

FUNDAMENTALS OF THE FAITH

G. F. Raines

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Typesetting, Charles and Dolores West
Production Assistance, Connie Krute
Layout and design, Betty Burton Choate
Artwork, Steven Burton Choate

Order from:
J.C. Choate Publications
P.O. Box 72
Winona, MS 38967
Phone: (601) 283-1192

Dedication

This book is dedicated to my wife, Mildred, for the encouragement that I receive from her unceasingly in all that I strive to accomplish in the Lord's service; to my daughter, Dolores Ann West; to my son-in-law, Charles P. West; to Clay Underwood; to J.C. and Betty Choate and Connie Krute; to Paul and Sarah Swindle; to all others who had any part, either great or small, in making it possible for the material to be published for whatever good it may in the providence of God be able to accomplish; and, finally, to my wonderful grandson, Charles David West, whose devoted childlike love for his grandmother and me is a source of joy and strength.

The Publisher's Statement

I first met Brother G.F. Raines in 1953 at a debate held near Nashville, TN, when both of us were students in college. With the passing of time, it became a common occurrence to see Brother Raines' name on short teaching articles in our brotherhood papers. Throughout all of these years, his writings have been used regularly in the **Gospel Advocate, Firm Foundation, Gospel Light, Words of Truth**, and many other periodicals.

Brother Raines and his wife, Mildred, operate a unique type of mission work from their home in Newton, MS. They visit homes and hospitals in their area, print and distribute literature, and they write articles for gospel papers and also for secular papers over the country, through which they offer a Bible correspondence course.

This past year, with Brother Raines' permission, we printed the material which appears in this book in two volumes in New Delhi, India. Those books are now being used throughout that country, and in other countries over the world.

Because of the wide range of topics and the uniqueness of the approach, we wanted to print this book for use here in the States as well, to be made available to World Bible School teachers for their students in numerous countries. It is our prayer that **Fundamentals of the Faith** will be widely used, and we are confident that wherever it goes it will bear good fruit for the Lord.

Thank you, Brother Raines, for sharing these writings with us and the world, and may God continue to bless your efforts to serve the Lord in this way, as well as in all other ways possible.

J.C. Choate
Church of Christ
Winona, MS
February 1, 1992

Introduction

I met J.C. Choate for the first time at the Arnett-Crouch debate in Hartsville, TN in March of 1953. I had the privilege of being one of the staff writers for **Choate's Quarterly** in the late 1950's; and more recently I have prepared written materials for use in the great work which Brother Choate and his faithful wife, Betty, have been carrying on in India and other foreign mission fields for approximately 30 years.

In 1974, Brother Choate encouraged me to contribute of my material for distribution in India. Various other time-consuming activities prevented my making use of this opportunity at that time, but in 1987 I compiled from my writings the manuscripts for two books entitled **Fundamentals of the Faith** and **Fundamentals of the Truth**, which were published in New Delhi, India in December of 1990, primarily for evangelistic circulation in India.

This book contains the same articles that were published in two volumes in India in 1990. To expedite the preparation of the material for publication in the United States, my daughter, Dolores Ann West, and her husband, Charles P. West, transferred the articles to computer discs over a period of several weeks in the spring and summer of 1991. Without their help, **Fundamentals of the Faith** in its present form would not have been ready for publication at this time or in the foreseeable future.

Our prayer is that through the widespread distribution of this book in India, the United States and other countries, in concert with other evangelistic efforts already in progress far and near, "the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified" (2 Thessalonians 3:1) in the salvation of many eternity-bound souls.

G.F. Raines
Newton, MS
January 1, 1992

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**FUNDAMENTALS
OF THE
FAITH**

THE ORDERLINESS OF THE UNIVERSE

Nothing excites our curiosity and interest more than the amazing orderliness of the universe. As Sir James Jeans said: "The universe seems to be nearer to a great thought than to a great machine."

For hundreds of years scientists have marveled at the uniformity of the shape of snow crystals, which, though they show many variations, are all of the hexagonal crystal system; that is, they are all flat and six-sided. It is indeed an amazing fact that no two of the little six-sided crystals are exactly alike.

The tides of the ocean, following the moon around the earth except where land stops them, rise and fall on a time schedule so definite that they regulate the day for the people who live along the seacoasts.

The constancy of the earth's distance from the sun maintains a life-supporting temperature; but if the average temperature should drop 80 degrees, life would be completely wiped out, and a change of 80 degrees in the opposite direction would also extinguish the life on the earth.

The coloration and physical structure of animals is another splendid example of orderliness. The Australian sea horse has leafy growths on its body that gives it the appearance of the seaweed in which it lives. Some of the little animals of the ocean are nearly transparent and their color blends so perfectly with the water that it is extremely difficult for their enemies to see them. If a flounder fish is put on a checkerboard, even the arrangement of the squares are reproduced on its body. The chameleon lizard also changes its color to match its environment.

The structure of insects is another unanswerable argument against atheism.

...the long-horned grasshopper, Metaprosagoga insignis, possesses wings which not only resemble leaves but which are equipped with irregular patches that look as though the leaf tissue had been eaten away by an insect, leaving only a network of veins visible. Another tropical leaf-grasshopper has brownish wings that suggest dried leaves. The resemblance is heightened by the fact that markings near their extremities give the impression that they are cracked or torn (Edwin Way Teale, The Strange Lives of Familiar Insects, Dodd, Meade & Co., 1964, pp. 4, 5).

Most of us have seen the orderly V-shaped formation of a flock of wild geese flying to or from their breeding grounds of the Far North. A leader flies in the apex of the triangle and the other geese follow him.

As we observe the intricate construction and exquisite beauty of the plants and flowers that adorn the bosom of the earth, we see a wisdom and skill that infinitely transcend human ingenuity, and exclaim in our hearts: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Psa. 14:1). We know that Jesus was right when he said:

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these (Matt. 6:28, 29).

The wonderful orderliness of the universe indicates that it is controlled by an intelligent supreme being. It marvelously manifests the glory and handiwork of God, in whom "we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

2

NATURE AND NATURE'S GOD

My childhood home near Hartsville, Tennessee, in Trousdale County, was surrounded by the beauties of the foothills of the rustic Cumberland Mountains. I have traveled extensively during the past twenty years, and no place that I have visited is more beautiful than the scenes of my childhood. By the time I left my home to enroll in Freed-Hardeman College, I had developed an appreciation of nature as the handiwork of God.

While I was very young, I learned that,

Not all the beautiful or inspiring music emanates from a voice or an instrument. Wind, water, and trees create melodies that equal or surpass any notes played on the harp, the violin, or the organ (Frances P. Reid).

Goethe described nature as "the living visible garment of God."

The Holy Bible says:

The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God (Psa. 14:1).

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork (Psa. 19:1).

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse (Rom. 1:20).

3

THE LAW OF BIOGENESIS

The fact that life comes only from life is scientifically known as "the law of biogenesis."

William Thomas Kelvin, one of the greatest British scientists of his time, said:

Inanimate matter cannot become living except under the influence of matter already living. This is a fact in science which seems to me as well ascertained as the law of gravitation.

Prof. John Tyndall, the world-famous scientist who followed the great Michael Faraday as Director of the Royal Institution in London said: "Every attempt made in our day to generate life independent of antecedent life has utterly broken down."

Dr. McNair Wilson, formerly editor of the Oxford Medical Publications, said: "Modern Medicine and Surgery are founded on the truth enunciated by Pasteur, that life proceeds only from life and only from life of the same kind and type."

Since it is a well authenticated fact that life comes only from life, life has always existed; and,

There is not one shred of truth from science to account for the presence of life upon the earth other than a special creation by the great original First Cause — God — Who is life and the fountain source of all life.

4

EVOLUTION IS A HOAX

The theory of organic evolution has been well described by Prof. A. G. Freed as "a system of hypotheses strung together with a million guesses."

Prof. Freed also wrote:

Nothing could be further from real science than the modern theory of evolution. It is founded upon guesses and hypotheses with no safe conclusions. It faces a thousand unanswered questions.

Another noted college professor said:

...I have studied science many years, and have taught it several years in our best colleges. I have seen hundreds of experiments, but never has a new species of plants or animals resulted.

Genuine science is indispensable, but the theory of evolution is not science. It is "science falsely so called."

The apostle Paul said to Timothy:

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

5

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

By the law of Moses, all the adult Hebrew males were commanded to "appear before the Lord God" in Jerusalem three times in the year (Ex. 34:23) for the feast of tabernacles (Lev. 23:34), the feast of passover (Ex. 12:17; Lev. 23:5), and the feast of Pentecost (Ex. 34:22).

The Hebrews were surrounded by warring nations of people who were continually trying to take their land. It seems from a human point of view that while the men were away from home to keep the feasts the enemies would have invaded the territory of the Jews and made slaves of their wives and children.

But when God commanded His people to keep the feasts, He gave them this promise: "Neither shall any man desire thy land when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year" (Ex. 34:24).

Nine hundred years elapsed between the time of Moses and the captivity of the Jews, and

...the united testimony of the Jews today is that never during feast times...when the feasts were held as appointed, did an enemy appear even once (Professor Bush, Notes on Exodus).

If the holdings and families of the Hebrews were not protected by the providence of God during the feast times, why was their land not desired while they were keeping the feasts as it was at other times?

This, I verily believe, is an example of the exertion of divine influence and proves that there is in this universe a supreme being who keeps watch over those who walk by faith and do His will.

God, "our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psa. 46:1), says:

Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness (Isa. 41:10).

When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee (Isa. 43:2).

I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee (Heb. 13:5).

6

WHAT DOES INFIDELITY OFFER?

Genuine Christianity, the religion revealed in the gospel of Christ, offers the followers of Christ: (1) a good conscience; (2) "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding"; (3) "joy unspeakable and full of glory"; and, (4) the glorious hope of "an inheritance

incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away" in the resplendent glories of eternal light and immortal love.

But what does infidelity offer us for the renunciation of Christianity? It offers us counterfeit happiness in life; it offers us equality with the lowest forms of animal life in death; and after death it promises us eternal extinction and everlasting oblivion. How wonderful infidelity is!

Does infidelity make better homes and better citizens?

Does infidelity do anything to restrain the violent stream of corruption that threatens to undermine and totally destroy civilized society?

Does infidelity do anything to frustrate the intentions of imperialistic Communist dictators who threaten America with chaos and ruin that would be unparalleled by any disaster in the history of mankind? No. Communism is a system of infidelity. Therefore, infidelity in all of its variegated forms aids and abets the nefarious work of the Communist infidels who have boldly and emphatically declared that our children will live under Communism!

What does infidelity offer? Nothing!

Truly,

Skepticism is an awful experiment. It is simply taking the risk of losing everything, without the possibility of gaining anything for this world or the world to come (Benjamin Franklin).

Chalmers has well said:

Infidelity gives nothing in return for what it takes away. What, then, is it worth? Everything valuable has a compensating power. Not a blade of grass that withers, or the ugliest weed that is flung away to rot or die, but reproduces something.

Similarly, J. R. Paxton observed that, "Infidelity...tears down, but never builds up; destroys, but never imparts life; attacks religion, but offers no adequate substitute."

Let us "continue in the faith grounded and settled" because **...without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him (Col. 1:23; Heb. 11:6).**

And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments (1 John 2:3).

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city (Rev. 22:14).

7

AN EMPHATIC INDICTMENT OF ATHEISM

The Holy Bible says: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). This great verse is an emphatic indictment of atheism, the belief that there is no God.

David says: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork" (Psa. 19:1).

Paul says:

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse (Rom. 1:20).

Joseph Addison, the great British poet and essayist, said:

"To be an atheist requires an infinitely greater measure of faith than to receive all the great truths which atheism would deny."

Abraham Lincoln said:

"I can see how it might be possible for a man to look down upon the earth and be an atheist, but I cannot conceive how he could look up into the heavens and say there is no God."

Johann Kepler (1571-1630), the famous German mathematician and astronomer who formulated the three basic laws of planetary motion, described his research as "thinking God's thoughts after him."

S. Julio Schwantes says:

The very existence of natural laws discoverable by human intelligence was to him convincing evidence that God had planned the universe with marvelous wisdom. The absence of law would betray the absence of a Planner, and not vice versa.

Dr. George Washington Carver, who has been described as "a scientist of undisputed genius" (Lawrence Elliott), frequently referred to the earth as "the garden of God." He also said, "A flower is God's silent messenger."

Dr. E. A. Maness (B.L., M.A., Ph.D.) in his Evidences of Divine Being said:

If the word 'God' were written upon every blowing leaf, embossed on every passing cloud, engraved on every granite rock, the inductive evidence of God in the world would be no stronger than it is.

I could just as easily believe that Homer accidentally dropped several thousand Greek letters on the ground and picked up the Iliad and the Odyssey as I could believe that the marvelous universe of which we are a part is a product of blind chance.

"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Psa. 14:1).

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the basic fact upon which Christianity rests. Many years ago, Alexander Campbell said:

Only show me the man, who, on the testimony of the Apostles and prophets, believes that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, and I will engage to show you a Christian, not only in faith, but in works. A belief in this fact is the fons et principium of Christianity — the source from which the practice of all Christian virtues must be derived. This is the principle which leavens the whole mass—this is the balm of Gilead, the cordial which calms, and cheers, and comforts the heart (Campbell-Owen Debate, McQuiddy Printing Co., Nashville, Tenn., 1946, p. 315).

Just as certainly as Jesus was raised from the dead, he was “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16:16). Paul says he was “declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom. 1:4). Jesus claimed to be the Son of God (Matt. 16:16-19); and, obviously, God would not have raised an imposter.

Even the most ardent and determined enemies of Christ and Christianity admit that the body of Jesus was not in the tomb early in the morning of the third day after his burial. They say the disciples stole the body, but the fact that a Roman guard consisting of sixty soldiers guarded the tomb made it impossible for the body to be removed in such a way.

The soldiers were not all asleep at the same time, as the enemies of Christianity allege, because, as Benjamin Franklin said:

It was certain death, under the Roman military law, for a soldier to be found asleep while on guard. Then the guard was divided into different watches, and each watch only required to be on guard six hours at a time, involving no necessity for being sleepy while on guard. Then, it would have been marvelous for the entire watch to have fallen asleep at once, and so soundly asleep, as not to have been awakened by the rolling away of the stone from the entrance of the tomb, which was 'very great,' and the entire transaction of taking away the body! This is an incredible story (The Gospel Preacher, Vol. 1, Thirty-Third Edition, Gospel Advocate Co., Nashville, Tenn., 1947, p. 17).

The fact that the tomb was empty proves conclusively that God raised Jesus from the dead. This sacred truth cannot be refuted by all the prejudice, sophistry, ingenuity, and learning under the vast canopy of heaven.

In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay (Matt. 28:1-6).

After his resurrection and just before his ascension into heaven, our Lord gave to his apostles the Great Commission, saying:

All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy

Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world (Matt. 28:18-20).

Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:15, 16).

Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:46, 47).

In Rom. 6:1-5, the apostle Paul says:

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid, How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.

9

JESUS, THE SON OF GOD

All penitent believers who have been baptized into Christ are sons of God (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:26, 27). But Jesus, having been miraculously begotten by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary (Matt. 1:18-25), was, and is, uniquely the Son of God.

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the

Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven (Matt. 16:13-19).

If Jesus was not the Son of God, he was an imposter, because He said in many instances that He was the Son of God. If Jesus was an imposter, he was not a good man. It is universally admitted by those who deny the truth of the Bible that Jesus was a good man. It is grossly inconsistent to admit that Jesus was a good man and at the same time deny that he was the Son of God.

Jesus made the evidence that He was the Son of God absolutely impregnable forever by His glorious resurrection from the dead by the working of "the mighty power" of God. Paul says that God "declared him to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4).

Other proofs which declared Jesus to be the Son of God were: (1) His matchless teaching (Matt. 7:28, 29); (2) His miracles (John 3:2; 20:30, 31); and, (3) His sinless life (Heb. 7:22-26).

The Ethiopian eunuch, desiring to be baptized into Christ, said to Philip,

**See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?
And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart,
thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that**

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing (Acts 8:36-39).

Jesus says,

Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven (Matt. 10:32, 33).

Paul says,

...if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Rom. 10:9, 10).

10

THE ART OF WRITING

The history of the art of writing has always been of interest to me, and, during the past few years, I have done some reading and writing on that subject.

Cuneiform characters were cut with a stylus on wet clay tablets in ancient Mesopotamia (a country in southwest Asia). Public inscriptions were frequently engraved on stone. Short letters and receipts were written with ink on potsherds (broken pieces of pottery). Messages were also written with a stylus on wooden tablets covered with wax.

Orley M. Berg says:

Pottery is the most enduring substance known, being absolutely indestructible. Even iron will rust, corrode, or melt, but not so with pottery, which is simply hard-baked clay. It can be broken into many pieces, but none of the elements of nature will cause the pieces to disintegrate.

Papyrus was invented by the Egyptians and was the most extensively used writing material of the Mediterranean area.

Two layers of narrow strips from the pith of the stem of the papyrus plant, laid lengthwise and crosswise, were glued together, pressed, hammered, and rubbed smooth. The resultant sheets, about a foot square, were glued together to form long rolls (Frank B. Holbrook).

Leather began to be used about the fifteenth century B.C. Parchment, a leather material prepared by a refined tanning process, was in general use after the second century B.C. Most scholars believe that the original Bible manuscripts were written on papyrus and leather scrolls.

The Holy Bible, "a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psa. 119:105), is a product of the art of writing coupled with the supernatural inspiration of God: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:21).

The words of the apostles of Christ in the New Testament are not "the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (1 Cor. 2:13).

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

DO WE HAVE THE REAL BIBLE TODAY?

Many archaeological discoveries, including some during recent years in the dusty sands of Egypt, prove that the Bible of the twentieth century agrees in all qualities pertaining to authenticity with the Bible of the second century. Concerning four fragments of the second-century New Testament which were discovered in the early 1960's, R. H. Blodgett wrote:

The importance of these four manuscripts is perhaps beyond measure. However, one fact looms out above all others: for all practical purposes the text as found in a reliable modern Bible...and the text as found in these early pieces of second-century Bibles agree almost to the letter.

Our Lord Jesus Christ confidently and unequivocally says: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35).

The apostle Peter, by the inerrant and infallible inspiration of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:13), says:

For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever (1 Pet. 1:24, 25).

We should rejoice exceedingly because of the providence of God which has protected and preserved the Holy Bible through many turbulent centuries while powerful civilizations have declined, tottered, and fallen into oblivion, because, as Paul says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

12

BIBLE QUOTATIONS FROM THE EARLY CHURCH SCHOLARS

There are so many quotations from the Bible in the writings of the early church scholars that it is said that the Bible can almost be reproduced from these quotations alone. Let us consider a few of these quotations:

Theophilus (a writer of the second century): Thus he teaches those that do good not to boast, that they be not pleasers of men. "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth" (see Matt. 6:4).

Tatian: "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made" (see John 1:3).

Clement of Alexandria: "Behold," says Paul, "the goodness and severity of God" (see Rom. 11:32).

Tertullian: Paul himself writes to the Philippians, "if by any means I may attain to the resurrection of the dead" (see Phil. 3:11).

Iraeneus: And on this account the apostle, in the first Epistle to the Thessalonians, speaking thus, "May the God of peace sanctify you wholly; and may your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ" (see 1 Thess. 5:23).

13

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

The sacred scriptures, having been given by the inspiration of God, are able to make us "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15). Therefore, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11).

The Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not found therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scripture, we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority there was never any doubt in the Church.

The Bible plainly tells us what we must do to be saved and to live the Christian life faithfully. Please read Mark 16:16; John 3:5; Acts 2:38; Tit. 2:11-14; 2 Pet. 1:5-11.

The apostle Paul says:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek (Rom. 1:16).

And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess. 1:7, 8).

Our Lord Jesus Christ, "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:8), says:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven (Matt. 7:21).

He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not

spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak (John 12:48, 49).

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away (Matt. 24:35).

John says: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14).

14

THE HOLY BIBLE

At the coronation of British sovereigns, a copy of the Bible is presented to the monarch with these solemn words:

To keep your Majesty ever mindful of the Law and the Gospel of God as the rule for the whole life and government of Christian Princes, we present you with this Book, the most valuable thing that this world affords. Here is Wisdom; this is the Royal Law; these are the lively Oracles of God.

The apostle Paul says:

All scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

The Holy Bible is most assuredly the word of God. Let us implicitly follow the infallible guidance thereof rather than the whims and dictates of human wisdom. For the reason that "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23), "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12).

Dr. Laton E. Holmgren has well said:

Until the invention of printing there were not many copies available, and yet it has survived the efforts of men before and since to discredit and destroy it. It speaks to today's world as if it were published this morning.

The Bible is an indestructible anvil on which countless thousands of infidelic hammers have been utterly annihilated.

Jesus says: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35).

Peter says:

For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever (1 Pet. 1:24, 25).

15

THE HOLY BIBLE—GOD'S BOOK

J. A. Hickman has well said:

Today man sees all his hopes and aspirations crumbling before him. He is perplexed and knows not where he is drifting. But he must realize that the Bible is his refuge and the rallying point for all humanity. It is here man will find the solution of his present difficulties and guidance for his future action, and unless he accepts with clear conscience the Bible and its great message, he cannot hope for salvation (The Hurricane Breeze, Hurricane, W. Va., May 12, 1966, p. 2).

The apostle Paul observed that,

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruc-

tion in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

Peter says:

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever (1 Pet. 1:22-25).

If you want to know what you must do to be saved, please read Mark 16:16; John 3:5; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:26-40; Rom. 6:3, 4; 2 Pet. 1:5-11; Rev. 2:10.

When a man takes his Bible, and kneeling at its open page, has solemnly committed all his life and soul to its great promises and mighty commands, without a single reservation, then his prayers and deeds will tell upon the world, and he never can be unimportant again (R. W. Ives).

Within the Sacred Volume lies
The mystery of mysteries;
Happiest they of human race
To whom their God has given grace
To read, to fear, to hope, to pray,
To lift the latch, to force the way;
But better had they ne'er been born
Who read to doubt, or read to scorn.

—Sir Walter Scott

The Bible tells us that "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23), for the reason that, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12).

God says:

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways....For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts (Isa. 55:8, 9).

We must "walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7), and "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17), which is "a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psa. 119:105).

16

THERE IS NO BOOK LIKE THE BIBLE

There has never been, and there will never be, another book like the Book of God, the Holy Bible.

Man has no greater need than that of accurate spiritual guidance:

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death (Prov. 14:12).

O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps (Jer. 10:23).

Inasmuch as "the heart is deceitful above all things" (Jer. 17:9), "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered" (Prov. 28:26). Those who walk wisely "walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7), and "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17), which is "a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psa. 119:105).

The Bible is the only guide by which we can "safely navigate the stormy waters of human experience." The indwelling of the matchless truth of the Bible in our mind "makes the waste places of the heart blossom as the rose."

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night (Psa. 1:1, 2).

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

On the 31st day of October in the year 1517, Martin Luther published 95 propositions refuting the Roman Catholic doctrines of penance, indulgences, purgatory, and other false doctrines of the Roman Church. In April, 1521, he appeared before the Diet at Worms, Germany. He effectively replied to the charges that were made against him, and closed his defense with these courageous words:

Let me be convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures, or by the clearest arguments; otherwise I can not and will not retract, for it is neither safe nor expedient to act against conscience. Here I take my stand. I can not do otherwise. God help me. Amen.

The world urgently needs more men today who are willing to take their stand unreservedly on the authority of the Bible, regardless of the consequences.

The Bible tells us all that any man can know about the commandments of God: "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and

keepth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:3, 4).

The Bible, being the word of God (2 Tim. 3:16, 17), "is true from the beginning" (Psa. 119:160), and Peter informs us that our souls are purified "in obeying the truth through the Spirit...Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. 1:22, 23).

Jesus says: Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven (Matt. 7:21).

Abraham Lincoln believed that "the Bible is the best gift that God has ever given to man."

Patrick Henry said: The Bible is worth all other books which have ever been printed.

George Washington observed that, "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible."

Sir Isaac Newton wrote: There are more sure marks of authenticity in the Bible than in any profane history.

17

THE WORLD'S MOST WONDERFUL BOOK

According to Newsweek magazine:

The U. S. public (and the whole world in general) is the most communication-glutted group of people in world history. Daily bombarded by 'facts' which conflict, daily told opposite versions of the same incidents, hopelessly incapable in this complicated world of sorting out the truth, a great many Americans have undoubtedly built a hard shell of skepticism around themselves.

This confusion of which Newsweek warns also exists in the spiritual realm and, consequently, many people who claim to be

Christians do not accept the Bible as the inspired revelation of the will of God. But I wholeheartedly believe that the Bible is God's inspired, infallible, and eternal word and that we shall be either saved or lost on the basis of what is written therein by "holy men of God" who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:21). Please read Mark 16:16; John 3:5; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; 2 Pet. 1:5-11; Rev. 2:10.

George Miller said:

The vigor of our spiritual life will be in exact proportion to the place held by the Bible in our life and thoughts. I solemnly state this from the experience of 54 years.

Patrick Henry said:

The Bible is worth all other books which have ever been printed.

Sir Isaac Newton observed:

There are more sure marks of authenticity in the Bible than in any profane history.

18

THE INCOMPARABLE BOOK

The value of the Holy Bible is greater than the combined value of all other books which have been written since the beginning of history. No other book has had such an irresistible influence on the course of human events. No other book has had as much influence on the perpetuation of the moral values of the civilized world. In addition to being the only reliable source of much of our historical knowledge, this incomparable Book has been the spark which has generated much scientific progress. It has inestimably improved the economic and social condition of every country in which it has been extensively circulated and received with respect and honor.

No other book has been such a radiant star of hope to sincere people seeking the way to heaven. No other book has been such an indispensable source of comfort to the dying. No other book can truthfully be described as “the infallible compass to the living.”

The Bible is the incomparable Book—the Book without equal—for the reason that it is “the word of God which liveth and abideth forever” (1 Pet. 1:25). Concerning the Old Testament, Peter says: “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Pet. 1:21). Concerning the New Testament, Paul says: “Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual (1 Cor. 2:13). Concerning God’s revealed truth in its totality, the same apostle says: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

Although the Bible is usually thought of as a single book, it is in reality a collection of many separate books. But, for the reason that the separate books were written in such perfect harmony and unity, they may be accurately considered as component parts of one matchless Book.

The 39 books of the Old Testament cover the entire period from the creation to the end of the book of Malachi, which was apparently written about 425 B.C. The first five books of the Old Testament are almost universally considered by Bible scholars to have been written by Moses in about 1400 B.C. The other 34 Old Testament books were written during the next 1000 years, by shepherds, kings, captives in foreign lands, men of great education, and men of little formal education. Nothing pertaining to the Old Testament is more obvious or impressive than the fact that its authors, although of widely variegated backgrounds, wrote in such abso-

lute harmony and unity that it cannot be explained except on the basis that they truly wrote "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:21).

In their indescribable manifestation of almost unbelievable blindness and stupidity, infidels have ranted and raved and scoffed. Tyrants have diligently endeavored to utterly destroy the Bible by burning every copy which they were able to find. Yet, while the enemies of the Bible pass into oblivion one by one in an endless procession, the sacred message of the Bible shines as brightly today as when it was first written "by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16).

Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith's door
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
When looking in, I saw upon the floor,
Old hammers worn with beating years of time.

"How many anvils have you had," said I,
"To wear and batter all these hammers so?"
"Just one," said he; then said with twinkling eye,
"The anvil wears the hammers out, you know."

And so, I thought, the anvil of God's word
For ages skeptics' blows have beat upon;
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,
The anvil is unharmed—the hammers gone.

19

OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE WORLD'S GREATEST BOOK

Concerning the Book of God, the Holy Bible, someone has well said:

Other books tell us what men suppose; the Bible tells us what God knows. Other books tell us what other men...speculate; this Book tells us what an infinitely wise God who made us and all things, and consequently knows all things, has inerrantly revealed. This Book makes men wise with the wisdom that is golden, the wisdom that brings eternal salvation. No one can study this Book aright, no matter how ignorant he may otherwise be, without becoming possessed of that priceless wisdom that means eternal life. No other book has the power to make us acquainted with God and with His Son Jesus Christ, that this Book has. We earnestly entreat you to study this great Book that shows the way to eternal life; make it in your own experience 'the implanted word, which is able to save your soul.'

The apostle Paul says:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15).

The first four books of the New Testament are designed to present the infallible evidences of the divinity and Sonship of our Lord Jesus Christ, "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:30, 31).

The fifth book, Acts of Apostles, explains, both by precept and by example, to those who believe in Jesus what they must do to become children of God and heirs of

...an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (1 Pet. 1:4, 5; cf. Rom. 8:17).

In this wonderful book, the Holy Spirit, speaking through inspired men (1 Cor. 2:13), unequivocally and plainly answers the question, "What must I do to be saved?" Please read Acts 2:37, 38; 16:31; 22:16; 8:26-40.

The next 21 books are letters (epistles) to individual Christians and churches clearly and decisively describing the manner in which the Christian life is properly lived and the way that the work and worship of the church must be conducted. Please read Tit. 2:11, 12; Gal. 5:22, 23; Jas. 3:17, 18; 2 Pet. 1:5-11; Heb. 12:28; 1 Cor. 14:40.

Revelation, the last book of the New Testament, figuratively but beautifully describes the eternal bliss of "the spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb. 12:23) in the resplendent glories of eternal light and immortal love in "the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:11). The apostle John assures us that, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:4). And, as Joseph Scriven has well said, "When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun, we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we've first begun."

20

THE INFLUENCE OF THE BIBLE

The great influence of the Holy Bible on the everyday life of English-speaking people is inestimable.

Dr. W. Arthur Alcorn of Princeton University said:

A complete thesis on the influence of the Bible upon history, literature, art, music, government, law, philosophy, and mankind's thinking and accomplishments in general would fill a library.

In 1963, the Supreme Court of the United States eulogized the "literary and historic qualities" of the Bible.

Many of the world's greatest men have freely and humbly praised the influence of Bible study in their lives: George Washington, John Quincy Adams, Abraham Lincoln, Francis Bacon, Thomas Carlyle, Michael Faraday, William Gladstone, Immanuel Kant, John Locke, John Milton, Isaac Newton, and hundreds of others.

Gladstone, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, said:

If I am asked what is the remedy for the deeper sorrows of the human heart, I must point to something which in the well known hymn is called 'The old old story,' told of an old, old Book and taught with the old, old teaching which is the greatest and best guide ever given to mankind.

George Saintsbury, professor of rhetoric and English literature at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, said: "Here are the best words of the best period of England in the best order." This statement was made in his evaluation of the literary merits of the King James Translation.

Charles A. Dana, editor of the New York Sun, said: "Of all books, the most indispensable and the most useful...from which you learn more directly the sublime simplicity which never exaggerates, which recounts the greatest events with solemnity...but without sentimentality or affectation."

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the famous British poet, critic, and philosopher, said: "Intense study of the Bible will keep any writer from being vulgar in point of style."

The Holy Bible was "given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16); and, being the word of God, is designed by infinite wisdom to be a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path (Psa. 119:105).

The psalmist David says:

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper (Psa. 1:1-3).

21

THE BIBLE STORES OF WISDOM ARE NEVER-FAILING

I have been thinking of some of the well-known school textbooks of the nineteenth century which are now out-of-date and, therefore, no longer in our schools. The list of such books includes Webster's Blue Back Speller, McGuffey's Readers, Appleton's Readers, Arnott's Physics, Bain's English Composition and Rhetoric, Gilmore's Language and Literature, Cornell's First Steps in Geography, Huxley and Youman's Physiology and Hygiene, and hundreds of others.

In 1922, professor N. B. Hardeman, then the president of Freed-Hardeman College in Henderson, Tennessee, comparing the Book of God, the Holy Bible, with other books, said:

The Bible knows no such thing as passing while the ages come and go. It is ever fresh, like unto a mountain spring from which all our fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers slaked their thirst in generations gone by; and still, to us, the same spring offers that drink afresh, and it will continue to offer it to those yet unborn....Every generation born upon the earth finds the Bible waiting for it, with its fresh and never-failing stores of wisdom touching everything that affects the welfare of humanity.

The late William Lyon Phelps of Yale University once said:

Everyone who has a thorough knowledge of the Bible may truly be called educated, and no other learning or culture, no matter how extensive or elegant, can...form a proper substitute.

The Bible is distinguished from all other books ever written by the fact that, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

Peter tells us that

...all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever (1 Pet. 1:24, 25).

22

THE ROTUNDITY OF THE EARTH

Many years ago, one of the ships of Ferdinand Magellan that had sailed westward from Spain on September 20, 1519, returned to Spain from the east on September 8, 1522. It was the first ship to circumnavigate the earth. The unprecedented voyage conclusively proved that the world was round.

When a ship sails into view, only the plume of smoke is seen, then the top of the hull, then more of the hull, and finally the entire ship is seen. This also proves that the earth is round.

A few years ago, a picture was published by United Press International showing Mexico and the Gulf of California at the left and Northern New Mexico at the right and the earth's curvature between the two points. Since that time, the entire earth has been photographed.

Hundreds of years before the voyage of Magellan, Solomon said that God "drew a circle on the face of the deep" (Prov. 8:27).

About 750 years before the birth of Christ, Isaiah, "the prince of prophets," said that God "sits above the circle of the earth" (Isa. 40:22).

Solomon and Isaiah undoubtedly wrote so accurately concerning a fact utterly unknown in their eras by inspiration of God. It is a well authenticated fact that,

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may by perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

23

SOME GOOD RULES FOR EFFECTIVE BIBLE STUDY

I wish to share with you some good rules for effective study of the Bible which have enabled many people to obtain exceedingly great spiritual benefits from their study of God's word.

Rule 1: Study with an open mind. Make a diligent and persistent effort to learn what the Bible actually teaches instead of trying to make it prove what you already believe. The unadulter-

ated gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ "is the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16), and not human opinions (1 Cor. 2:1-5).

Rule 2: Study systematically. A student in school could not possibly learn biology, geometry, or Latin if he skipped around haphazardly from one subject to another instead of studying in an orderly and logical manner. It is just as impossible to adequately understand the spiritual truth of the Bible without studying it systematically as it is to master any difficult secular subject by following haphazard and spontaneous methods.

Rule 3: Study daily. The inspired historian Luke tells us that the Bereans

...were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so (Acts 17:11).

Inasmuch as the Bereans were commended for examining apostolic teaching in the light of the scriptures, let us carefully investigate every doctrine that we are not familiar with in the light of the gospel of our Lord, the New Testament, before accepting it.

Rule 4: Realize that absolute truth exists—not just "different shades of gray" or various degrees of error. Some pseudo-intellectuals have foolishly affirmed that, "You can prove anything by the Bible," or, "The Bible is full of contradictions." Such allegations are actually blasphemous. Those who make such baseless accusations against the Bible would become very angry indeed if I were to publicly state that their character is such that "you can prove anything" by them. When religious beliefs contradict one another, the conflict between them does not prove that the Bible teaches contradictory doctrines, but plainly indicates that at least one of the doctrines is not in harmony with the word of God.

Rule 5: Study thoroughly. In studying any given verse of scripture, we should carefully read and study as many other pas-

sages on the same subject as possible. We should especially consider the immediate context (verses surrounding the passage under consideration), as well as to whom, when, and under what conditions the statement was written.

Rule 6: Study prayerfully. In Proverbs 2:3-5, Solomon says:

Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.

Rule 7: Strive diligently to make a personal application of the will of God revealed in the Bible. The apostle Paul says: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Bible knowledge is indispensable, but it is of absolutely no real personal value unless it is prayerfully applied to one's own life.

May the Lord before whom we all must stand in the day of judgment richly bless you in the study of his holy word.

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night (Psa. 1:1, 2).

This book contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe in it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. (Selected)

THE SABBATH ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE

1. The word "sabbath" is a Hebrew word and means "cessation, rest". The word occurs first in Exodus 16:23 and marks the time of introducing the sabbath law to the Jews.
 - A. The sabbath was not fully made known to the Jews until the law was given on Mount Sinai: Nehemiah 9:13, 14; Ezekiel 20:5-12.
 - B. The sabbath was the seventh day of the week: Exodus 20:10. The first day of the week, which we are plainly instructed to observe (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2), is never referred to in the Bible as a sabbath day. The New Testament emphatically commands us to forsake not "the assembling of ourselves together." Please read Hebrews 10:24,25.
 - C. The sabbath was a memorial to the deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian slavery: Deuteronomy 5:15.
 - D. The Bible emphatically states that the forefathers of the Israelites who were delivered from the land of Egypt were not under the Ten Commandment covenant (which included the sabbath): Deuteronomy 5:1-15.
2. The sabbath law was never given to the Gentiles. It was given to the Israelites only. Please read carefully Exodus 31:13-17; Ezekiel 20:12; Deuteronomy 4:8; Psalm 147:19, 20.
3. Please read Jeremiah 31:31-34. This passage contains the Lord's promise to make a NEW COVENANT with his people.
 - A. Let us carefully observe that this covenant was not to be a restatement or a restoration of the covenant that God made when he brought Israel out of Egypt (that is, the Ten Commandment covenant): 1 Kings 8:9; Deuteronomy 4:13.

- B. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews identifies the covenant that God made when he brought Israel out of Egypt with what he calls “the commandment going before,” and expressly says that this covenant has been disannulled. Please read Hebrews 7:18 through Hebrews 8:10.
- C. The writer continues his explanation of the differences between the two covenants (the old and the new; the first and the second) through verse 29 of chapter 10; and in verses 9 and 10 he says:

He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

[NOTE] That is, we are saved by the second covenant—not by the first covenant (the old). Therefore, the salvation of people under the first covenant, including the Thief on the Cross (Luke 23), does not exemplify salvation under the new covenant.

- 4. Please read Amos 8:5, 9; Mark 15:33; Romans 7:4-7; 2 Corinthians 3:6-13; Galatians 3:19-25; Galatians 4:21-31; Galatians 5:4; Galatians 5:18; Ephesians 2:11-16; and Colossians 2:8-17. These passages clearly teach that the old covenant, including the sabbath, has been abrogated by divine authority and replaced by the new covenant.**
- 5. Although the old covenant is not today binding as a law, we need to study the Old Testament, because a thorough knowledge of the Old Testament enables us to better understand the New Testament. Please read Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:1-11; and Hebrews 2:1-4.**

NOT BY ATTAINMENT BUT BY ATONEMENT

One of the cardinal doctrines of the Book of God is the exceedingly precious truth that we are saved by Jesus's atonement rather than by our attainment. The apostle Peter says:

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot (1 Pet. 1:18, 19).

The Bible tells us that salvation is a gift of God which we appropriate by the merits of Jesus Christ and the grace of God through obedience to the will of God which is revealed in the gospel of our Lord, and not by meritorious works; that is, works of which man is the originator (Eph. 2:8, 9).

Paul says:

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 6:23).

Jesus says:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven (Matt. 7:21).

John says:

He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him (1 John 2:4).

James, referring to the commandments of God in the saving gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:16, 17), says: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (Jas. 2:24).

For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also (Jas. 2:26).

Our merciful and loving Redeemer, "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9), says to all mankind "of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev. 5:9), "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28).

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely (Rev. 22:17).

Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him (Acts 10:34, 35).

IN JESUS CHRIST "we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7), and "so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death" (Rom. 6:3).

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:16).

Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38).

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

And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 22:16).

All the angelic tongues of heaven could not fully describe the matchless salvation which is God's gift to undeserving man in Christ Jesus; and "he is able also to save them to the uttermost that

come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25).

But none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed;
Nor how dark was the night the Lord passed through
Ere he found his sheep that was lost.

— Selected

26

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

The atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ was typified by the Jewish Day of Atonement, an annual day of fasting and humiliation (see Lev. 16; 23:27-32). On the Day of Atonement, the high priest took the blood of sacrificial animals into the "Holy of Holies" in the temple and sprinkled it upon the Mercy Seat which covered the Ark of the Covenant.

The Jewish atonement was repeated "year by year continually" (Heb. 10:1), but Jesus, our high priest, "offered one sacrifice for sins for ever" (Heb. 10:12).

The Hebrews were cleansed temporarily by "the blood of bulls and goats" (Heb. 10:3, 4), but "we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10:10).

Peter says:

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot (1 Pet. 1:18, 19).

To be redeemed by the blood of Jesus, you must be translated into Christ (Col. 1:13, 14), "In whom we have redemption through

his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7).

Paul says: "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Rom. 6:3; see also Gal. 3:27; John 3:5; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:20, 21).

27

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

Dr. Ralph E. Knudsen has well said: "We are much like the man in a city who ran nearly a block to catch a bus and when he had sufficient breath to ask a question, he said to the conductor, 'Where is this bus going?' It seemed to be more important to be going somewhere than to know where that might be."

We are all passengers en route to eternity, but many people do not seem to either know or care where in eternity they are going!

Those who obey the will of God, which is revealed in the Holy Bible (Rom. 1:16, 17; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17), are going to heaven, whereas those who reject the counsel of God are going to hell.

Daniel says: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12:2).

Our Lord Jesus Christ says:

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation (John 5:28, 29).

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven (Matt. 7:21).

One of the most solemn truths in the Book of God is the fact that God

...hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead (Acts 17:31).

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world (Matt. 25:34).

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41).

If you want to know what you must do to be saved, please read Acts 16:31; Mark 16:16; John 3:5; Acts 2:38; 2 Pet. 1:5-11.

Our loving redeemer, "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9), says to all mankind, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28).

28

ARE YOU PREPARED TO DIE?

"An aged and somewhat eccentric Christian knocked at the shut door of the shop of a friend. When finally the door was opened and he was admitted, he asked, 'Were you expecting me?'

"'No, I wasn't,' was the answer.

"'But what if I had been Death?'

"Most of us will not be expecting Death when he visits us. Therefore we must be prepared. Only one preparation will suffice for eternity — that summarized by an old hymn which exhorts us to 'trust and obey'" (Desmond Ford).

The Book of God says:

Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth (Prov. 27:1).

For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away (Jas. 4:14).

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city (Rev. 22:14).

If you want to know what you must do to be saved, please read 1 Pet. 4:17, 18; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Mark 16:16; John 3:5; Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3, 4; Tit. 2:11-14; 2 Pet. 1:5-11.

A certain man said: "I have only one candle, and when that is burned, I am through." You also have only one candle!

Those who intend to yield themselves to God "tomorrow" need to carefully ponder the fact that "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Pet. 3:10).

In the day of the Lord,

...the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

Jesus says: "Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not" (Luke 12:40).

LET US PREPARE TO MEET GOD

The prophet Amos, distressed because of the sins of the chosen people of God, said, "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel" (Amos 4:12).

Nothing that man can be concerned about is worthy to be compared with the urgency of the necessity of preparing to meet God.

Someone has well said,

You are wise enough to sell goods for a profit; don't be foolish enough to sell your soul for nothing. You are wise enough to carry insurance on that which is perishable; don't be foolish enough to have no security for that which is eternal. You are wise enough to keep your appointments with men; don't be foolish enough to let your obligations to Almighty God go by default.

There is one appointment with God that no man can fail to keep,

Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead (Acts 17:31).

We prepare to meet God through obedience to the will of God. Jesus says,

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven (Matt. 7:21).

The will of God is clearly expressed in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul says,

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith (Rom. 1:16, 17).

For those who are prepared to meet God, beyond the graves and the gates of death,

There is a land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign;
Eternal day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain.

— Selected

But those who do not obey the gospel “shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power” (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

To prepare to meet God, you must: (1) believe the gospel (Mk. 16:15-16); (2) repent of your sins (Lk. 13:3); (3) be baptized for the remission of your past sins (Acts 2:38); and, (4) be faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10).

Jesus says,

And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be (Rev. 22:12).

30

“LET ME DIE THE DEATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS”

Balaam, a wicked false prophet, once said: “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his” (Num. 23:10). Like many careless and indifferent people of twentieth century America, Balaam did not adequately realize that if a person wants

to die the death of the righteous he must live the life of the righteous. Wishful thinking is never a substitute for godly living. Someone has well said: "Starting for heaven on a gravestone is risky business. Deathbed repentance is burning the candle of life for the devil and then giving the smoke to God."

One of the most meaningful questions ever put to our Lord Jesus Christ was, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:68). Truly, there is no person to whom we can go for salvation or the knowledge that enables us to obtain salvation by the grace of God but to our Savior. There is no true enlightenment and hope in the fallible and contradictory counsels of men. The most brilliant philosophies of the wisest of men utterly fail to provide satisfaction for the soul's thirst for the water of life. Only Jesus can do this. He says: "Come unto me, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

Paul tells us that God "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3), "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7).

To come to Christ (that is, to be translated into Christ), you must: (1) believe the gospel; (2) repent of your sins; (3) confess your faith in Christ; and, (4) be baptized into Christ.

Jesus says:

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:16).

Peter says:

Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38).

Paul says:

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Rom. 10:10).

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:3, 4).

Those who have been translated by the amazing grace of God into Christ must live lives of faithful obedience to the gospel of Christ to the end of their earthly journey in order to receive the crown of everlasting life.

Jesus says:

And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved (Matt. 10:22).

No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God (Luke 9:62).

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life (Rev. 2:10).

Paul, writing to "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling" (Heb. 3:1), said, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Heb. 3:12).

Those who would live the life that glorifies God must

...live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Tit. 2:11-13).

Our Lord is "not willing that any should perish" (2 Pet. 3:9), and "he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25).

31

"ARE YOU WASHED IN THE BLOOD?"

In language strongly and beautifully expressive of the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus, "the Lamb of God" (John 1:36), the apostle John says concerning one of his awesome and majestic visions on the isle of Patmos,

And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 7:13, 14).

The tribulation through which those whom John saw had passed is the common experience of all faithful children of God; for it is plainly stated in the New Testament that "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22; cf. 2 Tim. 3:12).

The word of God is the channel of divine grace by which the blood of Christ is brought into redemptive contact with the soul. Peter says,

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever (1 Peter 1:22, 23).

The word of God is the word (gospel) of Christ (John 3:34; 12:48, 49; Heb. 1:1, 2); and the apostle Paul says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16).

The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews says:

Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him (Heb. 5:8, 9).

All who are now saved by the blood of Jesus have been translated into Jesus Christ, "in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7).

Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? (Rom. 6:3; cf. Gal. 3:27).

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

Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38).

And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 22:16).

Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing pow'r?
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
Are you fully trusting in His grace this hour?
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

— Selected

RECONCILIATION

The apostle Paul described his work as a "ministry of reconciliation" and the gospel which he preached as a "message of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:18, 19). He tells us that God is the author of reconciliation and that Christ is its agent: "But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation."

In Romans 5:11, reconciliation is referred to as "atonement." This word denotes "an action by which two conflicting parts are made 'at one', or the state in which their oneness is enjoyed and expressed."

Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear (Isa. 59:1, 2).

Someone has well said,

Sin caused an estrangement; the cross has accomplished an atonement. Sin bred enmity; the cross has brought peace. Sin created a gulf between man and God; the cross has bridged it. Sin broke the fellowship; the cross has restored it.

We are reconciled to God in our Lord Jesus Christ, "in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7).

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? (Rom. 6:3).

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:16).

Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38).

33

FOUR DIFFERENT KINDS OF WORKS

Just as there are different kinds of faith described in the New Testament, there are also different kinds of works. The New Testament describes at least four different kinds of works, of which three are of absolutely no value in regard to the procurement of salvation, but the fourth is so important that no person can be justified apart from it.

The four kinds of works may be designated as follows:

1. **WORKS OF THE FLESH.** These are acts of unrighteousness and ungodliness such as adultery, murder, drunkenness, and idolatry. They are referred to and strongly condemned in Galatians 5:19-21 (A.S.V.):

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

2. **OUR OWN WORKS** (*Eph. 2:8, 9*). These are works practiced by men desirous of saving themselves without submission to the righteousness of God (*Rom. 10:1, 2*). In other words, they are works of which man is the originator or inventor. They include not only service to and worship of false gods, but also all other religious work and worship that God in his holy word has not authorized us to perform. Please read *Mark 7:7*; *John 4:24*; *Matt. 15:13*; *2 Cor. 5:7*; *Rom. 10:17*; *2 John 9*.

3. WORKS OF THE LAW OF MOSES (Rom. 3:28). The law of Moses was abrogated by the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Bible tells us in Colossians 2:14-16 and in Hebrews 10:9, 10. Therefore, no person is amenable to that law today. The apostle Paul emphatically states that "by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Gal. 2:16) and that those who strive to be thus justified "are fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:4).

4. WORKS OF OBEDIENCE (Rom. 1:5). Works of obedience are simply acts of obedience to the gospel of Christ. We cannot be justified apart from sincere gospel obedience. The word of God solemnly warns us that Jesus, "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9), "shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 1:7, 8). Saving faith is expressly said to be "faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6), and "this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3).

Paul says that we are not saved by works (Eph. 2:8, 9), while James just as emphatically says, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (Jas. 2:24). Paul obviously refers to works of which man is the originator or inventor, while James assuredly refers to works of obedience to the will of God (Matt. 7:21) revealed in the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:17), which is expressly said to be "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16).

There is no work that man can perform, even including work of faith and obedience, that will enable him to merit or earn his salvation. Jesus says: "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do" (Luke 17:10). Joshua did not earn Jericho by marching around it. Jericho is said to have been a gift of God (Jos. 6:1, 2) and salvation is said

to be a gift of God today (Rom. 6:23); and, just as the children of Israel were required to comply with certain conditions in accepting the gift of Jericho (Jos. 6), we are required to comply with certain conditions in accepting the gift of salvation (Heb. 5:9).

Faith, apart from obedience is, and always has been, absolutely worthless; "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (Jas. 2:26).

Jesus says:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven (Matt. 7:21).

Peter says:

Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him (Acts 10:34, 35).

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever (1 Pet. 1:22, 23).

The apostle John says:

And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him (1 John 2:3, 4).

If you want to know what you must do to be saved, please read Mark 16:16; John 3:5; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 2 Peter 1:5-11; Matthew 10:22; and Revelation 2:10.

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And

whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely (Rev. 22:17).

34

THE ESSENTIALITY OF TRUE OBEDIENCE

The Bible tells us that, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). This manifestation of God's love was grace, or favor. In the gospel of Christ, which is expressly said to be "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16), God, by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:13), has plainly revealed to man what to do to be saved. This revelation to all mankind of the way of salvation is also a manifestation of God's grace, or favor.

The erection of signboards along our great highways from coast to coast is a great favor to the people who travel by automobile. Let us think of God's commandments in the gospel of Christ as being signboards along the highway of life. I can see the grace of God in every commandment he has given. God's grace and God's commandments are actually inseparable. The essentiality of obedience to God's commandments is no more inconsistent with his grace, and the fact that we must be saved by his grace, than the essentiality of obedience to the instructions on the signboards along the highways is inconsistent with the grace of the state and federal governments that provided them.

The essentiality of unfeigned obedience to the will of God is clearly, plainly and decisively set forth throughout the Bible, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Jesus unequivocally says:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven (Matt. 7:21).

James says:

Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not be faith only (Jas. 2:24).

For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also (Jas. 2:26).

Peter says:

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever (1 Pet. 1:22, 23).

John says:

And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him (1 John 2:3, 4).

Saving faith is "faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6), and "this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3).

Inasmuch as obedience to God is the most infallible evidence of sincere and supreme love of God (1 John 5:3), no principle is more noble and holy than that of true obedience. All other virtues spring from the spirit of obedience and all sin springs from self-opinion and self-will.

To do some of the things that God wants us to do and at the same time to willfully disregard other things that He has commanded us to do is symptomatic of an unsound heart. Please read 1 Samuel 15:1-22. The spirit of sincere obedience moves toward

every commandment of God, as the needle always points where the loadstone draws.

It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4).

He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination (Prov. 28:9).

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man (Ecc. 12:13).

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city (Rev. 22:14).

35

FAITH AND WORKS

The Holy Bible plainly teaches that the only life that is pleasing to God is one in which both faith and works of obedience abound. Neither will save apart from the other. The two together, by the infinite grace of God, will result in "glory and honour and immortality, eternal life" (Rom. 2:7), as well as "quietness and assurance for ever" (Isa. 32:17), "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding" (Phil. 4:7), and "joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pet. 1:8).

Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only (Jas. 2:24).

For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also (Jas. 2:26).

Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works (Jas. 2:18).

Paul emphatically states that we are saved by "faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6). Such faith expresses itself in obedience to the commandments of God; "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3).

And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him (1 John 2:3, 4).

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city (Rev. 22:14).

Our Lord Jesus Christ, being "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9), says:

Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not (Luke 12:40).

And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be (Rev. 22:12).

If you want to know what you must do to be saved, please read Mark 16:16; John 3:5; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Tit. 2:11-14; 2 Pet. 1:5-11.

36

THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH

The Bible plainly teaches that we must not only believe in Christ, but must also obey the commandments of the gospel of our Lord, "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16), in order to be saved by the grace of God and the blood of Jesus. Let us consider a few plain passages of scripture which positively and unequivocally state that obedience to the will of God is essential to salvation.

Ecclesiastes 12:13: Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.

Matthew 7:21: Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Acts 10:34, 35: Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

Romans 6:16: Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8: And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 5:8, 9: Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.

James 2:24: Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

James 2:26: For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

1 Peter 1:22, 23: Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

1 John 2:4: He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

1 John 5:3: For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

Revelation 22:14: Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

If you want to know what you must do to be saved, please read Mark 16:16; John 3:5; Acts 2:38; 22:16, 2 Peter 1:5-11; Matthew 10:22; Revelation 2:10.

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely (Rev. 22:17).

37

SALVATION BY FAITH

The word of God plainly teaches that sinners are saved by the grace of God in the blood of Jesus Christ through faith in Jesus as the Son of God.

Peter says:

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot (1 Pet. 1:18, 19).

John says:

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the

Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name (John 20:30, 31).

The fact that sinners are saved through faith is one of the cardinal doctrines of the gospel of Christ. The fact that sinners are not saved by faith only is also plainly stated in the eternal gospel. The expression "faith only" is in the Bible only in James 2:24, where James emphatically says, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." Both in the Old Testament and the New, the Bible unequivocally teaches that, "as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (Jas. 2:26).

In the matchless Sermon on the Mount, our Lord Jesus Christ decisively stated:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven (Matt. 7:21).

There is no truth in all the Book of God that is more clearly set forth by the Holy Spirit than the fact that saving faith is simply "faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6); and "this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3).

Righteousness is obedience to the commandments of God (Psa. 119:172) in the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:17), which is "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom 1:16); and "in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:35).

And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him (1 John 2:3, 4).

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city (Rev. 22:14).

Although we must obey the commandments of God in the gospel of our Lord to be saved, we do not by our obedience earn, merit, or purchase salvation. Jesus says:

So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do (Luke 17:10).

38

TWO KINDS OF FAITH

The Bible draws a very sharp contrast between a dead, inactive faith which cannot save and an active, obedient faith which is pleasing to God. There is not a single example in all the Book of God, from Genesis to Revelation, of a person's being saved or receiving any blessing whatsoever, either spiritual or temporal, by virtue of the possession of faith prior to or apart from its manifestation in overt action.

The gospel of Christ explicitly states that saving faith is "faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6) and that "this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments" (1 John 5:3).

James, an inspired man of God, unequivocally describes the utter worthlessness of faith apart from obedience to the will of God, as follows:

Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works (Jas. 2:18).

Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only (Jas. 2:24).

For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also (Jas. 2:26).

This principle is effectively and impressively illustrated in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews (often called "the honor roll of the faithful" and "inspiration's hall of fame"). In this great chapter, the inspired writer describes many cases of the reception of blessings because of faith, and in every case the faith that procured the blessing was coupled with unfeigned obedience. He mentions, for example, such great men as —

1. Abel, who by faith offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain;
2. Noah, who by faith built an ark in precise harmony with God's instructions; and
3. Abraham, who by faith left his comfortable home and "went out, not knowing whither he went."

We are saved by faith and repentance. Jesus says in Luke 13:3, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

We are saved by faith and baptism. Jesus says in Mark 16:16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

A person who has been saved in the sense of becoming a child of God must remain obedient to the will of God as long as he lives in order to be saved in heaven. Our Lord Jesus Christ says:

And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved (Matt. 10:22).

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life (Rev. 2:10).

The apostle Paul says:

Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall (1 Cor. 10:12).

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest

any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin (Heb. 3:12, 13).

39

THE GREAT COMMISSION

When our Lord gave to his apostles the Great Commission, enunciating the terms of pardon for all men living in the New Testament age, he clearly stated: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned" (Mark 16:16).

The conditions of pardon enjoined in the Great Commission were first preached by the apostles on the first day of Pentecost after the Lord's ascension into heaven, on which day Peter, answerin

Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

The famous gospel preacher Benjamin Franklin well stated:

In the commission the Lord puts faith and immersion in the same sentence, in order to, or in view of the same object — salvation. The apostle, in the first discourse under that commission, connected repentance and immersion together, in the same sentence, in order to the same end, or in view of the same object—salvation, or remission of sins. This connects the faith, repentance and immersion together; all in view of the same thing—remission of sins (The Gospel Preacher, Vol. 2, Gospel Advocate Co., 1954, p. 136).

In Jesus Christ, "we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7). Therefore, "all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death" (Rom. 6:3).

Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (John 3:5).

And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins calling on his name (Acts 22:16).

40

WHAT MUST I DO?

In the New Testament the question, "What must I do to be saved?" (or the equivalent) is answered in Acts 2:38, Acts 16:31, and Acts 22:16.

The three thousand Jews (who believed on Jesus Christ) on the first day of Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus, were told, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

The Philippian jailer (who did not believe on Christ) was told, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:31; see also verses 32-34).

Saul of Tarsus (who had already believed on Christ and repented) was told: "...arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

Each one was told to take that step which was the next step for him to take in consideration of the steps which he had already taken (C. J. Sharp).

Where salvation is promised to a person, or affirmed of him, on certain named conditions, though it may depend on more conditions than those named, it can never depend on less. To this rule there is not, we affirm, an exception in the Bible (Moses E. Lard).

It is submitted, therefore, as a rule, that where in the Scriptures our salvation is predicated of a named cause

or condition, every other cause and condition named elsewhere in the Scriptures must be understood. Otherwise, the Scriptures will be made self-contradictory (J. S. Sweeney).

George A. Buttrick, the Editor-in-Chief of The Interpreter's Bible and The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, has well said that "any passage in the Gospels is to be interpreted in the light of the whole New Testament" (Pulpit Digest, Feb. 1966, p. 16).

Please read the following passages in your Bible: Mark 16:16; John 3:5; Acts 8:26-40; Romans 6:1-4; Galatians 3:26, 27; Ephesians 1:3-7; Colossians 2:8-13; 1 Peter 3:20-21.

41

BAPTISM IS ESSENTIAL TO SALVATION

Many people who believe and freely admit that baptism is essential to obedience deny that it is essential to salvation. That is the same as denying that obedience is essential to salvation. But the Bible plainly teaches that obedience is absolutely essential to salvation. Our Lord Jesus Christ says: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21). And the apostle John says:

And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him (1 John 2:3, 4).

Baptism is no more important than anything else that God in the saving gospel of Christ requires, but where in the Bible do we find authority to allege that it is less important than other things? Where does the Bible say that baptism is not essential to salvation?

There is no intelligent person who believes that there is miraculous cleansing power inherent in water to remove our sins, but our Savior has not promised to remove the stain of sin from your soul by his blood and by the grace of God before you are baptized.

In Mark 16:16, Jesus says: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

When I was a fifth-grade student at Kate Wilson Elementary School in Hartsville, Tennessee, I was taught by Mrs. Mary Horsley that, in arranging a sentence for diagram, the principle sentence is identified, then the dependent clause. In Mark 16:16, the principle sentence is "He shall be saved" and the dependent clause is "that believeth and is baptized." When transposed, the sentence reads with exactly the same meaning: "He shall be saved that believeth and is baptized." "Shall be saved" is the direct object of the verbs "believeth" and "is baptized." Let it be carefully observed that Jesus says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." He did not say, "He that believeth is saved and shall be baptized if convenient."

Belief and baptism in Mark 16:16 are joined by the coordinate conjunction "and." To both, thus joined, is inseparably connected the promise "shall be saved." Grammarians tell us that, "A coordinate conjunction is one that joins elements having the same grammatical construction" (The English Sentence, Jonathan Rigdon, Ph.D., Indiana Publishing Co., Danville, Ind., 1925, p. 162). The coordinate conjunction "and" is like the coupling pin by which railroad box cars are joined together. The coupling pin makes it impossible for the box cars which it joins together to move in different directions. Let us think of "believeth" as one box car and "is baptized" as the other. The two verbs can no more move in opposite directions with reference to salvation than two box cars properly joined together can move in opposite directions with reference to the station. No man has the right to uncouple "be-

lieveth" and "is baptized" and put the station (salvation) between them. Jesus says: "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Mark 10:9).

In John 3:5, Jesus says: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

In Acts 2:38, Peter says: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

In Acts 22:16, Ananias says: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

In Colossians 1:14, Paul says that IN JESUS CHRIST "...we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."

There are two plain passages in the gospel of Christ which tell us unequivocally that those who are in Christ have been baptized into him. In Romans 6:3, Paul says: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" And, in Galatians 3:27, the same inspired writer says: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

42

THE ESSENTIALITY OF BAPTISM, No. 1

In the Galilee mountain from which he ascended into heaven, Jesus said to his apostles:

Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world (Matt. 28:19, 20).

In the Jewish dispensation, God made this promise unto Israel: "In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee" (Ex. 20:24).

In the gospel dispensation, "God has recorded his name in the ordinance of Christian baptism. No man can claim the approbation of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit until he is baptized" (Ashley S. Johnson).

The Bible emphatically says that salvation is in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12; 1 Cor. 6:11). The promise of salvation, therefore, is placed after faith, repentance, and baptism.

Jesus says:

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned (Mark 16:16).

Peter says:

Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

Ananias says:

And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name (Acts 22:16).

In Jesus Christ,

...we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace (Eph. 1:7);

and

...as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27).

According to Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (p. 382), the "washing of regeneration" referred to in the following passage is baptism:

But when the kindness of God our Saviour, and his love toward man, appeared, not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by his grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life (Tit. 3:4-7).

43

THE ESSENTIALITY OF BAPTISM, No. 2

The baptism enjoined in the Great Commission of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and described and illustrated in the New Testament has been well described as "the true and proper expression of the soul's renunciation of sin and its trust in Christ who commanded it" (J. M. Trible).

Those who scorn the baptism that Christ commanded as if it were of little or no importance do despite to his authority, and deprive themselves of the promise of his forgiveness; for it is "he that believeth and is baptized" that "shall be saved" (Mark 16:16), inasmuch as, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

Ananias said to Saul of Tarsus: "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

Without the antecedents of faith and repentance, baptism is of no value whatsoever.

The Ethiopian eunuch said to Philip the evangelist: "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" (Acts 8:36). Philip replied: "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." When the eunuch had confessed his unfeigned faith in Jesus Christ, "he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both

into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him" (Acts 8:37, 38).

Jesus, being "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:8, 9), says to all men everywhere:

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest (Matt. 11:28).

I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me (John 14:6).

44

BAPTISM AND REMISSION OF SINS

In Acts 2:38, Peter says: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

Does anyone believe in repentance because of the remission of sins? No one so believes. No one so preaches. The relation of repentance to remission is that of a precedent to a subsequent. But the relation of baptism must be the same, for it is expressed by the same word, and at the same time; therefore, the relation of baptism to remission of sins is that of a precedent to a subsequent (J. S. Sweeney).

Jesus says:

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:16).

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

Ananias said to Saul:

And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 22:16).

IN JESUS CHRIST "we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7); and the Book of God plainly says that we must be baptized to be translated into Christ:

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? (Rom. 6:3)

For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ (Gal. 3:27).

45

ARE YOU REJECTING THE COUNSEL OF GOD?

Jesus declared that the Pharisees and lawyers who refused to be baptized "...rejected for themselves the counsel of God" (Luke 7:30).

Inasmuch as refusal to be baptized is rejection of the counsel of God, Jesus says, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

When Jesus gave the Great Commission to the apostles whom He had chosen to preach the gospel in all the world, He said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned" (Mark 16:16).

On the first day of Pentecost after the death and resurrection of Jesus, Peter said to three thousand persons who wanted to know what to do to be saved, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

Ananias said to Saul of Tarsus, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name" (Acts 22:16).

Barnabas, Paul's companion and co-laborer, is quoted by Dr. Thomas Armitage, a well-known Baptist scholar, as follows: "Happy are they, who, trusting in the cross, go down into the water full of sins and pollutions, but come up again bringing forth fruit, having in the Spirit hope in Jesus," (History of Baptists, p. 160).

Hermas, who was saluted by Paul in his epistle to the Romans (16:14), is quoted by the Baptist historian Orchard as follows: "Before a man receives the name of the Son of God he is ordained to death, but when he receives that seal he is freed from death and delivered unto life; now that seal is water, into which men descend under an obligation to death, but ascend out of it being appointed unto life," (Orchard's Church History, Vol. 1, p. 13).

Barnabas wrote about the time that the apostle John died. Hermas wrote about the middle of the second century, about forty or fifty years after John died.

Richard Watson, the Methodist scholar whose Institutes are studied in Methodist theological schools, says that baptism "is also obviously an act of faith, in order to the remission of sins, or the obtaining a good conscience before God." (Theological Institutes, Part IV, Chapter 111).

Albert Barnes, the popular Presbyterian commentator, in his comment on 1 Peter 3:21, describes baptism as an "indispensable condition of salvation." (Barnes' Notes).

In Jesus Christ, the Son of God, "we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7).

If you are not in Jesus Christ, you have not been redeemed by the grace of God and the blood of Jesus Christ. Have you done

what the gospel of Christ declares we must do to be translated into Christ?

Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:3-4).

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ (Gal. 3:27).

46

DID YOU FOLLOW THE RIGHT EXAMPLE?

Every man and every woman whose conversion is described in the New Testament heard the gospel, believed it, repented, and was baptized for (unto) the remission of sins (cf. Rom. 10:17; Mark 16:16; John 3:5; Acts 2:38). In your conversion, did you follow the examples recorded by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:13) in the New Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ, or did you merely imitate the restoration of some backslidden Jew of the Mosaic dispensation, such as the thief on the cross (Luke 23:33-43) or the man afflicted with palsy (Mark 2:1-5)? These Jews, whose forgiveness is frequently cited by those who do not know how to rightly divide the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15), to illustrate or exemplify forgiveness under the gospel dispensation were already God's children (Deut. 14:1) and their forgiveness, therefore, corresponds to the restoration of erring children of God (Acts 8:5-22) rather than to an alien's becoming a citizen of God's kingdom, the church (John 3:5; Acts 2:1-47).

In Mark 16:16, Jesus says:

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

In John 3:5, our Savior says:

Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

In Acts 2:38, Peter says:

Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

In Romans 6:3, 4, Paul says:

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Jesus, our Lord and Savior, is expressly said to be "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9); and the fact is plainly and unequivocally stated that in the day of judgment he

...shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

Although the wrath of God is to be "revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (Rom. 1:18), our compassionate and merciful Redeemer, "not willing that any should perish" (2 Pet. 3:9) and being "able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him" (Heb. 7:25), extends wide the arms of eternal love to all men of "...every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev. 5:9), saying,

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and

learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls (Matt. 11:28, 29).

47

WHAT IS BAPTISM?

I do not know of anything that is taught more plainly in the New Testament than the fact that the baptism required therein is immersion in water.

When Jesus was baptized of John in Jordan, he "...went up straightway out of the water" (Matt. 3:16).

After the gospel of Christ had been preached to the Ethiopian eunuch by Philip,

...they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him (Acts 8:38).

Jesus said to Nicodemus: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

As Ashley S. Johnson said:

It is an established law in the kingdom of nature that anything brought into the enjoyment of life by birth is smaller than that of which it is born. It is therefore a physical impossibility for 'a man' to be 'born of' a few drops of water.

Paul says: "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death" (Rom. 6:4). John Wesley, commenting on this passage, wrote: "Buried with him, alluding to the ancient practice of baptizing by immersion."

Genuine baptism requires "much water" (John 3:23). The fact that sprinkling and pouring do not require much water is conclusive proof that they are not really "modes" of baptism.

Dr. Philip Schaff, one of the most distinguished American Bible scholars of all time, wrote: "In order to be true to its original

meaning, and its vital relation to redemption through Christ Jesus, baptism must be immersion." Please read Mark 16:16; John 3:5; Acts 2:38.

In a letter written in August, 1890, to C. D. Jones of Lynchburg, Va., Prof. A. Diomedes Kyriacos, Professor of Church History in the University of Athens, Greece, said:

The verb baptizo in the Greek language never has the meaning of to sprinkle or to pour, but invariably that of to dip (The Great Controversy, Ashley S. Johnson, eleventh edition, Gospel Advocate Co., Nashville, Tenn., 1952, p. 263).

Prof. W. S. Tyler of Amherst College in Massachusetts wrote: "I do not know of any good Lexicon which gives sprinkle as a rendering for baptizo."

Prof. M. L. D'Ooge of Colby University in Michigan wrote: "There is no standard Greek-English Lexicon that gives either sprinkle or pour as one of the meanings of the Greek verb, baptizo."

Prof. James Flagg of Cornell University in New York wrote:

I know of no lexicon which gives the meanings you speak of for baptizo (that is, sprinkle or pour), not even the Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine periods, by Prof. E. A. Sophocles.

Prof. Milton W. Humphreys of Vanderbilt University in Tennessee wrote: "Although some Lexicons give pour or sprinkle as meanings of baptizo, there is no standard Greek-English Lexicon that does."

The lexicon written by Liddell and Scott is a lexicon of classic Greek. The New Testament was written in koine Greek. No true scholar, therefore, would endeavor to prove by this lexicon that the New Testament meaning of the word baptizo is pour or sprinkle.

The fact that New Testament baptism is unquestionably essential to salvation makes it imperative that we know exactly what this baptism is:

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:16).

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

Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38).

And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 22:16).

48

SOME THOUGHTS CONCERNING INFANT BAPTISM

The New Testament declares that only penitent believers can be baptized by the authority of Jesus Christ.

Jesus says: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned" (Mark 16:16).

Peter says: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

Many years ago, Ashley S. Johnson wrote:

What character of persons are to be admitted to the benefits of Christian baptism? Those and those only who have been changed in heart and life by faith and repentance; penitent believers. As to infant baptism, no one can show either by a command of Christ, or the practice of the apostles, that it is of divine origin. It was

originated by man, and its practice in my judgment is a sin, for it proposes to perform an act in the name of divinity which has no foundation in Scripture or common sense.

Jesus tells us that people must be taught before they can be baptized by his authority (Matt. 28:18-20). It is obviously impossible to teach the gospel to an infant.

Note: Passages are from American Standard Version.

49

INFANT BAPTISM

The Book of God plainly teaches that only persons who exhibit evidence of faith in Jesus Christ and have repented of their sins can be baptized by divine authority.

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:16).

Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38).

Inasmuch as baptism is expressly said to be for (unto, A.S.V.) the remission of sins, infants cannot be scripturally baptized, for the reason that they have no sins to be remitted. Please read Ezek. 18:20; 1 John 3:4; Matt. 18:3.

The first express mention of infant baptism in church history was a condemnation of the unscriptural practice in the writings of Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus (Tertullian) about A.D. 200.

August Wilhelm Neander, the famous Lutheran historian, wrote: "Baptism was administered at first only to adults, as men were accustomed to conceive baptism and

faith as strictly connected" (Church History, Vol. 1, p. 424).

50

WHAT IS THE CHURCH OF CHRIST?

In the second chapter of Acts of Apostles we read of the establishment of the church of Christ in the great city of Jerusalem upon the first day of Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Upon that day Peter preached remission of sins in the name of Christ in obedience to the great commission that our Lord had given to his apostles before his ascension into heaven (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15, 16; Luke 24:46, 47).

Those who believed the gospel and obeyed it by repenting of their sins and being baptized in the name of Jesus were added to the church by the Lord (Acts 2:37-47). If you hear the same gospel today, believe it as the multitude of Jews did on that day of Pentecost and obey it as they obeyed it, the Lord will likewise add you to his church — the church against which the gates of hell shall not prevail (Matt. 16:18); because God is no respecter of persons. Peter said to the household of Cornelius:

Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him (Acts 10:34, 35).

The church of Christ is composed of people who have done what the three thousand persons did on the day of Pentecost; and have, consequently, been added to the church to which they were added — the body of Christ (Eph. 1:20-23; Col. 1:18). As members of the body of Christ, we have organized congregations like the congregations that are called "churches of Christ" (Rom. 16:16) in the New Testament. We worship as the first-century Christians worshiped (John 4:24) and we engage in the same work in which

the first-century church engaged (Acts 6:1-6; Eph. 4:14-16; 1 Tim. 3:15). The church of Christ of today is, therefore, not a denominational religious organization; it is a reproduction of the church of which we read in the New Testament.

Foy E. Wallace has well said:

The wrong creed, the wrong doctrine, the wrong worship, the wrong organization and the wrong name could not possibly result in the right church. But the right creed, the right doctrine, the right worship, the right organization and the right name, for a like reason, cannot be the wrong church.

We solemnly urge you to investigate the church of Christ in your community in the light of the teaching of the Bible concerning the church that Jesus built.

The church of Christ refused to be governed by human creeds and confessions of faith because:

1. They divide believers by enjoining tests of fellowship apart from the gospel of Christ.
2. They are unnecessary. By the holy Scriptures we are "thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).
3. They are uninspired products of theological speculation.

Mr. James Alexander Haldane of Edinburgh, Scotland, has well said:

Man-made creeds of any nature, whether they be pronouncements of the Pope at Rome, the Augsburg Confession of the great Martin Luther, the Thirty-nine Articles, or the Westminster Confession of Faith of our own John Knox, serve no purpose except to bind men to the opinions of other men.

The gospel of Christ, for the following reasons, is the only rule of faith and practice to which we adhere:

1. Christ has all authority (Matt. 28:18).

2. Christ is the only lawgiver (James 4:12).
3. By the knowledge of Christ our faith is established in the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 2:1-5).
4. Christ is the head of the church (Eph. 1:20-23; Col. 1:18).
5. We are complete in Christ (Col. 2:10).
6. All that we do is to be done in the name of Christ (Col.3:17).
7. It is sinful to go beyond the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9).

We should study the word of God daily because, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12). The Bereans

...were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so (Acts 17:11).

The church of Christ in your vicinity cordially invites you to attend its services.

51

OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE LORD'S CHURCH

At the zenith of his earthly ministry, referring to the profound truth that Peter had just confessed, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, said: "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18).

The gospel of Christ reveals the following facts concerning the Lord's church:

1. It is neither Protestant, Catholic nor Jewish. (The word "Catholic" in this thesis is used as it is ordinarily used in modern theological parlance, and not as the equivalent of the word "universal.")
2. It was not governed by a pope. The idea that Simon Peter was a pope is only a myth. It is not based upon any

documentary evidence, either in the Bible or in profane history. The "keys of the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 16:19) were given to all the apostles (Matt. 18:18), and not exclusively to Peter.

3. It is expressly said to be the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 16:18, 19).
4. It was not established as "a spiritual contingent" (as the premillennial postponement theory alleges); it was established in fulfillment of God's "eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:10, 11).
5. It was established, in fulfillment of numerous prophecies (Isa. 2:2-4; Dan. 2:44; 2 Sam. 7:12, 13; Psa. 132:11) in the city of Jerusalem on the first day of Pentecost after the resurrection of our Lord (Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8; 2:1-47).
6. Since the day of Pentecost on which the church was established, all the saved have been in the church (Acts 2:47). The church is the body of Christ (Col. 1:18, 24; Eph. 1:22, 23), and we are reconciled to God in this "one body by the cross" (Eph. 2:16).
7. The gospel of Christ, by which we shall be judged in the last day (John 12:48, 49), requires all members of the Lord's church to perfect "holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1) by living "soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Tit. 2:12-14). One of the great truths of the New Testament is the fact that our Lord "loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:25-27).

THE TRUE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

The great book Acts of Apostles is an inspired history of the true apostolic church of our Lord Jesus Christ from the time of its establishment in the city of Jerusalem on the first day of Pentecost after the resurrection of our Lord to the time of the first Roman imprisonment of the apostle Paul.

In the beginning, the true church that we read about in the New Testament was in faith, doctrine, organization, government, worship, and terms of administration, fellowship, and unity just what the Lord wanted it to be. Jesus is the sole head of the church (Col. 1:18) and, consequently, the sole lawgiver (Jas. 4:12). The work that our Lord has done in person and through his apostles with reference to the church is perfect; and, since it needs no improvement and cannot be improved upon by the wisdom of men, it follows that there can be no divinely approved additions to this work nor subtractions or deviations therefrom.

The objective of the church of Christ today is to restore the faith and practice of apostolic times, and thus reproduce (restore) the apostolic church. The plea of the church of Christ for the restoration of the church which is plainly described by inspired writers in the New Testament was made necessary by serious departure or apostasy from "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). This apostasy was foretold by the apostle Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4, as follows:

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

You are humbly and earnestly invited to investigate the church of Christ in your community in the light of the teaching of the Holy Bible concerning the church that is described therein.

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THE SAVED ARE IN THE CHURCH

The word "church" is the most frequently used term in the New Testament that is used to designate saved people from the second chapter of Acts to the Book of Revelation.

In Acts 2, the historian Luke recorded the fact that as many as received the word of God (the gospel) believed in Christ, repented of their sins, were baptized in the name of Christ, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (37-47).

The true church, the church that Jesus established (see Matt. 16:16-19), is the body of Christ (Col. 1:18); and "he is the saviour of the body" (Eph. 5:23), for the reason that all saved people are reconciled "unto God in one body by the cross" (Eph. 2:16).

The house (family) of God "is the church of the living God" (1 Tim. 3:15), and all of God's children are in his family. Those who are "of the household of God" (Eph. 2:19) "are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph. 2:13). Please read Eph. 2:11-22.

The "new name" that Isaiah prophesied was to be given by the Lord to his people after the reception of the gospel by the Gentiles (Isa. 62:2) may be scripturally worn only by those who are in the house of God (Isa. 56:5). Apparently, the new name is the name Christian (Acts 11:26). A Christian is a penitent believer who has been united with Christ by being "buried with him by baptism into death" (Rom. 6:1-5; see also Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). By following the instructions of the Holy Spirit in the gospel of Christ (1 Cor. 2:13; Rom. 1:16), we "are...all baptized into one body" (1 Cor. 12:13),

the church (Col. 1:18), "which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

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FACTS CONCERNING THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

You are cordially invited to attend any or all of the services of the church of Christ in your community.

The church of Christ earnestly endeavors to promote "unity in essentials, liberty in non-essentials, and charity in all things."

The test of essentials and non-essentials is the plain teaching of the New Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ rather than the decisions of councils and the doctrines of human creeds and confessions of faith.

The Bible, the only proper standard of religious authority, is "open to the understanding of simple men" as to the things which are essential to salvation.

The church of Christ refrains from receiving anything into its faith or worship or making anything a test of fellowship among Christians that is not as old as the New Testament, for the reason that, "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God" (2 John 9).

The only objective of the church of Christ is to practice and promulgate simple apostolic Christianity, free from all mixture of human opinions and inventions of men, because, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12).

CONSIDER THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN YOUR COMMUNITY

You are cordially invited to consider the church of Christ in your community in the light of the teaching of the New Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ concerning the church which is described therein.

Churches of Christ are neither Protestant nor Catholic. We earnestly endeavor to practice simple, non-denominational Christianity. We regard the word of God as the only legitimate authority in religion. We believe that man-made creeds "serve no purpose except to bind men to the opinions of other men."

We cling steadfastly to the conviction that if we believe and practice the same things which were believed and practiced by the authority of Jesus Christ in apostolic times we will not be a denomination but only members of the "one body in Christ" (Rom. 12:5) which Jesus referred to when he said, "...upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). Peter, Paul and John were not members of any denomination; but they were Christians and, consequently, members of the Lord's church.

We believe that the name of Christ should be worn by God's children to the exclusion of all human designations (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:14-16). As John Wesley said: "Would God that all party names and unscriptural phrases and forms which have divided the Christian world were forgotten, and that we, as humble, loving disciples, might sit down at the Master's feet, read His holy Word, imbibe His spirit and transcribe His life into our own."

You are cordially invited to attend any or all of the services of the church of Christ in your community.

THE BUSINESS OF THE CHURCH

"A noted educator says that by way of experiment he asked boys from time to time what they studied in their Sunday school classes. One class had spent the time studying soil conservation. Another class had spent the greater part of the time during the autumn season discussing Saturday's football game. There is nothing wrong with either soil conservation or football, but under no circumstances should our class time be used up in a discussion of such matters" (Dr. William M. Elliott, Jr.).

The foregoing illustrations clearly indicate that many people do not know what the mission of the church is. The New Testament teaches that the principal business of the church is to maintain, preach, and perpetuate the saving gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The church of the Thessalonians knew what its mission was. Paul wrote in his first epistle to that great church: "For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything" (1 Thess. 1:8).

The Bible says that God wants the manifold wisdom of God to be made known through the church (Eph. 3:10, 11).

Paul says that the church is "the pillar and bulwark of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15).

Let the church BE the church!

THE HOPE OF THE JEWS

Judge W. G. Gaynor described the Jewish conception of the Messiah as follows:

In fact, Jesus did not answer at all to the idea or conception of the Messiah which existed in the Jewish mind, and was the source of the firm faith in the Hebrew people of the future triumph of their polity and nation. That polity embraced in its dual scope, spiritual and worldly hopes, expectations and aspirations alike; it was spirituality and temporality intermingled.

Jesus never intended to establish an earthly kingdom. When some of his admirers tried to force him to become an earthly king, "he departed again into a mountain himself alone" (John 6:15).

At the end of his earthly ministry, Jesus unequivocally said to Pilate:

My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence (John 18:36).

After our Lord's glorious resurrection and ascension into heaven, Paul said: "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14:17).

58

CHANGE AND DECAY

H. F. Lyte, the hymn writer, said, "Change and decay in all around I see." And Cowley described the world as "a scene of changes."

Peter observed that, "all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever" (1 Pet. 1:24, 25). He also foretold by divine inspiration that "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the

heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Pet. 3:10).

The apostle John says: "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (1 John 2:17).

Therefore, as Paul says, "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:2).

Dr. Ralph E. Knudsen has well said:

There are also the great unchangeables in the world and life which give permanency to cosmic existence....These unchangeables are not subject to the modifications of life which man directs but are inherent in the very fabric of the cosmos.

Jesus Christ, being "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8), is still "able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25). If you want to know what you must do to be saved, please read Acts 16:31; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 2 Pet. 1:5-11; Matt. 10:22; Rev. 2:10.

Knowing that he was destined to die on "The Old Rugged Cross" for all mankind (Heb. 2:9), Jesus said: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17).

Time is filled with swift transition—
Naught of earth unmoved can stand—
Build your hopes on things eternal,

Hold to God's unchanging hand.

When your journey is completed,
If to God you have been true,
Fair and bright the home in glory
Your enraptured soul will view.

— Selected

59

THE UNCHANGEABLE CHRIST

Ordinary leaders are changeable, but our Lord Jesus Christ is no ordinary personality. He is expressly said to be "the same yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8). He is like his Father who said to Israel, "I am the Lord, I change not" (Mal. 3:6).

The compassionate Savior who said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden" (Matt. 11:28) is "alive for evermore" (Rev. 1:18) and still "is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).

Our redeemer is "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty" (Rev. 1:8).

It has been well said that genuine faith in Jesus Christ is "first, a faith which is rooted in the actuality of history — 'yesterday'; second, a faith which is competent to help man in the tensions of contemporary life — 'today'; third, a faith which provides the basis of a courageous hope — 'tomorrow'."

If you want to know what you must do to be saved, please read Acts 16:31; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 2 Pet. 1:5-11; Matt. 10:22; Rev. 2:10.

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely (Rev. 22:17).

Jesus is "the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). He is "the way, the truth, and the life" and no man can come unto the Father but by him (John 14:6). One of the most precious truths of the everlasting and saving gospel is the indescribably wonderful fact that "he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25).

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THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE

Our Lord Jesus Christ, being "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:8), says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

It has been well said that, "Without the Way there is no going; without the Truth there is no knowing; without the Life there is no living."

In Jesus Christ, "we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7); and "so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death" (Rom. 6:3).

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

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:16).

Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38).

And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 22:16).

Our loving redeemer "is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him" (Heb. 7:25); and he is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). He shed his precious blood "for every man" (Heb. 5:9) that he might redeem unto God penitent believers "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev. 5:9).

Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him (Acts 10:34, 35).

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city (Rev. 22:14).

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely (Rev. 22:17).

61

LET US CONFORM TO THE WILL OF CHRIST

A story is told of a man who one day came to James Abbott McNeill Whistler, probably the most original artist of the 1800's, and requested his help in arranging a picture in a certain room. The man complained that the picture did not seem to fit the room. The famous artist replied, "Man, you're beginning at the wrong end. You can't make the painting fit the room. You will have to make the room fit the painting."

Analogously, when we look at God through Christ, we cannot make him fit into this lawless world or into our lives, but we must earnestly and persistently endeavor to make the world and ourselves fit into Him and His way.

The apostle Paul says:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God (Rom. 12:1, 2).

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:3-5).

Our Lord Jesus Christ expressly and unequivocally says: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21).

Peter says: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34, 35). The Holy Spirit tells us that "the fear of the Lord is to hate evil" (Prov. 8:13) and that righteousness is obedience to the commandments of God (Psa. 119:172).

The prophet Isaiah says:

And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever (Isaiah 32:17).

But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked (Isaiah 57:20, 21).

The author of the epistle to the Hebrews says concerning Jesus our Savior:

Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him (Hebrews 5:8, 9).

In the second chapter of his general epistle, James, the brother of our Lord, says:

Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only (James 2:24).

For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also (James 2:26).

We are not justified by works of which man is the originator (to which Paul refers in Ephesians 2:8, 9); but the Bible does not state in any passage that obedience to the commandments of the gospel of Christ is not essential to salvation. The gospel of Christ "is the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16); and "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

Saving faith is "faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6); "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3). "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:3, 4). "Blessed are they

that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14).

62

THE EMOTIONS

According to Marion Harper, Jr. (President, McCann-Erickson, Inc.), "Advertisers have found that the surest way to influence people to buy is to appeal to their emotions."

The Book of God warns us that, "The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going" (Prov. 14:15).

All people are motivated by their emotions to do many things, but we should take heed lest we allow them to supplant our intelligence.

Many people are governed almost exclusively by their emotions even in matters which have to do with the determination of their eternal destinies.

Emotion which does not lead to and flow out in right action is not only useless, but it weakens character, and becomes an excuse for neglect of effort (Tryon Edwards).

Every religious sentiment, every act of devotion which does not produce a corresponding elevation of life, is worse than useless; it is absolutely pernicious, because it ministers to self-deception, and tends to lower the tone of personal morals (Murray).

The Bible says:

O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps (Jer. 10:23).

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? (Jer. 17:9).

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death (Prov. 14:12).

To walk safely in the spiritual realm of life, we must “walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7), and “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17), which is expressly said to be a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path (Psa. 119:105).

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

63

ALL MEN NEED INFALLIBLE GUIDANCE

There is no person upon the earth who does not need infallibly accurate spiritual guidance and direction.

Solomon says:

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death (Prov. 14:12).

He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool (Prov. 28:26).

Similarly, the prophet Jeremiah says:

O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps (Jer. 10:23).

The heart is deceitful above all things (Jer. 17:9).

The word of God strongly and repetitiously emphasizes the fact that it is indeed *infallibly accurate* spiritual guidance that all mankind so urgently needs. Jesus warns us that “if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch” (Matt. 15:14).

Most of us certainly want to know which way to turn — which spiritual or religious road to follow. To find our way through the contradictory and confusing turns of life, we must have (and intelligently and prayerfully use) a spiritual road map. And the

Book of God, the Holy Bible, is intended by infinite divine wisdom to be our road map to reveal the one and exclusive way of life, peace, joy, service, fruitfulness, and reward in the resplendent glories of eternal light and immortal love. Like the road maps provided by our great oil companies, the Bible is now available to everyone. Let us, therefore, study the Bible diligently and find the way to be saved from our past sins (Mark 16:16; John 3:5; Acts 2:38) and to live happily and successfully, with reference both to this life and that which is to come (Psa. 1:1, 2; 2 Pet. 1:5-11; Rev. 2:10; 22:14).

I sincerely urge you to let the Bible be

...the light of your understanding, the joy of your heart, the fullness of your hope, the clarifier of your affections, the mirror of your thoughts, the consoler of your sorrows, the guide of your soul through this gloomy labyrinth of time, and the telescope through which you view the amazing and incomparable glories of the eternal home of the spirits of just men made perfect.

An inspired Hebrew psalmist wrote:

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path (Psa. 119:105).

The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple (Psa. 119:130).

Our Lord Jesus Christ, being "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6) and "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9), says, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39).

The Holy Spirit tells us that if we would walk in spiritual safety and security we must "walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7) and that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night (Psa. 1:1, 2).

64

WE MUST WALK BY FAITH

R. L. Whiteside said:

I stood by a bold spring of cold water, clear as crystal, gushing forth at the foot of a mountain. It appeared to be just the kind of water that would be good for a thirsty man, but I did not drink. Laboratory tests had proved it to be laden with typhoid germs. Faith in that report, not the appearance of the water, guided my actions.

Analogously, in the spiritual realm, we must "walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7). We must so walk for the reason that, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12).

The Bible tells us that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

David said: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psa. 119:105). John declares that he that "abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God" (2 John 9). Note: Passages are from the King James Version.

WALKING IN TRUTH

For the reason that, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12), Jeremiah the prophet said, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23).

Our Lord Jesus Christ says: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). We experience spiritual freedom by the purification of our souls, and our souls are purified "in obeying the truth" (1 Pet. 1:22).

The apostle John wrote: "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (2 John 4). To walk in truth is to live in harmony with the word of God. Jesus, praying to God for his disciples, said: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

To walk in truth is to "walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7), and "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

An inspired Hebrew psalmist wrote:

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psa. 119:105).

"The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple" (Psa. 119:130).

The apostle Paul observed that,

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

LUTHER AND ZWINGLE

Two of the greatest leaders of the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century were Martin Luther of Germany and Ulrich Zwingle of Switzerland.

According to D'Aubigne's History of the Reformation:

Luther was desirous of retaining in the church all that was not expressly contradicted by Scripture, while Zwingle was intent on abolishing all that could not be proved by Scripture....The Reformer of Zurich passed back over every intervening age till he reached the times of the Apostles; and, subjecting the church to an entire transformation, laboured to restore it to its primitive condition.

Although Zwingle had the right conception of scriptural authority, "his influence was overshadowed by that of Luther; hence his principles never obtained in what is known as the Reformation of the sixteenth century."

Paul says that we must learn "not to go beyond the things which are written" (1 Cor. 4:6).

John declares that,

Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son (2 John 9).

THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE

Only the truth can break the satanic shackles which keep people in spiritual bondage. Jesus says: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

At the end of his earthly ministry, Jesus was brought for judgment before Pontius Pilate, the sixth Roman procurator of Judea. During the trial, Pilate said to Jesus, "What is truth?" (John 18:38).

The word of God is truth (John 17:17); and as people obey the word of God more completely they become more holy (Psa. 19:7-9).

The state of freedom into which people enter through obedience to the truth is referred to in a few passages as a new birth. Peter says:

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever (1 Pet. 1:22, 23; see also John 3:3-5; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:3, 4; Gal. 3:26, 27).

Jesus bore witness to the truth so perfectly, both by word and deed, that he was able to say without exaggeration, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6; see also Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).

68

THERE IS SUCH A THING AS ABSOLUTE TRUTH

A. J. Ayer, a philosopher at Oxford University in England, wrote:

The question how a man ought to live is one to which there is no authoritative answer. It has to be decided by each man for himself (The Revolt Against Reason, Sir Arnold Lunn, Eyre and Spottiswoode, London, 1950, p. 221).

Sir Arnold Lunn endeavored to point out the absurd inconsistency in Ayer's allegation, as follows:

And if Himmler decides that his way of life involves massacring millions of Jews in gas chambers, there is no criterion by which we pronounce this way of life to be inferior to that of St. Francis.

The word of God, a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path (Psa. 119:105), says:

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death (Prov. 14:12).

O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps (Jer. 10:23).

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

Mr. Harold O. J. Brown, a doctoral candidate at Harvard University, has well said:

In the moral and intellectual sphere, in which freedom of thought and expression is to operate, the necessary mental equipment includes a clarity and toughness of thought which in turn depends on recognizing that there is such a thing as truth and that there are values which are absolute (The Freeman, Irvington-on-Hudson, New York, May 1966, p. 4).

In the spiritual realm, we must "walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7), and "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son (2 John 9).

DOES IT MATTER WHAT WE BELIEVE?

Dr. William M. Elliott, Jr., Minister of the Highland Park Presbyterian Church in Dallas, Texas, wrote:

To say that it does not matter particularly what one believes is sheer nonsense. There never was a more superficial, untrue statement. The individual who contends that it is of no consequence what a man believes just so he is conscientious, is...talking straight through the middle of his Sunday hat!

The Book of God plainly says:

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death (Prov. 14:12).

O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps (Jer. 10:23).

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord (Isa. 55:8).

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me (John 5:39).

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free (John 8:32).

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

IS ONE WAY AS GOOD AS ANOTHER?

It is frequently alleged that, inasmuch as all religious people are striving for the same place, one way is as good as another. Let us consider this illogical and unscriptural allegation in the light of some common-sense observations.

When you were seeking a wife, was one prospective wife as good as another?

When you were sick and called a doctor, was one as good as another?

When the doctor gave you a shot, was one shot as good as another?

When the pharmacist filled the prescription which the doctor gave you, was one medicine as good as another?

When you paid the pharmacist for the medicine, was one amount as good as another?

When your wife brought your baby home from the hospital, was one baby as good as another?

When your banker mailed you the title to your automobile, was one title as good as another?

The answer to all of the foregoing questions, of course, is no. Nevertheless, many people persist in believing, contrary to all rules of logic and all principles of divine revelation, that one religious way is as good as another.

Even if it could be proved that all religious people are striving for the same place, we must remember that the Book of God says that we must "strive lawfully" to receive the crown of life (2 Tim. 2:5). To strive lawfully is to strive in harmony with the law of Christ. Jesus says: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my

words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48).

The New Testament unequivocally informs us that the Lord's church is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22, 23; Col. 1:18, 24) and that, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:4-6).

Concerning acceptable worship, Jesus plainly says: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). To worship God in spirit is to worship "with reverence and godly fear" (Heb. 12:28) and to worship in truth is to observe the acts of worship authorized by "the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation" (Eph. 1:13).

Concerning worship that is not divinely authorized, Jesus says: "But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:9). "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matt. 15:13).

For the reason that "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23), "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12).

Many of the people who were converted to Christ in the early days of the church were religious (but lost) before their conversion to Him who is expressly said to be "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6); namely, the Pentecostians (Acts 2), the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8), Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9), Cornelius (Acts 10), and Lydia of Thyatira (Acts 16). Therefore, it is not enough to be religious. The only religion that is acceptable in the sight of God is the one true religion authorized, described, and illustrated in the gospel (doctrine) of our Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle John says:

Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son (2 John 9).

The Holy Bible, having been "given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16), is by God's infinite wisdom designed to be a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path (Psa. 119:105). Therefore,

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night (Psa. 1:1, 2).

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15).

71

LET US PREACH THE GOSPEL!

Before Jesus ascended into heaven, he commanded his apostles to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). The apostles admonished other evangelists to "preach the word" (2 Tim. 4:2), which is "the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation" (Eph. 1:13).

The simple preaching of the unadulterated word of truth produced amazing results, in spite of the fact that only the crudest facilities of communication and travel were available to the first-century evangelists. An unbeliever testified that there were six million Christians in the Roman Empire before the death of the apostle John.

One good man can accomplish more real good by preaching and teaching the word of God without adding thereto or subtracting therefrom than a hundred worldly, compromising preachers

can accomplish. Humanistic philosophy has never saved one soul since the beginning of time. The gospel of Christ is "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16). Therefore, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit" (Col. 2:8).

Paul said to the Corinthians: "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). Let us make the same noble resolution.

God forbid that we should glory "save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. 6:14).

72

THE WRATH OF GOD, NO. 1

The forbidding shores of earthly seas are the limits that God has fixed for the awesome waves that thunder against them, but there are no limits for the waves that foam and roar in the sea of God's wrath against sin. In this earthly phase of our existence, "the curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked" (Prov. 3:33), but the suffering that men experience in this life because of sin is only a prelude to the full stroke, the relentless force, and the consuming violence of the wrath of God that will in the day of judgment engulf those who refuse to humbly submit themselves to the righteousness of God which is plainly revealed in the gospel of Christ, "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16, 17).

The apostle Paul warns all mankind that God

...hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead (Acts 17:31).

The prophet Daniel says:

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt (Dan. 12:2).

Our Lord Jesus Christ says:

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation (John 5:28, 29).

However desperately men may try, no man upon the earth can escape the fact that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (Rom. 1:18), inasmuch as

...the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

Although it is indeed "a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31), "the Lord is...longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).

If you are not a Christian, I earnestly beseech you to accept today the great salvation that is in Christ (Eph. 1:7; 2 Tim. 2:10) by believing the gospel, repenting of your sins, and being baptized (immersed, Rom. 6:3, 4) in the name of Jesus Christ INTO (American Standard Version) "the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19).

Jesus says: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16).

Peter says: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

The citizens of the kingdom of Christ and of God who continue steadfastly in faithfulness throughout their lives will assuredly receive the crown of everlasting life (Matt. 10:22; 2 Tim. 4:6-8; Rev. 2:10); but we are solemnly warned that, "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 13:41, 42).

To live faithfully in Christ, we must "live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Tit. 2:11-14; please read Gal. 5:19-24; 2 Pet. 1:5-11).

73

THE WRATH OF GOD, No. 2

The word "wrath" occurs 197 times in the Bible. Of this number it is used of God 125 times. The word "anger" is used 237 times, of which number it is used of God 167 times.

The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men (Rom. 1:18).

The Lord Jesus Christ shall descend

...from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus (2 Thess. 1:8).

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb. 10:31).

Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment (John 5:28, 29).

And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life (Matt. 25:46).

Behold then the goodness and severity of God: toward them that fell, severity; but toward thee, God's goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shall be cut off (Rom. 11:22).

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9).

If you want to know what to do to be saved, please read Mark 16:16; John 3:5; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 2 Pet. 1:5-11.

God says:

I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live (Deu. 30:19).

"Prepare to meet thy God" (Amos 4:12); and, "Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Prov. 27:1).

THE POSSIBILITY OF APOSTASY

The point of many solemn warnings to children of God in the Holy Bible is that our matchless privilege of participating in eternal life is dependent on our continuing to abide in Jesus Christ in whom that life is available. If we fail to abide in Christ, our participation in the life that is in him ceases. We experience that life only as we remain in Christ, "who is our life" (Col. 3:4).

The Book of God, both the Old Testament and the New, contains many warnings against failing to abide in fellowship with God and the fearful and eternal consequences thereof.

In 1 Chronicles 28:9, your Bible plainly says:

The Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever (cf. 2 Chron. 15:2).

Our Lord Jesus Christ informs us that only those who have been born again are in his kingdom (John 3:1-5) and that,

The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 13:41, 42).

The Corinthians were "sanctified in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor. 1:1, 2); but Paul warned them, saying: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12).

The author of the epistle to the Hebrews, writing to "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling" (3:1), admonished them, saying: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (3:12). Obviously, only those who have fellowship with God can depart

from God, and a person who has departed from God is assuredly lost, although he was saved while he had fellowship with God.

Jesus warned the lethargic Laodiceans, saying: "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:16).

I earnestly entreat you to think seriously about these solemn warnings and "give diligence to make your calling and election sure" (2 Pet. 1:10).

In Hebrews 10:30, 31, the word of God unequivocally says: "The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

75

"WHOSOEVER IS BORN OF GOD...CANNOT SIN"

The apostle John says: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John 3:9).

When we consider this passage in the light of the general teaching of the New Testament, it can be easily seen that the passage does not mean (1) that it is impossible for a child of God to commit sin and that (2) the abiding of the seed in one's heart is unconditional.

Before writing the foregoing passage, John, in the same epistle, had said: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8).

"The seed is the word of God" (Luke 8:11), and sometimes people allow the devil to steal the seed from their hearts. Jesus, immediately after saying that "the seed is the word of God," said:

Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved (Luke 8:13).

John says:

Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father (1 John 2:24).

1 John 3:9 teaches that it is the will of God that the seed abide in us, and if it does continue to abide in us, it will keep us from committing habitual sin. The New Testament was written in Koine Greek, and in 1 John 3:9 the present infinitive of the verb is used. This tense conveys the idea of continuous action, and in this passage means sinning habitually.

Paul, writing to "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling" (Heb. 3:1), said: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Heb. 3:12).

76

"RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTETH A NATION"

Solomon, the illustrious king of Israel, said: "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34). The history of mankind bears testimony to the truthfulness of Solomon's well-known proverb.

Similarly, David, Solomon's noble father, said: "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord" (Psa. 33:12).

In May 1960, Professor James MacGregor Burns of Williams College wrote an article entitled "Test of a President" in The New York Times in which he said that the office of President is, above all, a "place of moral leadership." According to Dr. Burns, moral

leadership requires at least five things: (1) conviction, (2) the capacity to inspire, (3) a grasp of human events, (4) commitment (consecration to the public good), and (5) capacity for growth.

Americans need to pray the words of J. G. Holland even more now than when they were written many years ago:

God give us men! A time like this demands
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith and ready hands;
Men whom the lust of office does not kill;
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy;
Men who possess opinions and a will;
Men who have honor; men who will not lie;
Men who can stand before a demagogue
And damn his treacherous flatteries without winking;
Tall men, sun crowned, who live above the fog
In public duty, and in private thinking.

The apostle Paul says:

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour: Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:1-4).

77

THE DECAY OF HUMAN INSTITUTIONS

As Henry Brooks Adams (1838-1918), a famous American historian, and Arnold Joseph Toynbee, a well-known British historian, have convincingly pointed out, "Human institutions, like the human body, are subject to aging and decay."

During the past six thousand years, many powerful civilizations have flourished, declined, and fallen.

The true test of civilization is...the kind of man that the country turns out (Ralph Waldo Emerson).

All that is best in the civilization of today, is the fruit of Christ's appearance among men (Daniel Webster).

With Christianity came a new civilization, and a new order of ideas. Tastes were cultivated, manners refined, views broadened, and natures spiritualized (Azarias).

Christianity has carried civilization along with it whithersoever it has gone. And as if to show that the latter does not depend on physical causes, some of the countries the most civilized in the days of Augustus are now in a state of hopeless barbarism (Hare).

No true civilization can be expected permanently to continue which is not based on the great principles of Christianity (Tryon Edwards).

The Book of God says:

Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord (Psa. 33:12).

Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people (Prov. 14:34).

the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will (Dan. 4:25).

78

RECEIVING CHRIST'S WEALTH

Jesus Christ offers to all men his boundless wealth, but the portion of that which the Lord offers which we actually possess is determined by and is dependent on our faith.

The rainfall comes down in the same copiousness on rock and furrow, but it runs off the one, having stimulated no growth and left no blessings, and it sinks into the other and quickens every dormant germ into life which will one day blossom into beauty. We are all of us either rock or soil, and which we are depends on the reality, the firmness and the force of our faith in Christ (Alexander Maclaren).

Jesus assures us that "all things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9:23).

Paul, expressing unfeigned faith in Christ, confidently said: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).

79

NEW TESTAMENT DOXOLOGIES

The New Testament contains many beautiful doxologies which reflect the joyous and triumphant note of the unfeigned Christian faith of apostolic times.

Paul says:

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:53-57).

Peter says:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us

again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (1 Pet. 1:3-5).

The declaration that only those who "are kept by the power of God through faith" will receive the heavenly inheritance is infinitely significant.

"By rejecting conscience certain persons have made shipwreck of their faith" (1 Tim. 1:19). That is, "they believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away" (Luke 8:13).

"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12).

"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Heb. 3:12).

Please read 1 Chron. 28:9; 2 Chron. 15:2; Matt. 10:22; 13:41, 42; Col. 1:23; 2 Pet. 1:5-11; Rev. 2:10.

80

CHRISTIAN WARFARE

The Christian life is a ceaseless warfare against the powerful forces of Satan, who "is transformed into an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14) and "walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8).

Paul admonished Timothy to "war a good warfare" (1 Tim. 1:18) and "fight the good fight of faith" (1 Tim. 6:12) and thus "lay hold on eternal life."

Near the end of his life, Paul said in his second epistle to Timothy:

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing (4:7, 8).

Dr. Gerald Kennedy, a well-known scholar and preacher who has received ten honorary doctorates, has well said:

Popular preaching today is concerned with personal tensions and problems. The main drive is toward solving a man's inner conflicts and worries, which is important. How to solve individual troubles and how to cure insomnia seem to be the main themes of our message. It is as if our God had become primarily a divine sleeping pill or tranquilizer. We seldom suggest that men should come to church and get stirred up for the battle, but they should come to get so soothed that they forget there is a battle.

81

SELF-CONTROL, No. 1

Those who sow to the flesh will "reap corruption," whereas those who sow to the Spirit will "reap eternal life" (Gal. 6:8).

Those who sow to the flesh do the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21), but those who sow to the Spirit bear the fruit of the Spirit, which is "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal. 5:22, 23).

An entrance into "the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" will be provided only for those who have self-control (2 Pet. 1:5-11).

Robert K. Newell has well said:

Mankind must learn to govern from deep within the individual; and when man at least has mastered himself,

responsible human relationships will be the first and most important by-products of his accomplishment (The Freeman, Aug. 1965, p. 46).

82

SELF-CONTROL, No. 2

The word of God unequivocally says that those who sow to the flesh shall "reap corruption," whereas those who sow to the Spirit shall "reap eternal life" (Gal. 6:8).

Those who sow to the flesh do the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21), but those who sow to the Spirit bear the fruit of the Spirit, which is "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control" (Gal. 5:22, 23).

An entrance into "the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" shall be provided exclusively for those who have self-control (2 Pet. 1:5-11).

The apostle Paul says:

Know ye not that they that run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? Even so run; that ye may attain. And every man that striveth in the games exerciseth self-control in all things. Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, as not uncertainly; so fight I, as not beating the air: but I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected (1 Cor. 9:24-27).

Robert K. Newell wisely observed that,

Mankind must learn to govern from deep within the individual; and when man at last has mastered himself, responsible human relationships will be the first...by-products of his accomplishment (The Freeman, Aug. 1965, p. 46).

THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-CONTROL

Seneca, a famous Roman philosopher, said: "Most powerful is the man who has himself in his own power."

It is said that self-discipline was Benjamin Franklin's major secret of accomplishment. John H. Stoke said: "Do you wonder why you fail to win the success that you should? Much comes from training and self-discipline. Try Franklin's method and see if it will not help you."

Norman Vincent Peale observed:

The person who is not master of himself, but is mastered by some fear or some hate or some jealousy or some frustration is not a happy person. If ever you are to be happy you have to go to the Lord for help and get the strength to conquer that which masters you.

God's word teaches:

He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city (Prov. 16:32).

And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts (Gal. 5:24).

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world (Tit. 2:11, 12).

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me (Phil. 4:13).

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but

was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need (Heb. 4:14-16).

84

“YE HAVE NEED OF PATIENCE”

The apostle Paul says that “ye have need of patience, that, having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise” (Heb. 10:36).

This passage plainly teaches (1) that obedience to the will of God is essential to entrance into the kingdom of heaven and (2) that only those who continue patiently (steadfastly) in obedience to the will of God to the end of life’s pathway shall receive the promised inheritance

...incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (1 Pet. 1:4, 5).

Our Lord Jesus Christ says:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven (Matt. 7:21).

And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved (Matt. 10:22).

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life (Rev. 2:10).

During Paul’s last imprisonment in Rome and apparently only a short time before his execution, he wrote:

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing (2 Tim. 4:7, 8).

If you want to know what you must do to be saved, please read Acts 16:31; Mark 16:16; John 3:5; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 2 Pet. 1:5-11.

Note: Passages are from American Standard Version.

85

THE IMPORTANCE OF WATCHFULNESS

Our Lord Jesus Christ says:

Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak (Matt. 26:41).

Peter says:

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. 5:8).

Concerning the day of his return, the Lord says:

But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is (Mark 13:32, 33; cf. Luke 12:43-48).

Paul says:

Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil (Eph. 5:14-16).

Someone has well said:

A soldier caught sleeping when he is supposed to be standing guard is in serious trouble. During wartime it means a court-martial and possibly being shot at dawn. If failure to watch is such a disastrous crime among the armies of men, is the failure of Christians to watch and pray any less culpable? And is there any other sin which Christians commit so frequently and so flagrantly as prayerlessness?

86

KEEP YOUR HEART PURE

A pure heart generates a holy life, but a corrupt heart produces ungodliness and unrighteousness, against which the wrath of God is to be revealed from heaven in the last day (Rom. 1:18).

Solomon said: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23).

Jesus says:

For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; All these evil things come from within, and defile the man (Mark 7:21-23).

Of whatever evil we can conceive, of whatever evils manifest themselves and spread desolation and misery through society, the human heart is the fountain, and on this is grounded the necessity of that entire regeneration of the will, affections, and all other moral faculties of the soul upon which our Lord insisted, in opposition to the Pharisees, who placed holiness in external acts, and left the vices of the heart unremedied (Watson).

Our Lord strongly denounced the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees with this scathing rebuke:

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also (Matt. 23:25, 26).

Jesus warns that

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

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God (Matt. 5:8).

Let us bring "into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5).

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things (Phil. 4:8).

87

LEGALITY DOES NOT CONFER MORAL ABSOLUTION

In most states, it is legal for a man to put away his wife for nearly any conceivable reason and marry again, but the legality of divorce and re-marriage for many causes does not make it morally right. The law of Christ and of God plainly says:

Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adul-

tery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery (Matt. 19:9).

Covetousness is not illegal, but it is certainly immoral, and is, therefore, unequivocally condemned by the gospel of Christ:

Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revlers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9, 10).

Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the rath of God cometh on the children of disobedience (Col. 3:5, 6).

Leonard E. Read in an article entitled "Power and Corruption" said: "Mere legality does not confer moral absolution; legality merely confers penal absolution and may be but a cover for gross corruption" (The Freeman, Aug. 1965, p. 53).

Jesus says:

He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day (John 12:48).

Paul says:

See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven (Heb. 12:25).

John says:

Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son (2 John 9).

LUSTFUL CURIOSITY

The lustful curiosity of men has been one of the great human frailties since the beginning of man's history and is referred to many times in mythology, folklore, and the Book of God, the Holy Bible.

Actaeon, a mighty hunter in Greek mythology and a worshiper of the goddess Artemis, by chance saw and with lustful fascination beheld the goddess as she was bathing. She changed him into a stag and his own dogs tore him to pieces.

According to an ancient legend, Lady Godiva, the wife of Leofric, earl of Mercia and lord of Coventry, rode naked on a horse through Coventry to obtain for the people relief from a burdensome tax. A tailor named Tom could not restrain his curiosity, and was struck blind when he peeped through a shutter. Our phrase "Peeping Tom" is traceable to this legendary incident.

The Bible says that once when the Hebrew men of war were away from their homes fighting the Ammonites,

David tarried still at Jerusalem. And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon (2 Sam. 11:1, 2).

David's lustful gaze led to adultery and the murder of Uriah, the husband of the woman (Bathsheba). Bathsheba became the wife of David and the mother of Solomon, the third Hebrew king, who "fell a prey to the sensualities of his time and position, died leaving his kingdom under the eclipse of faction and on the edge of decay."

In the matchless Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said:

But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart (Matt. 5:28).

The apostle Paul says:

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh (Gal. 5:16).

And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts (Gal. 5:24).

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world (Tit. 2:11, 12).

John says:

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world (1 John 2:15, 16).

89

WHAT IS WRONG WITH A "SQUARE"?

Today when a person has firm beliefs and enough courage to live in harmony with them he is labeled by society as an "odd-ball" or a "square."

Any mousy weakling can be a conformist, but only a real man — a man of fortitude and stamina — can be what is popularly known as an odd-ball or a square.

Dr. Edward Hughes Pruden has well said:

How hasty we are to label all who dare to be different as 'odd-balls' or 'squares'. But strangely enough it is the 'odd-balls' and the 'squares' who have made history. To

save my life I cannot recall the name of the judge who sentenced John Bunyan to twelve years in prison in Bedford jail..., but all of us know John Bunyan and rejoice in his witness to his faith....The Christian today needs great courage to withstand the pressures of a pagan world, and such pressures are always around us, but if we insist upon the right to obey our consciences, that courage is never without its exceeding great reward.

The Holy Bible says:

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God (Rom. 12:2).

And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever (1 John 2:17).

90

THE IMPRESSIONABLE MIND OF YOUTH

Many years ago, Sir Richard Steele observed that,

The mind in infancy is...like the body in embryo; and receives impressions so forcible that they are as hard to be removed by reason, as any mark with which a child is born is to be taken away by any future application.

Children can, and should be, taught the great spiritual truths of the Bible while they are young.

The Book of God says:

Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it (Prov. 22:6).

And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4).

WE MUST LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY

The gospel of Christ informs us that

...the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world (Tit. 2:11, 12).

And we are solemnly warned that

...the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hinder the truth in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18).

To live righteously is to live by faith (Rom. 1:17) which comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17).

An inspired psalmist declared that to live righteously is to obey the commandments of God (Psa. 119:172).

Jesus says:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven (Matt. 7:21).

Peter says:

Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him (Acts 10:34, 35).

The apostle John says:

And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him (1 John 2:3, 4).

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous (1 John 5:3).

92

OUR DEEDS MUST MATCH OUR WORDS

Dr. Joseph R. Sizoo, Director of the Chapel at George Washington University in Washington, D. C., has said:

Too much of Christianity turns on cliches rather than conduct, words rather than action, and discussion rather than deeds....When there is a divorce between what you say and what you do, when words do not match deeds, religion is a hollow and empty thing.

Ezra, the godly scribe of the Old Testament era, "had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments" (Ezra 7:10).

Our Lord Jesus Christ, who "began both to do and teach" (Acts 1:1), said in the Sermon on the Mount ("the Magna Charta of the Christian faith"),

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Matt. 7:21-23).

Paul, the matchless apostle to the Gentiles who faithfully carried the gospel to Asia Minor, Greece and Rome, tersely said in his epistle to the Romans, "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?" (Rom. 2:21).

THE KIND OF LOVE THAT GOD REQUIRES

Let us consider an extremely important question: What is the nature of the love that God in the Holy Bible requires of man? This is an infinitely important question because God will not accept any substitutes in lieu of what he requires.

The love required in the Bible is (1) *love toward God in the form of implicit obedience to his commandments* and (2) *love toward man in the form of sincere outgoing concern*. In Mark 12:30, 31, Jesus says:

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

If you love your neighbor as yourself, you practice in your relationships with him the rule which is written in Matthew 7:12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

If you love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, you obey the will of God with all your might: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3).

To those who think that obedience is not essential to salvation, James says in the second chapter of his epistle: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (James 2:24).

"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (James 2:26).

The apostle John, knowing by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that our souls are purified "in obeying the truth through the Spirit" (1 Pet. 1:22), wrote:

And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him (1 John 2:3, 4).

Our Lord Jesus Christ "shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel" (2 Thess. 1:7, 8); but, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14).

94

DO YOU LOVE GOD WHOLEHEARTEDLY?

According to a Harris poll of a representative segment of our population, 97 percent of American adults believe in a living God, 54 percent attend church services at least one time each week, 50 percent express gratitude to God before most meals in their homes, and 72 percent believe that death is not the end of life.

But, unfortunately, many people who claim to be religious do not love and serve God wholeheartedly. There has never been a time when more church members were lukewarm.

To the complacent Laodiceans, the Lord Jesus Christ said:

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth (Rev. 3:15, 16).

The apostle Paul says:

Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall (1 Cor. 10:12).

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But

exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin (Heb. 3:12, 13).

When a certain scribe asked Jesus, "Which is the first commandment of all?" he replied:

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself (Mark 12:30, 31).

If you truly love God with all your heart, you obey the will of God with all your might!

The apostle John says:

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous (1 John 5:3).

He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him (1 John 2:4).

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city (Rev. 22:14).

In the matchless Sermon on the Mount, our Lord Jesus Christ said:

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

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven (Matt. 7:21).

CHRISTIAN CONSECRATION

Concerning the worship of the church of Christ in apostolic times, Robert P. Roth says: "Rather than the services following wild, free enthusiasms, it appears from the New Testament records that the Spirit himself led Christians to recognize ordered worship to be a life of love that flows from the presence of the Risen Lord" (Meaning and Practice of the Lord's Supper, Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia, 1961, p. 5).

Everyday conduct is a better spiritual gauge than all the shouting that any man could possibly do.

Our Lord Jesus Christ says:

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24).

The apostle Paul says:

For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints (1 Cor. 14:33).

Let all things be done decently and in order (1 Cor. 14:40).

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

SEEKING FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD

In the great Sermon on the Mount, our Lord Jesus Christ said: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" (Matt. 6:33).

The kingdom of God is the domain in which God is acknowledged as king....And the whole extent of God's

kingdom on earth is measured by the number of hearts in which his authority is enthroned above all. To seek the kingdom of God, therefore, is to seek that state of mind and heart in which his will is the supreme law. To seek the righteousness of God is essentially the same thing (J. M. Tribble).

Many are willing to have God on the back seat as a passenger provided they can choose the route and do the driving. The most grievous error that any man can commit is to try to take his life into his own hands, and seek to take the place of God, directing his own life, instead of submitting himself to the sovereignty of God.

Jesus says:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven (Matt. 7:21).

The apostle John says:

He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him (1 John 2:4).

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city (Rev. 22:14).

Please read Mark 16:16; John 3:5; Acts 2:38; Tit. 2:11, 12; 2 Pet. 1:5-11; Matt. 10:22; Rev. 2:10.

97

TRIFLING WITH SPIRITUAL DUTY

Our Lord Jesus Christ, illustrating man's absurd proneness to put first things (the most important matters) last said:

A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all

with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come (Luke 14:16-20).

The great supper in this parable represents all the blessings of eternal glory in the kingdom of God, with which the things of this life, however important they may be, are not worthy to be compared.

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

Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth..." (Col. 3:2), because the earth and "...the works that are therein shall be burned up (2 Pet. 3:10).

Jesus says: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28).

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them (Heb. 7:25).

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely (Rev. 22:17).

If you need to know what to do to be saved by the grace of God and the blood of Christ, please read Mark 16:16; John 3:5; Acts 2:38; 2 Pet. 1:5-11.

Time is filled with swift transition,
Naught of earth unmoved can stand,
Build your hopes on things eternal,
Hold to God's unchanging hand.

— Selected

FEAR IS DESTRUCTIVE

Fear is an exceedingly destructive force that paralyzes spiritual growth and work.

John says:

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love (1 John 4:18).

Jesus says:

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these (Mark 12:30, 31).

Those who love God wholeheartedly obey his commandments unreservedly. John says:

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous (1 John 5:3).

The prophet Isaiah says:

And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever (Isaiah 32:17).

But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked (Isaiah 57:20, 21).

OUR HEARTS REST ONLY IN GOD

During the darkest days of World War II when the children were being evacuated from London, someone heard a little girl pray this simple prayer:

Dear God, please protect mommy and daddy from these terrible bombs, and dear God, do take care of yourself. God, if anything happened to you, we are all sunk.

Augustine said: "Thou hast made us for thyself, O God, and restless are our hearts till they find their rest in thee."

The psalmist David wrote: "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart" (Psa. 37:4).

The prophet Isaiah said:

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee (Isa. 26:3).

And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever (Isa. 32:17).

But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked (Isa. 57:20, 21).

To work righteousness is to obey God's commandments. An inspired psalmist said in Psa. 119:172: "My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness."

Jesus unequivocally says:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven (Matt. 7:21).

The apostle John adds:

And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him (1 John 2:3, 4).

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city (Rev. 22:14).

100

DO YOU LIVE OR MERELY EXIST?

Dr. Norman D. Fletcher has well said:

The idea that life is to be equated with existence, reduced to bread, lived as if it were a matter of things, automobiles, houses, clothes, and all that, and the more the better, this description of the good life as 'living it up', is not only not living it up, but really not living at all. It is resigning from life in favor of existence.

Only those who are genuinely happy really live; to be genuinely happy, we must have peace of mind; and to have peace of mind we must work righteousness (obey God's commandments, Psalm 119:172):

And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever (Isa. 32:17).

But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked (Isa. 57:20, 21).

Jesus says:

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matt. 16:26).

John says:

And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever (1 John 2:17).

101

GOD HAS WORK FOR YOU TO DO!

Throughout the history of mankind, God has used qualified individuals in his matchless work.

God selected Abraham to be the founder of the Jewish nation.

God selected Moses to be the great leader and lawgiver of the Hebrews.

God selected Gideon to be a judge of Israel.

The God who had work for Abraham, Moses and Gideon also has work for you to do. God has work for every member of the body of Christ to do; and "those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary" (1 Cor. 12:22), although their works are wrought in the background rather than in the limelight and may seem to be insignificant in the eyes of men.

The parable of the talents teaches us that God requires us to do the best we can with the ability that he has given to us (Matt. 25:14-30). The word of God assures us that "if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (2 Cor. 8:12) and informs us that, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much" (Luke 16:10).

Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil (Eph. 5:14-16).

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58).

Our Lord Jesus Christ "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Tit. 2:14).

Paul admonished the Colossians to be fruitful in every good work and increase in the knowledge of God (Col. 1:10). Faithful disciples of Christ are those who glorify God by bearing "much fruit" (John 15:8). "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (Jas. 4:17).

102

THE VALUE OF PERSISTENCY

According to the Thorndike Barnhart Dictionary, to be persistent is to have "staying qualities, esp. in the face of dislike or disapproval."

The value of persistency is well illustrated in this story which was told by Dr. Ralph E. Knudsen:

An incident is reported in which a well-known magazine was involved in a national program to secure subscribers. The names and addresses were being processed for mailing through an IBM machine. The machine stuck at a certain name and a sheepherder in a western state received six thousand invitations to subscribe to the magazine. The people in the little town into which the sheepherder's mail poured were all excited about the amount of mail he received. After opening a few hundred of the letters the sheepherder responded by saying, "I give up; I subscribe."

Jesus told a story about a judge who "neither feared God nor regarded man," but nevertheless vindicated a widow because of "her continual coming" (Luke 18:1-8).

Paul says: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9).

Lucretius said: "The falling drops at last will wear the stone."

Shakespeare wrote: "Much rain wears the marble."

Edward Eggleston observed that, "Persistent people begin their success where others end in failure."

103

LITTLE UNNOTICED SERVICES

Anthony Hope has well said:

You are very essential to the happiness of the world. Your little services may pass unnoticed, but the sum of all such helpfulness is what makes the world better today than it was yesterday, and builds up our civilization.

Esther Baldwin York tells the following interesting story which is a good illustration of the truth stated by Anthony Hope:

A retired schoolmaster was feeling discouraged, lonely and no longer useful. And then one day he received a letter from a former pupil. "The influence of your kindly wisdom," it read, "has remained with me all these years. Now, in the large business firm of which I am the head, I pass on your precepts and good counsel to my employees. So you see what a lot of good you are still doing. May I take this belated opportunity to express my deep appreciation for what you have done for me and innumerable others."

Many people dream of someday doing something great, but let us remember that little things done in a great spirit accomplish much and in the lives of others live forever.

The Holy Bible teaches that we must not despise "the day of small things" (Zech. 4:10).

Jesus says:

He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much (Luke 16:10).

He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward (Matt. 10:41, 42).

Elizabeth Baxter wrote:

I love to do things for others—
It gives me deep inner joy.
Perhaps I take life too seriously,
But then, it is not just a toy
To be played with and lightly discarded,
But wisely and thoughtfully used,
'Tis a gift from our wondrous Maker,
And should never be abused.

104

LET US RESTORE THE UNFAITHFUL

Our Lord Jesus Christ, being "longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9), assures us that "joy shall be in heaven, over one

sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance" (Luke 15:7).

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted (Gal. 6:1).

Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins (Jas. 5:19, 20).

If shifting loyalty from one's home to evil companions and behavior hurts an earthly father, contemplate how much the Heavenly Father is distressed. Yet, like the prodigal's father, God ever waits for His child to return, and stands with inviting open arms, hoping intently for his return (Arnold).

To God's erring children as well as to alien sinners, our infinitely compassionate Savior says: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28).

To the lukewarm Laodiceans, Jesus wrote:

I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me (Rev. 3:18-20).

LOVE AND FORGIVENESS

Our Lord Jesus Christ has been regarded by the greatest educators of all ages since the first century of the Christian era as the greatest teacher in the entire history of man.

God gave Jesus a commandment concerning what he was to teach (John 12:48, 49), and he, therefore, spoke "the words of God" (John 3:34).

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds (Heb. 1:1, 2).

Concerning love, Jesus said:

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (Mark 12:30, 31; see also 1 John 5:3; 1 Cor. 13:1-7).

Concerning forgiveness, Jesus said:

For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses (Matt. 6:14, 15).

Dr. Ralph E. Knudsen has well said:

These were sober words, penetrating conscience then as well as today. It is love and forgiveness which make reconciliation an objective reality between God and man and between man and man. Reconciliation is the great

need of every age and this was a vital reality in his teaching.

106

GOD FORGAVE EVEN MANASSEH

Manasseh was the son and successor of Hezekiah on the throne of Judah (B.C. 694-640).

The Bible tells us that Manasseh

...did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel (2 Chron. 33:2).

Manasseh and the Hebrews had been solemnly warned of the consequences of their sins, but they refused to listen;

Wherefore the Lord brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon.

And when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, And prayed unto him: and he was intreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem, into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God (2 Chron. 33:12, 13).

One commentator observed:

Manasseh knew the true God, and hence he had sinned against great light. He is called 'the prodigal son' of the Old Testament. His captivity gave him time to think, and he saw that his life had brought upon him this great calamity.

The commentator Whittle said:

It is impossible that any sinner who desires to forsake sin and turn to God will be refused mercy, after the record of pardon from God to a man like Manasseh. Would the Bible be the Book it is, if sin were not personified by such characters, and grace personified in Christ to meet their need?

The Book of God says:

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon (Isa. 55:7).

Though affliction drives us to God, He will not therefore reject us, if we sincerely seek Him, for afflictions are permitted to bring us to Him (Matthew Henry).

The apostle Paul says:

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby (Heb. 12:11).

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory (2 Cor. 4:17).

Peter assures us that the Lord "is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).

107

THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF TROUBLE IN LIFE

Trouble is as inevitably a part of human life as eating, sleeping and breathing.

Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground; yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward (Job 5:6, 7).

Although, "Man that is born of a woman is of a few days, and full of trouble" (Job 14:1), "Trouble is the structural steel that goes into the building of character" (Douglas Meador, Matador, Texas Tribune).

The apostle Paul says:

And not only so, but we also rejoice in our tribulations: knowing that tribulation worketh stedfastness; and stedfastness, approvedness; and approvedness, hope (Rom. 5:3, 4).

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward (Rom. 8:18).

For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory (2 Cor. 4:17).

Anna R. Cole has very beautifully said:

The rose is but more perfect
For the thorn upon its stem;
The sky seems but the bluer
For the cloud along its rim;
The rainbow all the fairer
Because it follows rain;
And life is all the richer
With the passing of the pain.

FRIENDSHIP

Friendship is definitely one of the most powerful influencing factors of life.

The friendship of Naomi and Ruth caused Ruth to leave her home, kindred, and religion.

The Biblical story of the friendship of David and Jonathan has been described as "one of the noblest and most beautiful stories of friendship in history" (Henry H. Halley). This friendship caused Jonathan to willingly forfeit his own right to the throne of Israel.

Those whom we choose for our friends either make or mar our lives. "Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals" (1 Cor. 15:33).

By the inspiration of God, Solomon observed that, "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother" (Prov. 18:24). Similarly, Ralph Waldo Emerson said: "The only way to have a friend is to be one."

Our best friends are not those who make life easy for us; our friends are those who put courage, energy, and resolution into our hearts. If you can wake up a young man, arouse his sleeping or undiscovered powers, so that he will win a fortune or do a brave thing with his own hands and brain, that is infinitely better to do for him than if you were to give him a fortune as a present (F. R. Miller).

We cannot look, however imperfectly, upon a great man without gaining something from him. He is the living life-fountain, which it is good and pleasant to be near; the light which enlightens, which has enlightened, the darkness of the world; and this is not as a kindling lamp only, but rather as a natural luminary, shining by the gift of Heaven; a flowing light-fountain, as I say, of native original insight, of manhood and heroic nobleness, in

whose radiance all souls feel that it is well with them (Carlyle).

Someone has well written:

This learned I from the shadow of a tree
That to and fro did sway upon a wall;
Our shadow selves — our influence --- may fall
Where we can never be.

109

THE BREVITY OF LIFE

The Book of God says that "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27).

Robert W. Service solemnly wrote:

Just think! Some night the stars will gleam
Upon a cold, grey stone,
And trace a name with silver beam,
And lo! 'twill be your own.

Concerning the brevity of life, the Holy Bible says:

For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanishes away (Jas. 4:14).

Our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding (1 Chron. 29:15).

My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle (Job 7:6).

Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not (Job 14:1, 2).

The days of our years are three-score years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is

their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away (Psa. 90:10).

The thought of the foolish men is that "their houses shall continue for ever" (Psa. 49:11); but Solomon says: "Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Prov. 27:1).

Desmond Ford has said:

The years accelerate as they increase, and the saying is true which claims, "The first twenty years is the longest half of your life."

Someone has said:

When as a child I laughed and wept,
Time crept.
When as a youth I dreamt and talked,
Time walked.
When I became a full-grown man,
Time ran.
When older still I grew,
Time flew.
Soon I shall find in traveling on,
Time gone.
O Christ, wilt Thou have saved me then?
Amen!

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:16).

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

Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38).

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness

and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world (Tit. 2:11, 12).

And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved (Matt. 10:22).

110

THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE

Just before his death on February 28, 1868, John Smith, one of the most highly respected evangelists of the church of Christ, said: "What a great failure, after all, would my long and checkered life have been but for this glorious hope of a hereafter."

The theme of the Old Testament book Ecclesiastes is the "vanity of earthly life apart from the sure hope of immortality."

In order to have the hope of everlasting life in the hereafter, we must obey the commandments of God.

Jesus says:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven (Matt. 7:21).

Peter says:

Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him (Acts 10:34, 35).

John says:

He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him (1 John 2:4).

Please read the following passages: Mark 16:16; John 3:5; Acts 2:37, 38; Rom 6:1-4; Gal. 5:22, 23; Jas. 3:17; 2 Pet. 1:5-11.

Only those who work righteousness and have the hope of eternal life have the peace of mind that produces real happiness. Isaiah says:

And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever (Isa. 32:17).

But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked (Isa. 57:20, 21).

Peter says:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (1 Pet. 1:3-5).

Heaven is "the perfection of all that can be said or thought" (Shirley) and "the treasury of everlasting joy" (Shakespeare).

Truly, "No man will go to heaven when he dies who has not sent his heart thither while he lives." Therefore,

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth (Col. 3:1, 2).

And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever (1 John 2:17).