral and spiritual values above the ritual. (Verse 33.)

Because he possessed these four traits, Jesus said unto him, "Thou art not far from the kingdom." Near the kingdom, but not in it. How pathetic to be near the

kingdom but not in it, to perish at the door, to be almost persuaded but to fail. (Acts 26:28.) The story is told of a man who ceased to dig for gold when one more stroke of the pick would have brought the ore. While proper understanding of divine things brings men to the door, obedience is necessary to bring them into the kingdom. (Matt. 7:21; John 3:3-5; Heb. 5:8, 9.)

BAPTISM

MARK 16:15, 16

B-aptism, a divine command. (Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 10:48.)

A-ssociated with the names of the Holy Three. (Matt. 28:19.)

P-receded by repentance. (Acts 2:38.)

T-eaching should follow. (Matt. 28:20.)

I-mmersion—a burial and a resurrection. (Rom. 6:1-4.)

S-alvation, the grand end in view. (Acts 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21.)

M-embership in Christ's body, a result. (Gal. 3:26, 27.)

THE DAYSPRING

LUKE 1:77-79

This is the language of Zacharias, as he spoke concerning the birth of the Lord Jesus. It is suggestive of two contrasting pictures.

One is a picture of gloom—"darkness and shadow of death." This darkness is not the cool, clear, calm twilight of a summer eve, but the midnight darkness of a winter season—cold, clammy, dreadful. With such a darkness we associate ignorance, danger, despair, and death. This

represents the condition of the race before Jesus was born, or the state of any man who has not embraced the gospel of the Son of God.

The other is a picture of cheerfulness—"the dayspring from on high shall visit us," etc. The dayspring is the spring of the day, the first appearance of the day, the dawn of early morning. The coming of Christ is the dayspring of mankind. (See Mal. 4:2; Matt. 4:16; John 1:9; 8:12; Rev. 22:16.)

Let us ask:

I. *Whence came he?* "From on high." From "the tender mercies of God." As the soft water flows over granite, so the tenderest mercies come from God, the strongest character.

II. *How came he?* Not in a flash of glory, blinding tender eyes, as he later appeared to John on Patmos. (Rev. 1:12-18.) He came into the world of humanity as the sun comes forth—tenderly, gradually. Even the most sensitive eye can bear to look upon the rising sun. Jesus first appeared in prophecy, then as a babe, the boy of twelve, the carpenter, the public minister, at last in the full orb of the glory of the gospel.

III. *Why came he?* He came on a "visit" of mercy. (See Jas. 1:27.) Like the dawning sun—

1. To give light. In order to enlighten, to correct error, to reveal truth Christ was born. (See John 1:4.)

2. To give warmth—the warmth of love to cold hearts. (Rom. 5:6-8; 1 John 4:11.)

3. To give life. (Luke 1:79.) In the darkness of the night, all nature seems to be dead; but it begins to throb with life at dawn. (John 10:10.)

4. To guide "our feet in the way of peace." Since he came, we can see the path of peace and the glory to which it leads.

Since "the dayspring" has come and the day has dawned, how should we walk? We should walk in the light. (1 John 1:7; John 3:19.)

"AS HE WAS PRAYING"

LUKE 9:29

Prayer changes things. It alters things within; it alters things without. It changes our attitude toward the world, toward people, toward sin, toward God, toward the universe.

I. As Cornelius prayed, a heavenly vision and an angelic voice came. (Acts 10:1ff.) This opened the way for the Lord's messenger and the Lord's message which brought salvation to him and to his house.

II. As Peter prayed, the heaven was opened. He received a vision of the breadth of God's grace and his own duty. (Acts 10:9ff.)

III. During his baptism, Jesus prayed. The heavens were opened unto him and the Spirit descended upon him. (Luke 3:21, 22.) Those who are baptized and pray as they are baptized, receive the gift of the Spirit. (Acts 2:38; 22:16.)

IV. When the disciples prayed, the place wherein they were gathered was shaken, etc. (Acts 4:31.) Prayer has power to

bring about a spiritual awakening, a shaking of the things within us and about us.

V. As Paul and Silas prayed, the earthquake came. Paul was given an opportunity to preach the gospel to receptive souls. (Acts 16:25ff.)

VI. As Jesus prayed on the Holy Mount, his countenance was altered and his garments became as white as the light. (See text.) There is a direct connection between prayer and the growth of Christian character. When we pray, our lives beam with heavenly radiance and we become an attraction to the people about us.

"AT JESUS' FEET"

LUKE 10:38-42

This three-word expression describes a bodily posture which numerous individuals assumed toward our Lord during the days of his flesh, indicating gratitude, devotion, penitence, humility, an eagerness to learn and to obey.

"At Jesus' feet" is an appropriate position for God's creatures all over the world. He is our Friend, our Redeemer, our Lord and our King. Let us, therefore, sit at his feet—

I. Like Mary, as eager learners, seeking the light of eternal truth. (Luke 10:38-42; Psa. 1:1, 2; John 8:32; 14:6.)

II. Like Jairus, as pleading intercessors, interested in the well-being of others. (Luke 8:40-42; 3 John 2; Phil. 4:6.)

III. Like the poor outcast, weeping for our sins, seeking divine pardon. (Luke 7:36-38; 1 John 1:1, 2.)

IV. Like the Samaritan, as grateful recipients of divine compassion and cleansing power. (Luke 17:11-16; Eph. 5:20.)

V. Like the unknown Gadarene, for the security the Lord can give. (Luke 8:26-35; Psa. 91:1.)

VI. Like the adoring women, worshipping the living Lord. (Matt. 28:8, 9; John 4:23, 24; Rev. 22:8, 9.)

VII. Like the beloved John, filled with devotion and reverential awe. (Rev. 1:10-17.)

Let all who hear his gentle voice today come and fall at his feet in humble submission, obeying from the heart that form of doctrine to the end that they may be free from the practice and the guilt and the tyranny and the penalty of sin. (Matt. 7:21; Acts 22:6-16; Rom. 6:17, 18; Heb. 5:8, 9.)

HOW TO PRAY

LUKE 11:1

I. *Get alone with God.* (Matt. 6:6.)

II. *Ask in Jesus' name.* (John 14:13, 14; 16:23, 24.)

III. *Be definite or specific.* (Luke 18:41.)

IV. *Be importunate.* (Luke 11:5-8.)

V. *Be constant.* (Luke 18:1.)

VI. *Rely upon the Holy Spirit.* (Rom. 8:26, 27.)

VII. *Be sure of an answer.* (Mark 11:24; Luke 11:9-13; Heb. 11:6.)

REPENTANCE

LUKE 13:3

- R**-equired of all men. (Acts 17:30.)
E-njoined by the Savior. (Luke 24:46, 47.)
P-receded by godly sorrow. (2 Cor. 7: 10.)
E-nforced by fear. (Luke 13:3.)
N-ecessary for the blotting out of sins. (Acts 3:19.)
T-urning from sin unto God. (Luke 11: 32; Jonah 3:10.)
A-ccompanied by baptism. (Acts 2:38.)
N-ewness of life—a grand consequence of both. (Rom. 6:1-4.)
C-auses joy in heaven. (Luke 15:7, 10.)
E-ncouraged by the goodness of God. (Rom. 2:4.)

THE PRODIGAL SON

LUKE 15:11-24

In these words, so full of beauty and pathos, we have the story of the prodigal son in two parts. We shall entitle the first part, *A Typical Sinner*; the second part, *An Ideal Penitent*.

I. *A Typical Sinner*. (Verses 11-17.) The early part of his career is characterized by the following:

1. *Self-will*. He resented his father's authority and departed against his will. The spirit of rebellion alienated him from his father, even while he was yet in his father's house. In this, we have sin in its essence.

2. *Self-indulgence*. He spent what the father had given on himself. Forgetting that he had a soul, he pampered his pas-

sions, deified his fleshly desires. By so doing, he sank to the level of the brute creation. Another definition of sin: The glorification of self.

3. Self-inflicted sorrow. By his rebellion and sensuality, he brought upon himself:

- (a) Hunger. (Verse 14.)
- (b) Humiliation. (Verses 15, 16.)
- (c) Home-sickness. (Verse 17.)

II. *An Ideal Penitent.* (Verses 18-24.)
Coming to the latter part of his career, we note:

1. Determination in his mind. (Verses 18, 19.) As his will had been employed in the departure, it must also be employed in his return. He said, "I will arise and go to my father." He will "arise," for he has until now been grovelling in the dust. He will "go," for he is a long way off. To his "father," for at present he dwells with swine.

2. Action in the body. (Verse 20.) It was in his body that his will found expression. Man's body is a servant of his mind, his will.

3. Confession on his lips. (Verse 21a.) He spoke of no sins but his own. He said nothing of the evil companions who had doubtless taken his money and left him in want. He made no complaint against the citizen who had "sent him into his fields to feed swine." His own guilt was so heavy on his heart that he thought of no sins but his own.

4. Humility in his heart. (Verse 21b.) He did not come demanding recognition, or a place of honor. (See 1 Sam. 15:30.) He

didn't even ask for the place he once occupied—that of a son. He came to be in subjection to his father's will—"make me as one of thy hired *servants*." (See Matt. 21:28-31.)

5. The restoration. (Verses 22-24.) He who returns to God in true penitence will receive more from God and God's people than he expects.

In the early part of his career, the prodigal son stands before us as a warning, reminding us that sorrow follows sin, that man reaps what he sows. In the latter part of his career, he stands before us as an example, showing us the meaning of true penitence and the blessings that follow.

THE PRODIGAL SON

LUKE 15:11-24

In this parable we have—

I. *A warning to the innocent:* The sinner must suffer for his sins. This is one of the inevitables. (Gal. 6:7, 8.)

II. *An example for the sinner:* All who sin like the prodigal should also repent like the prodigal. (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30.)

III. *An encouragement to the penitent:* God freely forgives and joyfully receives the humble penitent. (Isa. 55:6, 7.)

WHY MEN ARE LOST

LUKE 15

I. Like the sheep, some are lost by reason of their own carelessness. (Verses 3-7.)

II. Like the coin, some are lost by reason of the carelessness of others. (Verses 8-10.)

III. Like the younger son, some are lost by reason of the sins of the body. (Verses 11-24.)

IV. Like the elder son, some are lost by reason of the sins of the disposition. (Verses 25-32.)

THE TEN LEPERS

LUKE 17:11-19

Learn:

I. *From the ten:* That all need cleansing. (Rom. 3:23.)

II. *From the Savior:* That he heals all who obey. While in the very act of obedience, the sinner is cleansed by divine power. (Verse 14; Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16.)

III. *From the stranger:* That the grace of gratitude is very beautiful in the sight of the Lord. (1 Thess. 5:16, 17.)

IV. *From the nine:* That ingratitude is an ugly sin. (Isa. 1:2, 3; Psa. 41:9; Rom. 1:21.)

SIMON, SATAN AND THE SAVIOR

LUKE 22:31, 32

Let us study:

I. *Simon.* A man. A representative man. A strange mixture of weakness and strength, of evil and good. Upon him were focused two conflicting forces: one trying to destroy him, the other trying to save him.

II. *Satan.* Man's enemy. A roaring lion. The destroyer. He desired Simon

not to save him, but to sift him as wheat. He desires all men, especially the Lord's people, for the same purpose.

III. *The Savior.* Man's friend. Man's intercessor. Man's redeemer. When he rescues man, he gives him a great work to do—that of establishing the brethren.

"EXCEPT"

JOHN 3:5

Some tell us that salvation will be universal. That this doctrine is untrue may be seen from the following Biblical passages:

I. "*Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*" (Matt. 18:3.)

II. "*Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.*" (John 6:53.)

III. "*Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.*" (Matt. 5:20.)

IV. "And if a man contend in the games, he is not crowned, *except he have contended lawfully.*" (2 Tim. 2:5.)

V. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, *except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye except ye abide in me.*" John 15:4.)

VI. "*Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*" (John 3:5.)

GOD'S NATURE

JOHN 4:24

No inspired writer tells us so much about the nature of God as John. Other writers tell us what God *does* and the *attributes* he possesses. John tells us what God *is*. All four of the references that follow came from the pen of the beloved disciple. Let us note them.

I. *God is Spirit.* (Text.) Invisible, but very real. His presence permeates the universe.

II. *God is light.* (1 John 1:5.) Intelligence. Purity. Truth.

III. *God is love.* (1 John 4:8.) Mercy. Kindness. Benevolence.

IV. *God is like his Son.* (John 4:9.) In the personality of Jesus of Nazareth, God is manifested to human comprehension. (John 1:1, 14.)

ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP

JOHN 4:24

I. "*God is Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth,*" or according to his word. (John 4:24; 17:15a.)

II. God is a *holy* Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in the spirit of humility and contrition. (Isa. 1:15, 16.)

III. God is a *benevolent* Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in the spirit of gladness and gratitude. (Jas. 1:17; Psa. 100:1, 2; 122:1.)

IV. God is a *kingly* Spirit and they that

worship him must worship in the spirit of fear and reverential awe. (Isa. 6:1-5; Rev. 1:12-18.)

V. God is an *intelligent* Spirit: and they that worship him must worship with all the faculties of mind—an undivided attention. (Matt. 15:7, 8; 22:37.)

VI. God is an *invisible* Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in the spirit of faith—of implicit trust in his word. Sight worship is excluded. (Ex. 20:4, 5; 2 Cor. 5:7; Gal. 5:19, 20.)

VII. God is a *loving* Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in the spirit of love—love for God, love for man. (Matt. 5:23, 24; 1 John 4:8, 11, 20, 21.)

VIII. God is a *forgiving* Spirit: and they that worship him must worship with a forgiving spirit. (Matt. 6:14, 15.)

IX. God is a *fatherly* Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in a filial spirit—the spirit of a child. A child is trustful, dependent, hopeful. (Matt. 6:9.)

THE DEMANDS OF DIVINE LOVE

JOHN 21:15-17

The attitude of our Lord on this occasion may be regarded as a lover. No lover is satisfied merely to assume that the object of his affection requites his love. He asks for repeated acknowledgement or confession of it. And he is all the more insistent if an estrangement has been overcome, a reconciliation effected. This was the case of the Savior and Simon.

We are reminded:

I. *That the Lord wants our affection.* (Matt. 22:37, 38.) The best thing in any man's heart is his love and the Lord knows that if he has a man's love he has the man—the entire man, body, soul and spirit.

II. *That the Lord wants our supreme love.* (Verse 15.) This alone will satisfy him. A divided affection he will not accept. (Jer. 29:13.) No lover is pleased with anything but the supreme love of the one loved. To be loved as well as someone else will not satisfy. Hence, Jesus asks, "Lovest thou me more than these?"

1. More than these things—these boats, these nets, this sea, this occupation? He asks similar questions of us.

2. More than these friends? The Lord wants us to love him more than any thing, more than any person in the world. (Matt. 10:37.) Life is ruled by the thing or by the person we love supremely.

III. *That the Lord wants a confession of our love.* Any real lover requests this—he asks it again and again. He is not content to assume it or to infer it. Jesus, with his divine insight, knew that Simon loved him before he asked. But he wanted Simon to confess it—not once, not twice, but thrice. It was good for Simon to make such a confession. It is good for any disciple to make the confession openly, again and again.

IV. *That the Lord wants an evidence of our love.* Each time when Simon confessed his love, the Lord replied—"Feed my sheep," "feed my lambs." Prove your love by service to men—by breaking to them the bread of life, by giving them the great

sustaining element, God's eternal world. (Matt. 28:19, 20.)

Not until for the love of him we are willing to forsake father or mother, son or daughter, is he satisfied with our love. To the last the Lord is our lover. (John 13:1.) He asks for our love, our supreme love, the confession of our love, the infallible proof of our love, which is self-denying service.

"FOLLOW THOU ME"

JOHN 21:18-22

This command was meant primarily to call Peter to another locality. As evidence of this, John followed the two. In later life, Peter gave it a spiritual significance (1 Pet. 2:21-24.) It is in that light that we shall consider the command.

The Master's instruction carries with it various implications to which we shall direct attention.

I. "*Stand not in idleness.*" In order to follow Christ, steps must be taken. These must be forward steps—in the direction of the Leader. A follower of Christ is a most aggressive person.

II. "*Turn not aside into worldliness.*" Be not hindered by a great possession (Mark 10:17-22); by a domestic duty (Luke 9:59, 60); by a divided affection (Luke 9:61, 62). We cannot follow two masters. (Matt. 6:24.)

III. "*Lag not behind in fear.*" There is danger in lukewarmness—Peter followed from afar and was severely tempted (Luke 22:54ff). There is safety in nearness—John followed in nearness and was secure. (John 10:27, 28.)

IV. "Go not before me in presumption." A follower must not precede a leader. We should do nothing as worship or as service without a precept or example from the great Leader. (See 2 John 9.)

V. "Depart not from me in unbelief." (See John 6:66ff.) Let not the lack of understanding hinder you. "We walk by faith, not by sight." (2 Cor. 5:7.)

"Follow thou me." Our primary concern should be in ourselves, not in another. (Verse 22.) Let us be less curious about a fellow-disciple and more concerned about ourselves.

"Follow thou me." Let us go with him to the cross (Rom. 6:6), through the tomb (Rom. 6:4), into newness of life. Let us follow him in suffering, in sinlessness, in guilelessness, in unrevengefulness. (1 Pet. 1:21-23.) Let us follow him to regions of eternal glory. (Col. 3,3,4.)

"Follow thou me." Be active. Be aggressive. Move ever forward, not backward, not to the right, not to the left.

PENTECOST

ACTS 2:37-41

Can Pentecost be repeated in our time? In a number of ways it can, if certain conditions are fulfilled. What are those conditions? We find the answer in the acrostic that follows.

P-rayer. (Acts 1:14.) Pentecost is preceded by prayer.

E-xpectations. (Acts 1:4.) Not only must we ask great things of God, but also expect great things of God.

N-ewness of life. (2 Cor. 5:17.) A suc-

cessful meeting can be defeated by sin.

T-eaching. (Acts 2:14ff.) This teaching must be Christ-centered.

E-arrestness. Their hearts were not divided. Our hearts must not be divided. (Jer. 29:13.)

C-harity. They were of "one accord." "They were all together." We must be united by the bond of charity.

O-bedience. They were obedient. (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:12; 2:1.) Without obedience, Pentecost cannot be approached.

S-alvation. The thousands who obeyed were saved. (Matt. 7:21.)

T-eamwork. They worked together. We must work together. (Acts 2:14; 2:42.)

WHAT I OWE MY HOME CONGREGATION

ACTS. 2:42-47

Unto the church of my Lord in every locality, I am under solemn obligation to the extent of my ability; but unto my home congregation I am under special obligation.

I. I want my home congregation to radiate a wholesome influence in the community. Therefore, *I owe it the example of a good life.* For it I must "live soberly and righteously and godly." (Matt. 5:13-16.)

II. I want strangers who enter the door of the meeting house to feel at home, to learn to love us, to return from time to time. They are my guests; I must enter-

tain them. *I owe it to them and to the church to show myself friendly.* I must not stand back and wait for other members to greet them; this I must do. (Heb. 13:2.)

III. No congregation can make progress without faithful and efficient leaders. To a certain extent, the members of the church make or break their leaders. To the end that our leaders may be stronger and more efficient, *I must give them my support.* As long as they are true men, I must not embarrass them in their work. (1 Tim. 3:19.)

IV. My home congregation has financial obligations, which are due at regular intervals. Whether I give or do not give, the obligations must be paid. If it is right for my congregation to pay its obligations each week, *it is right for me to give each week.* Though circumstances may force me to be absent at times, my contributions must find their way to the treasury of the church. (1 Cor. 16:1, 2.)

V. I know that the very existence of any congregation depends upon the attendance of its members. In fact, attendance is the life of the church! For this reason, *I must attend the services*—all the services I can. For all that I have, I would not have it said that my home congregation perished because I would not attend the meetings. (Heb. 10:25.)

VI. I want my congregation to grow, to multiply in numbers. Therefore, *I must set myself to the noble work of winning souls for Christ.* This I can do by teaching and by persuading; this I can do by persistent effort; this I can do by bring-

ing them to our meetings. (Prov. 11:30; Psa. 122:1.)

VII. My home congregation cannot thrive in a frigid atmosphere. I must not by my carelessness allow the church to become a place where hearts are chilled. I must make it a place where hearts are warmed. Therefore, *I owe it my heart, the warmth of my love.* (Rev. 2:1-5.)

Wishing to be an honest man, I must meet my obligations to the best of my ability. I must with the help that God gives play my part in the incomparable work of building up the body of Christ, which he purchased with his own blood.

THE GRACE OF GENEROSITY

ACTS 3:6

In this paragraph—verses 1-10—we have one of the finest examples of generosity and helpfulness to be found.

We see:

I. *The recipient:* The lame man. He was a dependent man—his affliction had disqualified him. He was a typical, representative man.

1. Like him, humanity is crippled—rendered immobile by sin.

2. The affliction of humanity, like the affliction of the lame man, is of long standing—dating back to the beginning of the race. (Gen. 3.)

3. Like him, humanity lies as a beggar at the gate of the temple—the church of the living God. (See Acts 16:9.)

II. *The givers:* The apostles—Peter and

John. They, also, were typical men, representatives of the church.

1. Like them, every child of God should be a giver—have something to offer. Sharing is the spirit of Christ, the very essence of Christianity. (See John 3:16; Tit. 2:14a; Jas. 1:17; Acts 2:42; 1 Cor 16:1, 2.)

2. Like them, every child of God should seek to lift the fallen man, lend him a helping hand, put him on his feet, give him a song to sing. Certainly, we should not crush him.

III. *The gift*: "What I have, that give I unto thee." All that we have came from God; he has blessed us, empowered us, enriched us; but not all with the same blessing.

1. Unlike the apostles, we do not possess the miraculous power of healing, but we have other power and gifts—time, energy, talent, money, a wonderful message.

2. Whatever we have, that we should share or give. (See Mark 12; 41ff; 2 Cor. 8:12.)

IV. *The channel*: "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth." (See Col. 3:17.) Whatever a child of God gives, he should give in Jesus' name.

1. How is this done? Through Christ's body. The apostles gave as Christians, members of Christ's body, not as members of another organization.

2. Why should this be done? To glorify Christ and his body. Every time a gift is presented, some person or institution receives praise or honorable mention. Christ

should receive the glory for our gifts through the church. (Eph. 3:21.)

"THE STONE"

ACTS 4:11, 12

In these verses we have:

I. "*The stone.*" (Psa. 119:22.) Jesus is so called because of his stone-like qualities. He is strong, durable, dependable, fit for a foundation. (Isa. 28:16; 1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:20; 2 Tim. 2:19.)

II. *A rejected stone:* "Set at naught of you the builders." The Jews were the builders. They were erecting the building of their national life. When they came to this stone, Jesus of Nazareth, they found no place for him. They set him at naught.

1. They rejected all that Jesus in mercy offered: His word (John 8:37); his reign (Luke 19:14); his protection (Luke 13:34); the abundant life (John 10:10; 5:40).

2. Not content with this, they put him to death. They spurned the message and murdered the messenger.

III. *A chosen stone:* "Made the head of the corner." The blunder of the builders did not hinder the plan of the Almighty. (See 1 Pet. 2:4, 7b.)

1. Angels sang at his birth. (Luke 2:14.)

2. He was shielded in his infancy. (Matt. 2:13-23.)

3. He was acknowledged by the Father. (Matt. 3:13-17.)

4. He was approved by his miracles. (Acts 2:22.)

5. He was transfigured on the "Holy Mount." (Matt. 17:1-8.)

6. He was raised from the dead. (Rom. 1:4.)

7. He was laid in Zion for a foundation. (Isa. 28:16.)

IV. *A stone of salvation:* "In none other is there salvation," etc. (See John 6:67, 68.)

1. He is our example to guide us. (1 Pet. 2:21-23.)

2. He is our high priest to atone for us. (Heb. 9:24.)

3. He is our advocate to intercede for us. (1 John 2:1, 2.)

4. He is our mediator to stand between us and God. (1 Tim. 2:5.)

5. It is through him alone that we have certainty of a happy immortality. (2 Tim. 1:10.)

Those who are building upon the sand, have need of this Stone—of the security he offers, of the salvation he gives. Unto all who obey him, he is the author of eternal salvation. (Heb. 5:8, 9.)

THE WITNESS OF THE PROPHETS

ACTS 10:43

The Seed of Abraham. (Gal. 3:36.)

The Mighty One of Jacob. (Isa. 60:16.)

The Lion of the Tribe of Judah. (Rev. 5:5.)

The Star of Balaam. (Num. 24:17)

The Prophet of Moses. (Deut. 18:15.)

The Messiah of Daniel. (Dan. 9:25.)

The Redeemer of Job. (Job 19:25)

The Root of Jesse. (Isa. 11:10.)

- The Shepherd of David. (Psa. 23:1.)
 The Immanuel of Isaiah (Isa. 7:4; Matt. 1:23.)
 The Righteousness of Jeremiah. (Jer. 51:10.)
 The Covenant of Peace of Ezekiel. (Ezek. 37:26.)
 The Plumline of Amos. (Amos 7:7.)
 The Lily and the Blossom of Hosea. (Hos. 14:5.)
 The Ruler of Micah. (Mic. 5:2.)
 The Salvation of Habakkuk. (Hab. 5:13.)
 The Sun of Righteousness of Malachi. (Mal. 4:2.)
 The Desire of All Nations of Haggai. (Hag. 2:7.)

GOD'S NEARNESS

ACTS 17:27b

It is a childish idea that God is far removed, that he dwells apart on a giant planet billions of miles away. "The Lord is at hand." (Phil. 4:5.) "He is not far from each one of us." But how near is the Lord?

I. He is near enough to see us, to know all about us, even the deepest secrets of the soul. (Gen. 16:13; Prov. 15:3; Jer. 23:23, 24; Heb. 4:13.)

II. He is near enough to hear us, even the faintest whisper of the penitent. (Psa. 116:1, 2a; Matt. 7:7-11.)

III. He is near enough to sympathize with us, to guard us from danger, to bear our burdens. (Heb. 2:16-18; 4:15, 16; Psa. 46:1; 1 Pet. 5:7.)

IV. He is near enough to receive our

spirit when it departs. (Luke 23:46; Acts 8:54-60; Luke 16:22.)

The Lord is very near—nearer than any person on earth can be. He is over us, around us, underneath us. (Deut. 33:27.) In him we live, we move, we have our being. (Acts 17:28.)

“Speak to Him thou for He hears, and spirit with spirit can meet—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.”

(Tennyson.)

GOD, THE GRAND SOURCE

ACTS 17:28

In these meaningful words, the apostle presents God—

I. *As the source of life:* “In him we live.” He is our life. (Gen. 2:7.) We are his offspring (Acts 17:25.) All life emanates from him. The theory of spontaneous generation has been exploded. Life cannot come from death; life can only come from life.

II. *As the source of energy:* In him “we move.” Power for movement does not reside within ourselves. If life come from God, so must energy: for energy is but a manifestation of life. God is our strength.

III. *As the source of our existence:* In him “we have our being.” God is not only the source of life, but also the preserver of it. He is our provider, our protector, our preserver.

THE JUDGMENT

ACTS 17:30, 31

Let us consider:

- I. *The necessity of it.* Without the final judgment, there can be no moral purpose in society. Wrongs must be righted. The justice of God demands it.
- II. *The certainty of it.* The fact that it is a necessity in God's moral plan makes it a certainty. (Text; 2 Cor. 5:10.)
- III. *The universality of it.* Before the throne, all nations shall assemble. (Matt. 25:31, 32.) No man shall escape. (Rom. 2:3; Rev. 20:12, 13.)
- IV. *The individuality of it.* (Rom. 14:12.) Each man must answer for himself. Each man must stand alone.
- V. *The impartiality of it.* (1 Pet. 1:17.) Not a man's social position, or his financial standing, or his political station, but his "works" shall be the determining factor. No favoritism shall be manifested.
- VI. *The thoroughness of it.* Men shall not only answer for their works, but also the "secret things"—the motives unseen by the eyes of men. (See Eccl. 12:13, 14; 1 Cor. 4:5.)
- VII. *The finality of it.* Life is followed by death; death is followed by the judgment (Heb. 9:27); the judgment is followed by the eternal destiny (Matt. 25:46.)

"WHY TARRIEST THOU?"

ACTS 22:16

We shall note the circumstances under

which this momentous question was asked.
(Acts 22:3-15.)

Consider:

I. *The question*: "Why tarriest thou?" Saul had believed, acknowledged the Lord, repented of his sins, fasted and prayed; but he tarried. A definite thing remained for him to do. The Lord does not want any man to delay in matters of obedience. (See Psa. 119:60; Prov. 27:1; 2 Cor. 6:2.)

II. *The command*:

1. "Arise." The Lord does not want the praying penitent to be downcast, to grovel in the dust; but to exert his strength, to move out of dangerous territory, to cross the boundary line. (See Gen. 19:15; Luke 15:18; Col. 1:13.)

2. "And be bantized."

(a) The purpose in view: "Wash away thy sins." He was a penitent, praying believer; yet his sins had not been washed away. The power to cleanse is not in the water, but in God who commands. (Heb. 5:8, 9; 1 Pet. 3:21; 2 Kings 5:1-14.)

(b) The accompaniment: "Calling on his name." This is done in prayerful obedience. (See Luke 3:21.)

III. *The obedience rendered*. (Acts 9:18, 19.) The obedience of Saul was characterized by two things, namely:

1. Promptness: "Straightway." (See Mark 1:16-18.)

2. Humility. Without a murmur or an objection, he obeyed from the heart "that form of doctrine." (See Rom. 6:17, 18.)

Friend, you have heard the story of re-

deeming love. You believe. You have determined to sin no more. You are prayerful. "Why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name."

TOGETHER

ROM. 6:6

These seven "togethers" are seven links of a chain which binds us indissolubly with the Lord Jesus. We shall note them:

- I. *Crucified together.* (Rom. 6:6.)
- II. *Buried together.* (Rom. 6:4.)
- III. *Raised together.* (Col. 2:12.)
- IV. *Seated together in heavenly places.* (Eph. 2:6.)
- V. *Suffering together.* (Phil. 3:10.)
- VI. *Heirs together.* (Rom. 8:17.)
- VII. *And glorified together.* (Rom. 8:17.)

They indicate the everlasting purpose of the eternal God in our redemption, and his plan effecting that purpose.

VICTORY

1 COR. 15:56, 57

In the life we now live, we are beset with many foes: An evil world without; weakness within; the dread of death, etc. Without help from above, we are doomed to regions of eternal darkness.

But, thanks to God, the help we need comes through the Christ. Through him we are more than conquerors. (Rom. 8:37.) He gives his people victory over the following. (Note the acrostic.)

V-icious habits. (Matt. 1:21; 1 Cor. 6:9-11.)

I-dolatry. (1 Thess. 1:9, 10.)

C-owardice. (Psa. 23:4; Heb. 13:6, 7.)

T-ongue, An evil. (Matt. 15:18-20; Acts 15:9; 1 Pet. 1:22.)

O-rdeal of death. (Text; 2 Tim. 1:10.)

R-eligion, Talkative. (Jas. 1:16, 27.)

Y-outhful lusts. (2 Tim. 2:22; Rom. 1:16.)

THE THING THAT AVAILS

GAL. 5:6

The word "avail" means to be of use, of value, of service. There are things that are of no use or value to us in our religious experiences. For these things we should not strive. Only for those things that are helpful should we strive.

The thing that avails is:

I. *Not a rite or an outward ceremony:* "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision avail-eth anything, nor uncircumcision." Though venerated because of its age. Though introduced by the greatest of men. Though it has been sanctioned by the saints.

II. *Faith.* Faith in Christ—in his person, in his divine personality, in his wonderful words.

1. Without faith we cannot approach God (Heb. 11:6), we cannot be saved (Mark 16:16), we rest under condemnation (John 3:16.)

2. With faith in Christ we are justified (Rom. 5:1), we are purified (Acts 15:9), we have access to God (Rom. 5:2), we can move mountains (Matt. 17:20).

III. *An active faith:* A "faith that worketh."

1. Without activity, faith is barren, it is dead, it does not exceed the faith of demons. (Jas. 2:14-20.)

2. With activity, under the guidance of God's word, we are justified, faith is perfected, faith is a living thing. (Jas. 2:21-26.)

IV. *Faith working in the spirit of love:* "Faith that worketh through love."

1. Without love, faith is a non-entity; it amounts to nothing. This is a divine declaration. (1 Cor. 13:2, 13.)

2. With love—love for God and love for man—as the motive, faith avails, i.e., it is of real value in the world of humanity, in attaining life's supreme goal.

WORDS OF COMFORT

1 THESS. 4:13-18

The saints in Thessalonica were grieving over their dead as though they were forever gone. The purpose of the apostle Paul, in the language of the text, was to enlighten them with reference to their dead and, thereby, comfort their heavy hearts. Verse 18 is significant. What words of comfort do we find in the text?

I. *That the dead are asleep.* (Verses 13, 14.) They "sleep in Jesus." (Acts 7: 60.) The word "cemetery" comes from a Greek word which means to sleep. If the dead are asleep, may we not expect an awakening?

II. *That those who sleep in Jesus "will God bring with him."* This expression im-

plies that they are in God's keeping. No harm can befall them. He will bring them.

III. *That "the Lord himself shall descend."* He will not come by proxy. The same Lord who was made flesh shall come in his glorified nature. The friend of man, who was himself a man.

IV. *That God's people shall be re-united.* "We . . . shall together with them be caught up," etc. We shall meet the redeemed from whom we have been separated. The ties of friendship, broken by death, shall be reunited in the day of the Lord.

V. *That we shall "meet the Lord in the air."* The place of the meeting is specified—"in the air." Up away from the sin-cursed earth, safe from the destructive forces which shall befall the earth.

VI. *That "we shall forever be with the Lord."* The Lord is eternal, so are his people. He is not subject to decay or death; neither are they. To be forever in the Lord's presence is to be in heaven, in the beautiful mansions he went away to prepare. (See Psa. 16:11.)

BIBLE READING—WHAT IT DOES

2 TIM. 2:15

The Bible will work wonders in our hearts and lives, if we only give time to the reading of it. The Bible will shed light on our path, reveal the plan of salvation, give visions of a brighter day and lead us to heaven, if we but give it a diligent study. A number of good things happen

to us when we read the sacred volume.
Here are some of them:

It works effectively in us. (1 Thess. 2:13.)

It gives light for one step more. (Psa. 119:105.)

It teaches, reproves, corrects, uplifts. (2 Tim. 3:16.)

It cleanses the heart. (John 15:3.)

It gives us faith, increases that faith. (Rom. 10:17.)

It greatly strengthens us. (1 John 2:14; Acts 20:32.)

It gives joy unspeakable. (John 15:11.)

It brings heavenly life. (John 6:63.)

“ANGELS OF GOD”

HEB. 1:6

I. *Use of the word.*

1. Originally, the word “angel” meant a messenger, human or divine. John the Baptist (Mal. 3:1a). Our Lord (Mal. 3:1b.)

2 Superhuman beings, intermediate between God and man. It is this use of the word that we shall consider.

II. *Their nature.*

1. Not phantoms or myths, but real beings. (Matt. 26:53.)

2. Spiritual (Heb. 1:14); created (Neh. 9:6; Rev. 4:6-8); eternal (Luke 20:36). They can sin. (Jude 6.)

3. Whenever manifested to men, they appear in human form (Luke 24:4; Acts 1:10). though more glorious (John 20:12; Matt. 28:2, 3; Acts 12:7).

4. They partake, in a measure, of the

attributes of God—love, holiness and truth—else, they could not abide in his presence.

III. *Their office.* Not to be worshipped (Rev. 19:10); they do not preach the gospel (Acts 8:26ff; 10:3ff); they render a particular service in harmony with their own nature (Heb 1:14; Dan. 7:9, 10).

1. In heaven they give unending praise and devotion to God. (Isa. 6:1-3; Rev. 5:11, 12.)

2. They are guardians of God's treasures. (Gen. 3:22-24; Jude 9; Rev. 21:12.)

3. They are ministers of God's mercy. They ministered to Jesus during the days of his flesh. (See Luke 2:9ff; Matt. 2:13ff; 4:11; Luke 22:43; Matt. 28:1ff; Acts 1:10, 11.) They are ministers of man. They were agents through whom the law was given (Gal. 3:19; Heb. 2:2). It was believed that every disciple had a patron angel. (Matt. 18:10; Acts 12:15.) They rejoice over the penitent. (Luke 15:10.) They carry the righteous dead to the abode of just spirits (Luke 16:11.)

4. They are ministers of God's avenging wrath. (See Matt. 25:31; 13:41, 42, 49, 50; 2 Thess 1:7, 8.)

FORSAKE NOT THE ASSEMBLY

HEB. 10:25

Here—

Praises arise. (Heb. 2:13.)

Prayers ascend. (Phil 4:6.)

Gifts are presented. (1 Cor. 16:1, 2.)

The Lord's table is spread. (1 Cor. 11:23-25; Acts 20:7.)

And the bread of life is broken. (Acts 20:7b.)

"*This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.*" (Gen. 28:17.)

LIFE'S MOMENTOUS QUESTIONS

JAS. 4:14

There are four important questions which are as old as the human race, yet as new as the infant in its mother's arms. Let us seriously consider them.

I. *Who am I?* (See Heb. 2:6, 7.) Man has a twofold nature:

1. A perishable body. There are three periods of his earthly existence—youth, maturity, decay. These periods pass in rapid succession. (1 Pet. 1:24.)

2. An immortal spirit, called "the inner man," "the hidden man of the heart." It is this which distinguishes him from the beast and makes him superior to it.

II. *Whence do I come?* Only in the Bible can the answer be found. (Gen. 2:7.)

1. The body from the earth. It is "the earthly house." (2 Cor. 5:1.) Every substance in the body is found in the earth. "Earth," "Adam," and "man" are three words with the same meaning.

2. The spirit from God. Man's mind or spirit could not have originated in the soil. No combination of material elements can produce mind, or thought. God is called "the Father of spirits." (Heb. 12:9, 10.)

III. *What is my life?*

1. A transient thing. "A vapor"; a shepherd's tent removed. (Isa. 38:12.)

2. A frail thing. Like a clod of dirt, it is subject to dissolution. (2 Cor. 5:1.) Suspended by a brittle cord. (Eccl. 12:6.) A flower. (Job 14:1, 2.)

3. A brief thing. (Psa. 90:10.) "Swifter than a post." (Job 9:25.) A "handbreadth." (Psa. 39:5.)

4. An uncertain thing. (Prov. 27:1; Gen. 27:2.) We make plans, but seldom are we able to execute them. (See Luke 12:16ff.)

5. An irrevocable thing. "Water spilt upon the ground. (2 Sam. 14:14.) (See 2 Sam. 12:15-23.)

IV. *Whither do I go?*

1. The philosopher: "I am going to the unknown. Life is a meteor which hovers momentarily between two eternities, then passes to the great unknown." A confusing, comfortless answer.

2. The infidel: "I go to the dust. Death ends all." He has no more to say of his own destiny than for the destiny of a dog. There is no light, no consolation in his answer.

3. The Christian: "I go to the Father. The grave is not the end. It is a golden gateway unto a greater life." Whether in life or in death, he is going to the Father. Herein, we find hope.

"A SPIRITUAL HOUSE"

1 PET. 2:1-5

I. *Its foundation.* (1 Cor. 3:11.)

1. "A stone"—for solidity, for durability." (Heb. 13:8.)

2 "A living stone." (John 1:4; Rev. 1:17, 18.)

3. A rejected stone: "Rejected indeed of men."

4. A chosen stone: "With God elect." The rejection of the builders did not hinder the purpose of God. (See Acts 4:11, 12.)

5. A "precious stone"—precious to God, the Father (John 1:14), precious to God's children (1 Pet. 2:7, 8; John 6:66-68; Eph. 1:3.)

II. *The superstructure.*

1. Its solidity. Built up of "stones"—believers. Stones resting upon "the stone." Stones supporting each other. (See Gal. 6:1, 2.)

2. Its vitality. Built up of "living stones." The house partakes of the nature of the foundation. Unlike the stones in the temple, which were dead. Believers are free from dead works: Wickedness (malice), guile (deception), hypocrisies, envies, evil speakings (slander).

3. Its nature: Not a material, but a "spiritual house"—a house of hearts.

4. Its singularity: "A spiritual house"—a unit. One foundation, one house. (See Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:21.) Stones are united by the foundation which upholds them and the cement which binds them. Believers are united by faith in Christ and mutual love, the cement. (Col. 2:2; 3:14.)

III. *The service within the house:* "To be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual

sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." From this we learn:

1. That God's children are priests. (Rev. 1:6.)

2. As priests, God's representatives, we have an exhibition to make: "That ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness," etc. (Verse 9.)

3. As priests, we have something to offer. (Heb. 8:3.) The offering is spiritual—affections, prayers, praise, etc. (See Rom. 12:1.)

4. The offering is made unto God, to whom we owe all things. (See 1 Cor. 6:20.)

5. The medium is Jesus Christ, our high priest, our mediator. (1 Tim. 2:5.)

PETER'S FOURFOLD ADMONITION

1 PET. 2:7

OK In this verse of only eleven words in the English Bible we have four plain, pointed statements, giving us the sum of our duty toward God and man. Let us study them one by one.

I. "*Honor all men.*" This admonition is universal in application. Regardless of a man's station or social position in life, honor is due him.

1. Because he is God's creature, bearing the divine image.

2. Because he is an object of the Savior's compassion.

3. By respecting his personality.

4. By doing unto him as you would have him do unto you. (Matt. 7:12.)

II. "*Love the brotherhood.*" This is God's family, the church.

1. Because of the common Fatherhood.
2. Because of the intimate relationship.
3. By entertaining kind thoughts.
4. By extending a helping hand.

III. "*Fear God.*"

1. Because he made us.
2. Because he loves us.
3. By respecting his authority.
4. By yielding to his voice.

IV. "*Honor the king*"—the civil government.

1. Because he is ordained of God.
2. Because he is not a terror to good works, but to evil.
3. By living in subjection to him.
4. By cooperating with him in every laudable undertaking.

A CHRISTIAN

1 PET. 4:16

Thrice this precious name appears on the pages of holy writ: Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16. In the name Israel, God's name was sanctified—Isra-El. In like manner, in the name Christian, Christ's name is sanctified—Christ-ian. As important as the name is, our primary interest is centered in the character. Character should precede the name. So, we shall ask, *What is a Christian?*

I. *A mind through which Christ thinks.*
(Phil. 2:5.) A Christian thinks the

thoughts of Christ. In this mental exercise, he is guided by words of Christ.

II. *A voice with which Christ speaks.* Not the voice of evil, but the voice of goodness—a voice of enlightenment, of prayer, of praise, of comfort. (Psa. 19:14.)

III. *An eye through which Christ sees.* Not an envious eye, or a covetous eye, or a sensual eye; but a compassionate eye (Luke 10:33), a generous eye—an eye more intent on finding good than evil. (Rev. 2:2-4.)

IV. *An ear through which Christ hears.* An ear attuned to the voice of the Infinite (Mark 4:24a). An ear that hears discerningly and sympathetically (Luke 8:18a). (See Acts 17:11.)

V. *A hand with which Christ works.* Christ was an incessant worker. (John 5:17; 9:4; Acts 10:38.) The Christian is also a worker. (Phil. 2:12, 13.)

VI. *A life in which Christ lives.* (Phil. 1:21; Gal. 2:20.) Christ was God incarnate (1 Tim. 3:16); in like manner, the Christian is Christ incarnate.

Christ is in the Christian. (Eph. 3:17.) This means wholesome character; this means a radiant personality (John 8:12; Matt. 5:16); this means noble endeavor; this means hope immortal (Col. 1:27).

It is also true that a Christian is in Christ. (Col. 3:3.) This means security; this means peace of mind; this means eternal rest. (Rev 14:13.)

WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN?

1 PET. 4:16

A Christian is—

C-haritable in disposition. (Eph. 4:31, 32.)

H-umble in attitude. (Eph. 4:1, 2.)

R-eliable in his dealings. (Rom. 12:17.)

I-mmaculate in his personal life. (Jas. 1:27.)

S-incere in motive. (Col. 3:22, 23.)

T-ruthful in speech. (Col. 3:9.)

I-ndustrious with his hands. (Eph. 4:28.)

A new creature. (2 Cor. 5:17.)

N-eighborly with his fellows. (Luke 10:30-37.)

WHAT TO DO WITH OUR SINS

1 JOHN 1:8-10

By "our sins" we mean the sins of church members. That all men sin is the voice of conscience and the word of God. (Rom. 3:23; text.) The question is, "What shall we do with our sins?" It is plain that we cannot go to heaven with them.

I. *Find them.* Use God's mirror, the X-ray of the soul—the word. (Heb. 4:12; 2 Cor. 13:5.)

II. *Repent of them.* After finding them, we should put them away—repent of them. (Isa. 55:7; Luke 13:3.)

III. *Confess them.* (1 John 1:9.) Satan would hinder confession of sins. As the fox takes its prey by the throat so as to stop all noise, so Satan would have us be silent concerning our sins.

IV. *Pray that they may be forgiven.* (Acts 8:22; Heb. 4:15, 16; 1 John 2:1, 2.) There is no merit in finding our sins, in repenting of our sins, etc. But in doing these things, we comply with God's law of pardon.

If we don't do something with our sins, our sins will do something with us. They will destroy us. They will keep us out of heaven. (See Isa. 59:1, 2; Ezek. 18:4; Rom. 6:23.)

"BEHOLD, HE COMETH"

REV. 1:7

Learn:

1. *That the Lord is coing:* "Behold, he cometh!" (Acts 1:11; Phil. 3:20; Rev. 22:12.)

II. *That his coming will be attended with a sign:* "With the clouds." A token of divine presence. (Ex. 24:15; 34:5; Num. 9:15-17; Matt. 26:64; Acts 1:9.)

III. *That his coming will be visible:*

1. To mankind in general: "Every eye shall see him." Those who saw him in the flesh and those who did not. (Rev. 20:12.)

2. To his foes in particular: "And they that pierced him." With the literal sword. (John 19:34, 37.) With the sword of alien sins. (Rom. 3:23.) With the sword of apostasy. (Heb. 6:6.)

IV. *That his coming will bring sorrow:* "All the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him." All earthly-minded people shall mourn. A mourning of a guilty conscience. A mourning of regret. (Jer. 8:20.) A

mourning of fear—a prophecy of doom. (See Rev. 6:15-17.)

V. *That his coming will receive the hearty approval of his friends: "Even so, Amen." A double affirmative—in the Greek, also in the Hebrew. (See 2 Tim. 4:8.)*

"BE THOU FAITHFUL"

REV. 2:10b

I. It was said of Daniel that *"he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault in him."* (Dan. 4:2.)

II. It was said of Judah that he *"yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the Holy One."* (Hos. 11:12.)

III. Paul referred to Timothy as *"my beloved and faithful child in the Lord."* (1 Cor. 4:17.)

IV. He also called Tychicus, *"the beloved and faithful minister in the Lord."* (Eph. 6:21.)

V. It was said of Jesus that *"he was faithful to him that appointed him, as also was Moses in all his house."* (Heb. 3:2.)

VI. And the apostle Peter admonishes us to commit our souls *"in well-doing unto a faithful Creator."* (1 Pet. 4:19.)

NO MORE TEARS

REV. 7:13-17

This marvelous word-picture from the pen of the apostle John closes with a beautiful expression: "God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes." These are not the tears of all men, but the tears of God's

children. With their tears the pages of history are stained.

I. There are tears of pity—compassionate people weeping the fearful doom of hardened sinners. (Luke 19:41, 42.)

II. There are tears of sympathy—tenderhearted friends who share sorrow, who weep with the ones who weep. (John 11:35.)

III. There are tears of bereavement—a David weeping for his son Absalom (2 Sam. 18:33), or a Rachel weeping for her children because they are not (Matt. 2:16-18).

IV. There are tears of penitent souls, who weep over the memory of sad mistakes. (Luke 7:36-38; 22:54-61.)

V. There are tears of anxiety—earnest Christian workers who are deeply concerned with the moral and spiritual well-being of the people with whom they live and labor. (Acts 20:31.)

VI. And there are tears of sacrifice—tears of God's children who suffer personal loss to the end that the church may go forward, that the gospel may be preached in those regions where it has never been heard. (Psa. 126:5; Acts 20:19.)

But the Father, with a tender hand, "shall wipe away every tear from their eyes." They are forever beyond the reach of harm; and all sadness is taken away.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE DEAD

REV. 14:13

These are wonderful words. In the hour

of bereavement, no words are more helpful. They offer a full measure of consolation.

They point out:

I. *The source of this consolation.* It was not a satanic voice, not the voice of a man, but "a voice from heaven" that John heard. It was not a voice of nature, not a voice of reason, but the clear voice of revelation that fell upon the ears of the aged seer.

II. *The state of the dead.* They are not in a state of pain or of grief, but of supreme happiness—"Blessed are the dead." This implies conscious existence. Though death fell upon the human race as a curse, it is here mentioned as a blessing. The blessedness of death is due to the works of him who conquered death, bringing life and immortality to light.

III. *A reservation.* Not all who die are happy—only those who "die in the Lord." Meaning: Who die in union with the Lord, in his body, in the faith, in the love, in the service of the Lord. "They rest from their labors," implying diligent service. Dying "in the Lord" implies a previous living with him or in him. It is still a curse to die in sin, or out of harmony with the Lord.

IV. *The affirming voice:* "Yea, saith the Spirit," emphasizing the truthfulness of all that John had said.

V. *The nature of their blessing:*

1. They "rest from their labors," or painful service. They also rest from illness, temptations, persecutions, etc.

2. "Their works follow with them." This may mean—

(a) That their deeds, as a mighty procession, follow them to the judgment to testify on their behalf. (1 Tim. 5:24.) Or,

(b) That their deeds follow them in perpetuating their influence in the world. Good people live in the hearts they leave behind.

(c) That in either of these senses or in both of these senses the words of the text may be taken.

THE OPEN BOOKS

REV. 20:11-15

This paragraph presents a word-picture of the last judgment, pointing out the following: The "great white throne"; the Judge on the throne; the dead before the throne; the open books; and the doom of sinners. At this time our interest is centered in the open books.

I. *The book of life.* Also called the book of God's remembrance. (Mal. 3:16.) This is man's book in God's hand. It is the family record. Inscribed therein are the names of God's children. (Phil. 4:3.) When a man is "born anew," his name is written in this book. To the redeemed this should be a matter of deep concern. (Luke 10:17-20.) "Is my name written there?"

II. *The Book of books*—the Bible. This is God's book in man's hand, to purify his life (John 15:3), to cast light upon his path (Psa. 119:105).

1. Unto every responsible person there come three serious questions, namely:

(a) "Whence do I come?"

(b) "What is my mission?"

(c) "Whither do I go?"

2. In the Bible and the Bible alone the answer is found:

(a) It tells him of his origin and nature. (Gen. 1:27; 2:7; Acts 17:28.)

(b) It reveals to him his duty—to God, to his fellowman (Eccl. 12:13; Matt. 22:34-40; Rom. 13:8-10).

(c) It points out to him his destiny. (Jer. 21:8; Matt. 7:13, 14; Rev. 22:14, 15.)

III. *The book of deeds.* A book of man's own making—man's book in man's hand.

1. This book, with spotless pages, is given to each at the age of accountability. All were given an equal start in life.

2. It is now in the making. On the pages are written our words, our deeds, our silent thoughts. The great objective: Not to make the Bible conform unto it, but to make it conform unto the Bible. (See Rom. 12:2.)

3. It will be sealed in death. After that, no changes in the book can be made. (See Heb. 9:27; Rev. 22:11.)

Ultimately, all three books will fall into the hands of the Judge of all the earth. In the day of judgment, they will be opened. Their contents will determine man's destiny. (Verse 12.)

When the book of life is opened, will your name be found therein? (Verse 15.)

The Bible will be opened. (John 12:48.) The book of your deeds will be opened. When the Judge places them side by side, will he find agreement between them? Will he find harmony?

Friend, are you afraid or ashamed for

the book of your deeds to be opened in the day of judgment? Remember, your ugly deeds or words may be blotted out in the precious blood of the Lamb. (See Acts 2: 38; 1 John 1:7, 8.)



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