

**THE FAITH
ONCE DELIVERED
TO
THE SAINTS**

By

S.C. Kinningham

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INTRODUCTION

This is a series of sermons presented by Bro. S.C. Kinningham over Radio Station W.K.C.U. in Corinth, Mississippi, U.S.A. We thank Bro. Kinningham for allowing us to print his sermons here in Singapore.

The reader will find that these sermons affirm the clear teaching of God's word while condemning the religious errors of men. You are invited to search the scriptures to see for yourself that these things are so.

**J.C. Choate
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131 Moulmein Road
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THE BIBLE, THE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD

As a basis for our study at this time, I am reading a passage found in 2 Tim. 3:14-17. There the inspired writer said, "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 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." I believe this passage itself to be inspired of God; and believe it is a part of a whole book that was so inspired. When we talk about the "bible," of course, we have reference to the holy scriptures. The word "Bible" itself is not found within the scripture, but it is an anglicized form of the Greek word "Biblos," meaning "book." Among the terms employed by the writers of the scriptures to designate the collection of writings which we call the Bible are these: The scriptures; the holy scriptures; the word; the word of truth; the law and the prophets; the old and new testament; the Jews usually referred to the Old Testament simply as "the law," "the prophets," and "the writings." But for sake of brevity and uniformity, we have employed the term "Bible" which means "book" to designate that volume of writings considered to be inspired of God. Then we prefix that with the word "holy" to distinguish it from all other

books. Hence, the "Holy Bible," the holy Book, or Book of God.

The Bible is simply a collection of books written by inspired writers. There are sixty-six of these books, and they were written over a period of some sixteen hundred years. These men lived in different countries, and in different ages. They spoke different languages, or at least, they lived among peoples of different languages. Yet, only two languages were employed by them in all these writings. All the things in what is known today as the Old Testament were written in the Hebrew language, and concerned primarily the Hebrew people. The things found in the New Testament, the testament of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, were written in the Greek language. That was the universal language at the time of their writing. And though these men wrote on a variety of subject matter, there was one grand theme running throughout the entire collection, and that is, the redemption of mankind. Their writings, when completed, yielded one consistent whole. These writers were not considered a literary people, and did not come from the colleges and universities. In fact, some of the greatest among them were considered by the leaders of their day as "unlearned and ignorant men." Only a few of them can be said to have had even a fair education for their day; yet under the most scrutinizing eye of the keenest intellects of literary and scientific achievement in this age of advanced learning, not one contradiction or discrepancy of serious consequence can be found in all their writings. Their statements are not only consistent with each other, but are in perfect agreement with every known fact in this enlightened age. This

within itself should lead us to believe that they were all guided by the same counsel, and that that counsel was supernatural and inerrant. That very thing is claimed by these writers themselves, and stated by them in these words found in 2 Pet. 1:21; "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 Spirit." The writers of the Bible were all holy men. They were men of God. Though they were human beings, and lived among their fellow human beings, they were filled with the Spirit of the Living God, and that Holy Spirit guided them in all they wrote. That is why it was inerrant and indestructable. That is why their writings were different in character from all other writings.

We called attention last week to some of the peculiarities of the writers of the Bible as a whole. Today let us notice some of the peculiarities of the writers of the New Testament. This is the portion of the Bible in which the law is found that is to govern all men in this age in which we live, and the portion with which more people are most familiar. We shall start with the historical writers of the New Testament. That is, those writers who gave to us an account of the birth, the life, the works, the death, the burial, the resurrection, and the ascension of our Lord. There were four of them, and are known as Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. They were devoted followers of Christ, and two of them at least were with Jesus personally throughout his personal ministry, and their attachment to him was very strong, tender and sympathetic. Men could not be more devoted to any one than they were to Jesus their Lord. Yet, they were unrivaled in the impartiality with which they set

forth the sins and follies of their friends and foes alike. They make no attempt to conceal their own sins; nor to apologize. Their own sins and follies are described with the same fullness of detail as the blackest deeds of their greatest enemies. What other writers have ever been so fair in their record of such matters? The proposal of James and John to call down fire from heaven to destroy a whole village of Samaria for refusing to receive Jesus for the night is as bluntly recorded as the murder of the babies in Bethlehem by Herod. The contention among the apostles and their desire for greatness is as fully and plainly set forth as the blasphemies of the Pharisees. Even though Peter was one of the most prominent among the apostles, and one of the most honored in the church, his cowardly denial of Christ is described with as much fullness of detail as the betrayal of Jesus by Judas. They did not apologize for Peter nor censure Judas. They simply set forth without a great feeling of emotion, the unvarnished facts for whatever emotion they might arouse in the hearts of their readers.

Next, we notice the imperturbable calmness with which they describe all events. The most wonderful and outstanding events — the most touching, are all described with the same degree of calmness as the most common-place and most indifferent. They manifest no more excitement in telling of the most outstanding miracles than they do in telling of the most trivial, everyday events. They show no more feeling when they speak of the murder of John the Baptist than when they speak of the voice crying in the wilderness. They are as calm and self-possessed in describing the agony in the garden and the scenes of Calvary as they

are in telling of his preaching in the synagogues or going to a desert place to be alone. No tears of emotion are expressed in telling of his cries on the cross, nor the removal of his body and the burial of it. When uninspired men write of such things they use language that is calculated to arouse great emotion, and add great detail in trying to impress them upon the minds of their readers. But their record is set forth in few words, and without that display of emotion that is so common among men. In telling about the resurrection of the Lord, they do it in the same calm calculated manner without a display of words of exaltation. What other writers have ever come even close to the writers of the Bible in this respect?

We notice in the next place the brevity with which they wrote in setting forth the life and works of the Lord. There has never been another set of writers burdened with a theme so momentous in their own estimation, nor in reality. They had the whole life of the Lord before them and had an intimate acquaintance with his work. They believed him to be the Christ, the Savior of the world. Yet, when they gave their account of his life, his works, his claims, and his teaching, which was destined to change the world, they compressed these accounts into about thirty-six pages each in this book that we call the Bible. Uninspired men have written volumes on the life of Christ, and even libraries. There is scarcely an end to the books that men have written about the Christ. They continue to write, even today, in glowing terms about the man they think he was, and about the things that seem to be hidden to the eye of the average student of the scripture. They betray much feeling and make many arguments. But the writers of the Bible do not argue

any point. They just simply state the facts as they were and leave the reader to draw his own conclusion. As strongly as they believed in him themselves, they did not try to convince others by arguments based upon the facts that they presented.

These writers did not concern themselves about all the details in his life's history, but they unite in giving to us the things the world needs to know. Uninspired men have written volumes on the temptation of Jesus alone. They have written volumes on his parables, volumes on his miracles, volumes on his trial, on his death, and other volumes on his resurrection. None of these things were ever impressed more forcefully upon the minds of any people than they were the writers of the scripture; and yet, they employed but few words and simple language in setting these things forth. Nobody was ever more impressed with the magnitude of his life and works, of his death and resurrection than were they; yet, the things they set were sufficient to accomplish God's purpose. John said, "There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written," (Jno. 21:25). If they had written all that people with their knowledge of his life could have written, no ordinary home could have contained their writings; and no person in his lifetime could have read all of it. They let us know that their storehouse of knowledge was by no means exhausted, and that the utmost care was taken in the selection of the things they presented. They picked out, and set forth, the things that were necessary and sufficient for us to be convinced that Jesus is the

Christ. John said, "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" (Jno. 20:30-31). Every principle he taught was clearly set forth by them, and the things he said about the kingdom that he came to establish are set forth in sufficient detail for the world to know what it was to be.

Not only did the writers of the scriptures pass over many of the events in the life of the Lord that we are so often made to wonder about, and set forth a sufficient number to convince us that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; but they are outstanding for the brevity with which they describe the events that they do set forth. The longest account that is given of the baptism of Jesus, the descent of the Holy Spirit, the Savior's prayer, and the voice from heaven acknowledging him as the Son of God on that occasion is given in twenty short lines. Many writers of our own time would not think of writing on this great happening without devoting a whole book to it. They would go into great detail telling us about the incidents leading up to it, in explaining the action of it, and making arguments on the "Why" of it all. Phraseology, and termonology, would be employed to create excitement about the descent of the Spirit, and emotion displayed in telling of his praying. But how different are these men who were inspired! The coming of the Holy Spirit and the beginning of the church of the Lord on the day of Pentecost, the conversion of such great multitude and 3000 people being added by the Lord on that day are all recorded in one brief chapter of forty-seven verses. What modern writer could tell

about the beginning of the Lord's church and all the wonderful events that occurred on that day in such short space? We well know that uninspired writers are quite verbose in their account of matters so momentous. The miracles of healing, the imprisonment of the apostles, the persecutions brought against the church, the stoning of Stephen, the beheading of the apostle James, the conversion of the chief persecutor of the church, and all the other wonderful events described by the writers of the Bible are all set forth in just a few lines. The only way the impartiality, the calmness, and the brevity and accuracy with which the writers of the Bible wrote can be explained is that "they spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." Thus, we have the Bible completed when the last writer of the New Testament scriptures laid the pen of inspiration down. That has been a long time now. Sufficient time has elapsed since it was finished for all of its claims to be tested and tried, and the flaws in it pointed out if there were any. And having been tested through nearly twenty centuries now, it stands today undented by the shafts of human criticism, and unscratched by the sword of its shrewdest enemies, as the word of the Living God.

David said in Ps. 119:160, "Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgment endureth forever." That affirms the absolute integrity of the Bible, "from the beginning" — from the first word to the last syllable of it. The beginning of God's word is the beginning of everything else. The first sentence of the Bible, "In the beginning God," stands out in its majesty like a great archway in the beginning of the universe. In the beginning of time,

there is God. In the beginning of the earth, there is God. In the beginning of salvation, there is God.

There has been much argument about the beginning of things — the beginning of the earth, the beginning of man, the beginning of nations, and the beginning of other things. Men who lay claim to learning and scholarship often tell us that the Bible account of the beginning of the earth cannot be true because it fixes the age of the earth at 6,000 years; and they say they have definite proof that the earth is much older than that. But that is only where men betray their ignorance, both of science and of the Bible. There is no statement in the Bible which indicates the exact age of the earth. The Bible says, "In the beginning," which describes a period of remote antiquity, hidden in the depths of eternal ages. The scientists, or rather the pseudo-scientists, vary widely in their estimate of the age of the earth. Some say it is a million years old; some ten million; some a billion; and some three hundred billion. And they all tell us that they have definite positive proof! We wonder. When scientists are so far apart in their calculations and so dogmatic in their affirmations, what right do they have to criticize the Bible which they do not know, and whose claims they have not taken the time to honestly consider? However, I shall not pause here to argue the question with them. Let their wildest imaginations ramble on, and their fancy speculate. But when we get back to the beginning, it will be the beginning of the first sentence of the Bible — "In the beginning, God." That is all the Bible affirms on the question. So we launch out into the fathomless depths of the eternal and urge that, "In the beginning God." There we have a char-

acter, all-wise, all powerful, all-loving, and divine. Accepting him, the Christian can explain everything, however miraculously it may follow.

Some feel a hesitancy in accepting that on the ground that it is mere assumption. If it is called assumption, I admit that I assume one thing – and that is, the existence of God. I accept Him as personified power, intelligent force, and life inherent. That is the only intelligent idea of the beginning of things that has yet been given. The atheist, who says there is no God, accepts what is known as “the nebular theory”; and he assumes, not one thing – but two, in the very beginning. He assumes the existence of matter and also of force. And then he will turn right around and assume a third thing – and that is, that force acted upon the matter; and the result is, all things as they appear today. I prefer to stay with the intelligent idea set forth in the scripture, accept God as First Cause, and say with the writer of the Hebrew letter, “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear” (Heb. 11:3).

There are three verses in the first chapter of the Bible that answer more satisfactorily the inquiries of mankind than all other books that have ever been written. They are the first, the twenty-fourth, and twenty-sixth verses of Genesis 1. They explain the origin of the earth, the origin of man, and the law of perpetuity. The first one says, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” In verse 24 God said. “Let the earth bring forth living creatures

after their kind." In verse 26 God said, "Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness." In these three verses we have the origin of the earth and of man, and the law of perpetuity. That law of perpetuity found in the beginning of the Bible has never been violated, and no athiest can cause it to be violated; and the word of David is vindicated when he said, "Thy word is true from the beginning; and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth forever."

Not only does the Bible begin with God, but it contemplates the entire span of time. Then when the Bible closes, we meet again with God. The Bible presents him as the first and the last, the beginning and the end. In the end, man who was made in his likeness in the beginning, will stand before him in judgment and be judged according to the things written in his book. The righteous then shall enter in to be with him for ever more in heavenly bliss, while those who have rejected his word will be forever banished from his presence. I urge today that you accept it as a message from God and containing the law of heaven, believe and obey it, that eternal happiness may be yours.

THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

I want to talk to you today about the inspiration of the Bible. I am happy to announce to you that I believe it to be absolutely authentic in every particular and wholly authorative. I have no disposition whatsoever to doubt a single statement found in it; nor do I doubt that it has been preserved in its completeness and handed down to us by the very hand that gave it. I am glad that I live in a land of Bibles and am a part of a civilization that is founded upon it. I would not want to live in a land without the Bible, nor to be a part of a society that is robbed of its principles. Indeed, the Bible is the most wonderful book ever given to man, and its influence is the sweetest that has ever been brought to bear upon any people.

It seems that the Bible, with all the blessings it has brought to the world, would meet with universal acclaim. But such has not been the case. There have been ambitious schemes and unholy purposes harbored by men and nations to exercise dominion over the peoples of the earth. To accomplish these ends, attacks have been made upon the Bible to destroy its influence upon those whom they would use as tools. When the Germans entertained such thought they enacted laws forbidding the use of the Bible in their schools. Then they went further. They sought to deify man, and to supplant the principles of divine truth with a philosophy tailored to the needs of their own unholy schemes. Hitler said: "For us there is no higher revelation of eternal reality than has sprung

from German soil and the German soul.” Then he said, “The only accepted standard for our indigenous faith is the German sense of morality.” The German Faith Movement was launched; and he said, “Therefore necessarily the German Faith Movement denies Christianity. It rejects Christianity in every shape or form, because its fundamental principles contradict the laws of the life of the people and race, and are alien to what is intrinsically German.” But what has happened to that regime built upon a foundation that denies God is a matter of history today.

The idea expressed by Hitler, and the German government, and the principle upon which they acted, is substantially the same as that which motivated the Japanese in the same quest. Robbed of the power and influence of the Bible, the blackest crimes and most atrocious deeds known among men were committed by them during the recent global conflict in which they were engaged. The atrocities of the Japanese soldiers shocked the world as the reports of their barbarous deeds spread to the civilized nations of the earth. Coupled with the gas chambers of Germany, in which multiplied thousands of innocent victims were exterminated because they would not give up their faith in God, this became the darkest blot on the human race since the Dark Ages of a few centuries past when it became a capital offense for one to be found with a copy of the Bible in his possession.

It is a known fact that Russia has also set out to conquer the world. This ambitious scheme reaches back through the past three decades. Like all others would trample the rest of humanity under their feet, their first move was to get rid of the Bible – to

destroy the influence of it among their people. Joseph Stalin issued a decree saying, "On May 1, 1932, there must not remain on the territory of the U.S. S.R. a single house of prayer to God, and the very conception of 'God' will be banished from the Soveit Union." Now our nation is following in the same steps. The Bible and prayer have already been driven out of our schools. Steps are already under way to remove "In God we trust" from our money and remove every element of religion from all branches of our military service and banish the concept of God altogether from our public life. Shall we sit idly by and allow these things to be taken from us and our children without a fight for those things that are so precious to us? Shall we, too, come to lean on the arm of flesh rather than the everlasting arm of the Almighty who created the heavens and the earth and upholds all things by the word of his power? Shall we yield to the would-be world rulers rather than the King of kings and Lord of lords who rules over all the kingdoms of men?

Legislative action is not the only method employed in the effort to destroy the power of the Bible in our land. Another very effective weapon that is being used against it is "Modernism." This is a banner that is being waved by those who claim to be friends of the Bible, but in reality are deadly foes of it. This is the work of religious leaders who come to us in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Religious educators, and others in high places, are denying the inspiration and authenticity of the Bible and seeking to relegate it to a level of fiction, myth, and fables. The most widely known seminaries and schools of religion are destroying the faith of thousands of

people in the Bible and are grinding out preachers by the scores who no longer believe in the inspiration of it nor accept it as a divine product. Two of the preachers in the town where I formerly lived were dismissed from their pulpits within the past year because of their avowed disbelief in the inspiration of the Bible.

Julian S. Huxley, a widely known religious educator, advocates discarding the Bible altogether. He wrote a book on "Religion without Revelation" in which he said, there is "no different kind of inspiration in the Bible from that in Shelley's poetry." Dr. James Bissett Pratt, another widely known in the field of religious education, said, "Men can get on without the Bible; they can live good and religious lives without it, or without any sacred book. The man who does not know the Bible, or whose acquaintance with it has begun in an unimpressionable age, will probably never know that he is missing anything." Dr. Micklejohn, who was instructor in philosophy in Brown University for fifteen years, and then professor of Philosophy in the University of Wisconsin for twelve years, said, "It is but the authority of that principle that one questions the existence of God . . . and if God does not exist, if the assertions about him are myths, then the very presence of those myths is a fact of supreme importance for our knowledge of mankind . . . who wrote the Bible? It seems clear that God did not do so. Nor did he inspire men to do it. But that implies that the aspirations of the Bible were created by men, created by their own unaided efforts."

A well known university maintained by one of the larger denominations of the land, and with which I am personally acquainted, argues strongly against the

inspiration of the Bible; and Eugene S. Tanner, head of the department of religion says the Bible contains a mere "religious" account of things and is not historically nor scientifically true — that the miracles reported in it are the mere concepts of men, or the hallucination of the mind. When preachers are being ground out of these schools of modernism, tailored to such patterns of atheism, and fill the pulpits of our land with this "anti-Bible" propaganda, how can we expect to do better than the other nations that have cast the Bible over board? And floating on these waves of modernism are many other trends calculated to destroy all spirituality in religion and the worship that is offered. Instead of the fundamentals of the gospel of Christ, a social gospel is being preached. Instead of a body of believers dedicated to the worship and service of Almighty God, churches are being made religious social clubs, with emphasis placed on that which appeals to the flesh rather than an earnest effort to please God. Much irreverence is shown in the worship that is offered, and Almighty God is pulled down from his exalted position in the heavens and made as common as the man on the street in the prayers that are prayed to him. Men address Him in prayer as "you" and "your" as if they were talking to a street cleaner or a gardener, instead of addressing him in terms suggesting the highest degree of reverence and dignity that is befitting to deity. Maybe these are considered by you as little things, but nevertheless, they are the pebbles on the beach that are constantly washed up by the great waves of modernism and infidelity. The God of the Bible deserves better and expects better at the hands of man who was made in His image and was designed to bear his likeness.

The reason that men sometimes give for saying the Bible is not historically correct is that Moses is said to have written the first five books of the Bible, that these books cover a period of over 2500 years, and that since there were no written records in those days, he could not have known of the things about which he wrote, only as they were handed down from one to another. They say that by handing these things down from one generation to another they were subject to much change and error. We are told that men told about the things of their childhood and the things their parents told them, that they passed these on to their children and grandchildren, and that they in turn passed them on to their children until finally they reached Moses. They say that Moses, not being present when God created the world and the things in it, could not have known anything about it. And they say nobody else was there when God made these things, and therefore, no man could know about it. But there is one thing they forget – and that is, that Moses was a prophet. A prophet is one through whom God speaks – one who speaks by immediate revelation. And God through Moses gave to us an account of the creation and the things that transpired through the past ages. God can as accurately reveal the past to man as he can the future. And that is exactly what he did. Moses could speak as accurately of things in the past that he had not seen as he could of things in the future that he had not seen. It was revelation in both cases. If I did not believe in a revelation of the past, why should I believe in a revelation of the future? I am perfectly willing to accept the apostle Peter's statement regarding the record of things in past ages when he said, "holy men of God spake as they were moved by

the Holy Spirit.”

As for the writings of the New Testament, Peter said, “We have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet. 1:16-21).

Men say it is fables. The writers of the scripture say, “We have not followed cunningly devised fables.” Critics say these things were handed down by man from one generation to another and, therefore, belong in the category of human tradition. The writers of the scripture say, “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 Spirit.” It was not necessary that Moses be in the Garden of Eden to know about the things that happened there. God revealed that to him. Paul said, “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto

us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:9-10). That is the only way man can know about the things that happened before the existence of man, and that is the way we know about what is going to happen after we die. We are not left in doubt about the future, but "life and immortality are brought to light through the gospel." We do not have to wonder about the state of the soul after death. God has revealed that to us.

When I talk about the inspiration of the Bible, I mean the plenary inspiration of it. That is, the full, complete inspiration of it – inspiration in its entirety. There are two schools of thought among those who hold that it is inspired. Some say it is "ideally" inspired, while others contend for the verbal inspiration of it. By being "ideally" inspired, is meant that God gave to man the "idea" and allowed him to state it in his own words. By verbal inspiration, is meant that the very words of it are inspired – that God not only gave the idea, but that he also gave the very words with which those ideas were to be conveyed to mankind. I believe the latter. I believe that every word in the Bible was inspired of God. This is not to say that I believe in an inspired translation of those words used by the writers of the scriptures. I do not. Men sometimes err in their translations, and I know of nobody who holds that the translations themselves are inspired.

Those who say the Bible is only "ideally" inspired tell us that certain passages do not mean what they say. On that ground, denominationalism rests. But all who accept the verbal inspiration of the scriptures believe that each word has a definite meaning and a definite bearing in its connection.

The writers of the scriptures themselves contend that they used the very words that were given them by the Holy Spirit in teaching the things they taught and in writing what they wrote. Before Christ's death, he told the apostles that he would send the Holy Spirit who "will teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said to you" (Jno. 14:26). In 16:13-14, he said, "When the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." Thus, the Spirit was to "Guide" and "teach" the apostles, and show them things to come. He was to receive from Christ and declare it to the apostles.

On the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ the Holy Spirit came upon them. Acts 2:4 says "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." The Spirit not only communicated to their minds, but guided their tongues in speaking the thoughts revealed to them. The words were not their own, but were the very words of the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul speaks later about the words they used, and said, "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1 Thes. 2:13). He said, "not the word of men" but "the word of God." Again he said in 1 Cor. 2:4-5, "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words

of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." He said, "not with words of man's wisdom," but the words he used were a "demonstration of the Spirit and power of God." In 11:23 he said, "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you." In 2:13 he said, "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you." In 2:13 he told about the "words" in which he spoke those things. He said, "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth; but which the Holy Spirit teacheth." The Spirit taught him the words to use. If that is not a divine statement of verbal inspiration, then words don't mean anything. But there are other evidences also.

In promising to send Christ into the world, God said in Deut. 18:19, "I will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." In Jn. 8:28 Jesus said, "As my Father hath taught me, I speak these things." His words were the very words of God. Let us notice some words in the scriptures that the writers could not have possibly used if they had not been revealed to them. In 1 Kings 13:1-2 the prophet said, "O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord: Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places . . ." "Josiah" was mentioned by name here 300 years before he was born. That is "verbal inspiration." In Isa. 45:1 the prophet said, "Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him." This was 150 years before Cyrus was born. In Isa. 7:14 is a prophecy concerning Christ which says, "Therefore the Lord

himself shall give you a sign; behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." 750 years later this was fulfilled, as recorded in Matt. 1:20-23. The angel that appeared to Joseph said concerning Mary, "She shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted it, God with us." The prophets could not have known to use these words if they had not been revealed to them. And there is no reason to assume that God would reveal some of the words to them and not reveal them all. In the face of these scriptures, how could anyone set aside a single word of the Bible and feel that he can get along without it? There is absolutely no superfluous matter in the Bible anywhere, and no word can be left out without marring the beauty of it and destroying the effectiveness of it.

As a final evidence that the very words of the Bible are all inspired of God, I would call your attention to the last chapter of the Bible, verses 18-19. There the apostle said, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book; if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." Thus, we find that God forbids that man add to, or take away from, "the words of the book of this prophecy." This is not only true of the book of Revelation, but of all that God has given to man. When he gave the law to Israel, he said, "Ye shall not add to, neither shall ye diminish aught from it." That is why it is wrong for man to make creed books, and for men to accept them. Every

creed book contains either more or less than the word of God. If it contains either more, or less, man is condemned of God for accepting it. We should be able to tell people in the language of the scripture what to do to be saved. We should be able to tell people in the language of the scripture about the church, and how to worship. The one who cannot tell the enquiring sinner in the language of the Bible what to do to obtain the forgiveness of sins, does not have the truth, and needs to learn it. When people ask today what they must do to be saved, we can use the very words that Peter used, and say, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). That is the language of inspiration, and man can not get around it, set it aside, or ignore it without losing his soul. Yes, we can tell people in the language of the man whom God sent to Saul of Tarsus to tell him what he must do. Finding Saul a penitent, praying, believer in Christ, Ananias said, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). The one who does not tell others in the language of the Bible what to do to be saved, simply does not tell them the truth. When science reaches its limit, and philosophy fails; when men in rejecting the Bible have destroyed each other; when the sun itself ceases to shine and the earth is removed out of its place; the inspired word of God, infallible and inerrant, will have survived every attack of infidelity and skepticism, and even the destructive forces of time itself. I urge that you believe it, and base your hope of eternal happiness upon it. Then when death's knell shall sound, your hope of the eternal will sustain you.

THE FAITH ONCE DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS

The last epistle of the Bible is a short one. It contains but one chapter. Yet that one chapter has all the authority back of it that all the rest of the Bible has, and the Testament of Christ would not be complete without it. It has all the authority of heaven back of it. There is some very strong and timely admonition given in this epistle that the Lord wanted impressed upon the hearts of all the saints before the Book was closed and sealed with the blood of Christ.

I want to read at this time the third and fourth verses of this epistle, which states in a very forceful way the object of the book. It is absolutely necessary that we know what the object of a book is if we are to benefit by what is in it. We should keep the object of every book in the Bible in mind as we read it if we are to get the message that God intended for us to get. In these two verses Jude said, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

Jude states, first of all, the thing he was writing

about. He did not want anyone mistaken about that. He said, "I am writing about the common salvation." Next, he gives an admonition in connection with that salvation, "That ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." The American Standard version says, "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." Then, third, he gives his reason for the admonition. He said it was necessary for him to give this admonition, "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." It is the "exhortation" that the writer gave that I want to emphasize particularly at this time; that is, "That he should earnestly contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." And let us bear in mind as we consider it that it will be necessary for us to keep before our eyes both the object of the epistle and the reason for his admonition. Let us bear in mind that he was writing about the "common salvation." Salvation is the thing about which the writer was primarily concerned.

Not his own salvation, but that which is provided for all saints. It is a "common salvation" because God has provided only one for all men. It is not common in the sense of not being important, or a thing of little consequence; but it is a "common salvation" because it is offered to all men on exactly the same terms. He has but one plan for all. All enter into that salvation the same way. It makes no difference who one might be, what his race or color might be, or his station in life — God requires the same of every individual on earth who would be saved. In 2 Tim. 2:10 we are told

that salvation is in Christ Jesus. Therefore, all who obtain this salvation will reach it in the same Christ and through the same door. In Eph. 2:16 the scripture says that Christ died to reconcile all men to God "in one body." The world may be torn asunder by sin and strife. The religious world may be divided into many religious bodies that will have little, or nothing, to do with each other, separated from each other by creeds that others will not accept and by names that others will not wear; but when all is said and done, the fact remains in the scripture that Christ died that he might reconcile all unto God in one body by the cross. And all who will enter into that salvation will reach it in that "one body" and will share it together in common with all true believers in Christ. The Bible also speaks of only one way of getting into Christ. In the 6th chapter of the Roman letter, and verse 3, the apostle said we are "baptized into Jesus Christ." In Gal. 3:27, he said, "baptized into Christ." In 1 Cor. 12:13, the scripture says, "baptized into one body." — not into many bodies, but into one. This should help us to understand what the writer meant when he spoke of "the common salvation."

"The faith once for all delivered to the saints" has to do with this common salvation. Not only does it have to do with that salvation, but "the faith" that the writer speaks of is essential to that salvation. It cannot be enjoyed upon any other basis. Notice, the writer did not say, "Faith," but "the faith." There is a difference. There are many faiths among men, but only one by which man might be saved. Men formulate their creeds and urge the world to accept them, and it is evident that God did not give all of them. There is but one that he gave. It is called "the faith."

It was delivered to the saints by men who were inspired of God and is infallible. A departure from that faith will rob one of the salvation of his soul. One does not have to deny the divinity of Christ nor the inspiration of the Bible in order to be lost; but he can just depart from that faith that was once for all delivered to the saints and fail of the salvation that God has provided. One can deny it in part here and there, failing to keep it as it is given, and lose his soul. So Jude said, "contend earnestly for that faith." He said certain men had crept in unawares, seeking to corrupt their faith and cause them to depart from those principles that had been given by inspiration. They were deceitful workers. They claimed to believe and teach the truth, but they were perverting it.

The Holy Spirit predicted that some would be led away from the faith by such men. In 1 Tim. 4:1-3, the scripture says, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth." The seducing spirits are those who would seduce men to turn away from that which is given by inspiration and accept something else. The "doctrines of devils" are preached only one way. The devil does not walk into the pulpit in person, but he works through men who claim to preach the doctrine of Christ. They are deceitful in their ways and deceive many honest souls. Listen to what the apostle Paul said about such men in 2 Cor. 11:13-15: "For such are false apostles, deceitful

workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." That is the way Satan appears. He is transformed into an angel of light. And the way he teaches his doctrines is through his ministers who are transformed into ministers of righteousness. No one claims to be a minister of Satan, but Paul said they are at work. Now if one comes to you wearing a religious name that none of the followers of Christ ever wore in the New Testament times preaching for a church that you cannot read about in all of God's Book, and trying to lead people into that church, while at the same time he is doing all he can in opposing the church that you can read about in the Bible, how could one say that he is a minister of Christ? There is one who is causing men to "depart from the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."

The apostle mentioned two doctrines specifically as being doctrines of devils; namely, "forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats." One of the most powerful religious bodies in the world today, so far as power among men goes, teaches both of these doctrines. That church claims to be infallible, and its earthly head claims to speak with the voice of God. But an apostle of Christ said those doctrines are of the devil and not of Christ. Yet, even though the whole world can read in the Bible that these are doctrines of devils, we are expected to respect and honor them. And in difference to those doctrines, our boys and girls are required to abstain from meats on certain

days in schools throughout the nation lest the advocates of those doctrines should be offended. Not only in the schools, but in public places of various description, the same is done. At the same time, one who claims to be a member of the church that all can read about in the Bible, and who insists upon doing the things stated in the scripture will be ridiculed by the public. There are many, many other doctrines taught today that fall in the same category with the two the apostle mentioned in 1 Tim. 4, all of which are calculated to lead men away from "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."

When Paul gave his parting counsel to the elders of the church at Ephesus, he said in Acts 20:29-30, "I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them." "Disciples" were to be drawn away by men speaking "perverse things," the apostle said. Yes, by men in the Lord's church itself who would speak "perverse things." He said, "even among your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things." Paul could not have written more accurately of things that exist today if he had been living in our own time. If he were among us today and could see how men enter privately into other congregations speaking perverse things to draw away men after them, he could say, "Ah!" This is the thing the Holy Spirit said nearly 2000 years ago would happen. Such men prey upon those who are ill informed in the scripture and void of the spirit of Christ, and who are willing to blindly follow a preacher into something he has never read in the scripture.

From all of this we are made to know one thing, and that is that not all religious leaders and teachers can be depended on to guide people aright. According to the scripture, some are going to "speak perverse things." That is, they are going to speak things that are contrary to that which is set forth in the word of the Living God. Many are led away from "the faith" by this means and will fail to share in that "common salvation." But let us look now to that "faith" that the writer speaks of and see if we shall not be able to ascertain what it is.

There are four things said about the faith in the scripture we have read. First, the writer asserts the existence of an organized and formal body of truth under the title of "the faith." It is not the act of believing that he is talking about, but rather the thing that is to be believed. Second, he asserts that this body of truth is complete and admits of neither change nor addition. It has been once for all delivered to the saints. Third, he asserts that the authority back of that faith is the authority of God. And fourth, the writer specifies the ones to whom the faith was delivered. He said, "to the saints." It was delivered by the Lord through men filled with, and guided by, the Holy Spirit.

"The faith" is something specific. It is a definite system of teaching. Paul spoke of it in Rom. 10:8 as "the word of faith, which we preach." It is spoken of on various occasions in the scripture as the body of truth taught by the apostles. It is the entire system given by them. When Jude said it was "once for all delivered to the saints," he meant it is complete.

“Once” does not mean twice. It does not mean again and again. Having been once delivered, we need not look for latter day revelations, nor additions. In Heb. 9:27-28, the scripture says, “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” Twice in this passage the term “once” was used. It is appointed unto men “once to die.” That suggests that man dies once, and only once. Christ was “once offered,” which suggests to us that his offering was complete. There is nothing more to be done in that respect. So it is with the revelation of God. It too, is complete. All claims of modern revelation must go down before this scripture as contradictions to the truth, and those who make the claims as being wholly unreliable. The fact that the “faith” has been delivered, means that it is accessible, and it is possible for us to know the whole truth of God and the very things that he wants us to believe. He wants us to believe those things that have been delivered, and no more.

This faith which was once for all delivered to the saints, which Paul said “we preach,” is the faith that God expects all men to obey. When Paul wrote to the saints in Rome, he said in the beginning of his epistle to them that “we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name” (Rom. 1:5). This obedience is to “the faith,” not just any faith — but that faith which God gave through his holy apostles. And then to remind them of the object of divine revelation, he closed his epistle by saying, it “is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the

everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith," (Rom. 16:26). This should forever settle the question of whether one can be saved merely by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle said there must be obedience to that faith which God sent him, and the other apostles, out to preach.

That is the way the response to the preaching of the apostles was spoken of on the part of those who accepted it. In Acts 6:7, we are told that "a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" as they were taught by the apostles. Can you truly say you have been obedient to "the faith" that was preached by the apostles, or that you have just merely done what some religious denomination requires for membership in that particular church? In Eph. 4:5 the scripture says, there is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." There are no more faiths acceptable to God than there are "Lords." And there are no more "baptisms" acceptable to him than there are "Gods." If we are to enter into the salvation that God has provided, we must follow the things the apostles taught, and earnestly contend for those things. One is not contending for "the faith" as long as he contends for the faith of some religious sect, or denomination. The faith of no denomination could possibly be "the faith" that was once for all delivered to the saints, and preached by the apostles. If so, that denomination would be found in the Bible. And if it were found in the Bible, all people would be expected to be saved through it. And if all people were expected to be saved through it, no others would have a right to exist. And in that event, it would not be a denomination at all, but the

church itself. To “contend for the faith” means that we must necessarily oppose all other faiths. For one cannot “contend for the faith” and at the same time sanction all others. Christ said, “He that is not with me, is against me. And he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad” (Matt. 12:30). When one is broad-minded and says that he respects all faiths, then he disrespects the one delivered once and for all to the saints and preached by the apostles; for all other faiths are rivals to it. When one says, “Our doctrine is based on the Bible,” that is not good enough. It is not merely to be based on the Bible, but it **MUST BE** the Bible. Otherwise, it is not of God.

Many people raise an objection today to those claim to be members only of the Lord’s church, saying, “You think you are the only ones right, and condemn everybody else.” Tell me, my friend, how one can “contend” for “the one faith” and at the same time sanction all others! Tell me how you can “contend” for the church the Lord built and at the same time give prominence to those built by Luther, Calvin, Smith, Wesley, and others! If you say you are “contending” for all these faiths, and all these churches, then you are contending for nothing in particular; but you are contending very definitely **against** that which was given by the Lord. The church that our Lord died for is worth contending for. The church that he bought with his own precious blood is worth contending for. The church of which he is the head, and of which he is the Savior, is divine and eternal. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it. It is worth everything to me to be a member of it, and I rejoice to tell the world about it. It has never been popular with the world at large, but I am not ashamed to be a

part of it. No, indeed. It is something to be proud of, to sit down with God's Book and read all about it, and to know that God has promised eternal salvation to all the faithful members of it. It is the one I am contending for against all others, and pleading with you also to be a member of it. You don't owe any of these men anything who started the various denominations. You do not owe anything to those churches themselves. So why contend so earnestly for them? But you owe everything to the Christ who bought the church we read about in the Bible with his own blood. Yes, you owe yourself and all you have to him. You are deeply indebted to the church of which he is the head and Saviour, for it was by it that the gospel was spread throughout the world in the first century. That was not done by any denomination on earth, but by the Lord's church itself. The denominations all came along many centuries after the Lord's church had spread the gospel over the entire world, and all rose up in opposition to the Lord's church. They stand in opposition to it today, and will as long as they exist. The denominations send men out preaching their own denominational doctrines and creeds, trying to convert men to their own denominations; but the Lord's church alone is dedicated to preaching "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" and to simply converting people to Christ. Won't you, friend, become a part of that great spiritual body and lend all your influence to it, and against everything opposed to it?

Another objection that many people offer today to the church of Christ as we "contend for the faith once delivered to the saints," is that "you put too

much stress on baptism. Actually, nobody can put too much stress on anything the Lord has commanded. We may neglect some of the things the Lord said, but we can never put too much stress on any part of it. Perhaps the reason that it appears to some that we put too much stress on baptism is the fact that the whole denominational world rejects it as something that is not at all essential to the salvation of one's soul. The things we say about "faith" go unnoticed, because all sects in Christendom accept that. The things said about "repentance" are also unnoticed; because that too is accepted by all, at least in theory. But because the denominational world is so violently opposed to baptism, people are quick to take exception to everything that is said about the essentiality of it. If the denominational world put as much emphasis on this command as they do on "faith", there would be no need for us to say as much as we must in the face of all the opposition to it. In the first place, it IS a command of the Lord. He told the apostles that whatsoever they should bind on earth would be bound in heaven, and in Acts 10:48, when Peter preached the gospel for the first time to the Gentiles, "He commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." This is the same thing that he commanded the first time he preached the gospel to the Jews, as recorded in Acts 2:38, and told them that it was in order to receive the forgiveness of sins. So why should we not contend for it? Why should you not contend for it instead of opposing it? Another thing, we are told in Rom. 6:3 that baptism puts one "into Jesus Christ." And that is where salvation is. Therefore, one cannot reach the salvation that is in Christ without it. So why should we not contend for it? And again I say, Why

would you not contend for it instead of against it? Let all men start stressing the importance of this command, and the absolute essentiality of it, and it will not be necessary for us to fight so hard then to get people to accept it. Then we can spend our time stressing other things that are opposed by the advocates of error. When one "contends for the faith which was once delivered to the saints," he will contend for everything in the word of faith preached by the apostles, and all who accept it will become Christians, and Christians only.

CHRIST OUR MEDIATOR

In 1 Tim. 2:1-8, Paul wrote to Timothy and said, "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. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not,) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and variety."

In this scripture, Jesus Christ is spoken of as the mediator between God and mankind. A mediator is one who stands between two parties and attempts to settle differences between them. It may be between two persons, two groups of persons, or between a person and a group of persons. But in whichever case it might be, it is to settle differences that grow out of a disagreement between them and bring them to peace with each other where perfect harmony will prevail. The word literally means "someone who stands in the middle of — or equidistant from two sides", which suggests to us that he must bear the same relation to each and have an equal interest in both parties.

We are quite familiar with things like this in our

relations with each other, and maybe this will be a help to us in our study of spiritual things. We frequently hear of disputes between two parties being settled by mediation. Labor disputes are sometimes settled in this way. Civil cases are often put into the hands of a mediator. Differences between nations are sometimes settled, or attempted to be settled, by mediation. Only a few years ago we read in the newspapers of a mediator who lost his life in the pursuit of his duties in Palestine. Count Folke Bernadotte was operating in the land of Palestine as a mediator between the Arab and Jewish forces. The hostilities between those two nations are of long standing, and deeply seated. Mr. Bernadotte was trying to bring together the two sides into a peaceful settlement of their varied problems involved. Both Jews and Arabs have a cause for which to be concerned; and in interest of world peace, an attempt was made by means of mediation to bring about a satisfactory and peaceful settlement. This is not an attempt to glorify Mr. Bernadotte, but merely a case in point to illustrate the position in which a mediator finds himself. The mediator of whom Paul spoke is one whose position is much higher than that of any who has ever worked simply between men, and the effects of his death of far greater importance than that of Mr. Barnadotte.

From the scripture we have read, we learn who our mediator is — Jesus Christ. We read of the parties between whom he stands. He stands between God on the one hand, and mankind on the other. We learn of the relationship he bore to both parties. He was equally related to both. He is Christ Jesus, or the God-man. God is his father, and all humanity his brethren.

He is the Son of God in a special sense. He is the only begotten Son of God. And he is the Son of man. That is, he was born of woman — was human as well as divine, and equally related to the entire family.

Another very important thing that we learn from the scripture is that there is but one God and one mediator. It would be just as scriptural to have a plurality of Gods as it would to have a plurality of mediators; for this passage says there is but one of each — one God, and one mediator. Yet, in spite of this, the world seeks mediation with God through many different mediators. We also read that there is but one humanity. Acts 17:26 says, God “hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth . . .” Now group these “ones” and we find ONE God, ONE mediator, and ONE humanity. If we accept the fact that there is but one humanity, and but one God, then we should also accept the fact that there is but one mediator through whom this one humanity can reach the one God. Jesus carried the thought even further by saying in Jno. 14:6, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me.” He limits the way by which man may reach the Father by saying it is only through him. Surely there can be no misunderstanding of the place that Jesus is filling today between man and his God.

But what is one going to do with these scriptures when he accepts other mediators than Christ himself? Multiplied thousands of people throughout the world are doing this. People are attempting to reach God through various other mediums. In the book entitled “The Faith of our Fathers,” by James Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore, the archbishop says,

“The Church exhorts her children not only to honor the blessed Virgin, but also to invoke her intercession.” Thus people attempt to reach God through the virgin Mary instead of the ONE mediator whom God has sent. For when one invokes her intercession, and God has sent His Son to be a mediator, that would be two – not ONE, as the scripture says. When one bows down before a priest to whisper in his ears the sins he has committed, addresses him as “Father,” and asks forgiveness of sins, which only God can forgive, he ignores completely what the scripture says about the ONE mediator; and the Lord Jesus Christ, who said, “No man cometh unto the Father but by me.” When one seeks the intercession of Michael the archangel, John the Baptist, St. Christopher, St. Agnes, or any other whom men have deified, it is in direct conflict with what the holy scripture says about the way to reach God.

Just as surely as there is but one God and he is the supreme ruler of the universe, so there is but one mediator through whom we can reach that one God. The Bible says that, my friends, and it is not the doctrine of a denomination. Since the Bible says it is so, I am willing to accept it as truth. Believing that there is but one mediator between God and man, I could not bring myself to make my appeal to my heavenly Father through any other. There is not another man who has ever lived, or who now lives, through whom I can reach God in prayer; nor through whom I can receive forgiveness of sins that I have committed. When some religious organization sets up a system whereby mediation is sought by an individual other than Jesus Christ himself, that organization is

unscriptural and is proposing something for its worshippers that is unscriptural.

Christ is the only one through whom sinful man, and in his weakness, can reach God who is righteous and good, and who alone has power to forgive sins.

There are other scriptures also which speak of Christ as our Mediator. Heb. 9:15-17 says, "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is; there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."

We learn two things particularly from this. The first is that Christ is "the mediator of the new Testament". He is the one through whom the law of the new Testament is given. He is the one through whom God speaks to us. We have no other way of knowing what God's will concerning us is. We have no other way of knowing how to obtain his mercy, how to receive the forgiveness of our sins, and how to serve him. So we urge that men go to the New Testament to find out what God's will is in everything. To go to the Old Testament for anything in worship today is to reject the mediation of Christ. The Old Testament was given through Moses. He was the mediator of it. The law in it was for another people — not for us. The worship ordained in it was likewise for another people, and not for us. God's only law for us today is in the new Testament, and the only worship he has

appointed for us is found there. We study it for the history of God's dealing with man through the past ages, and for the examples that they have become to us; but not because its law is binding on us, nor because the system of worship in it is the way God wants us to worship today.

The second thing that we learn from this passage is that he had to die to become the mediator that he is to us. A death had to take place before his testament could become effective. He died for the redemption of the transgressions which were under the first testament, and that he might become the mediator of the new. It was after the death of Christ that the law of pardon was given, the terms of salvation were made known, and the system of worship in which Christians engage was given. The writer of the Hebrew letter very graphically shows the difference between the new covenant and the old. In the 12th chapter of the same letter, beginning with verse 18, he describes the scene which took place in the giving of the law of Moses at Mt. Sinai. It was so awe inspiring that Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." And after giving that description, the writer says we are not come to that covenant, but "Ye are come unto Mt. Zion and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and the church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling . . . 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.”

That to which he referred is clearly the old covenant. Moses is the recognized mediator of it. He stood between God and the children of Israel in the day of the giving of the law. Paul says that “the law was ordained by angels in the hands of a mediator,” Gal. 3:19. Moses was the mediator of the Old Testament, and Christ of the new. When Christ died, the old covenant, or the old testament, ended. The new covenant, or new testament, went into effect. We are not under Moses today, nor the Old Testament of which he was the mediator. We are under the New Testament and are subject to God only through Christ. If one goes to the Old testament for circumcision, for incense, sprinkling, infant membership, or instrumental music in worship, he turns away from Christ as his mediator and turns to Moses. But I am sure many people have never stopped to think of this when they go to the Old Testament for some religious practice. But now you will know the difference, and the reason why we must be governed by the New Testament in all things that we do today.

Now we are ready to consider the mediator as the one who stands between two parties with view to reconciling them. A husband and wife may live together for a number of years and then become estranged to each other. Their years of married life may serve as ample evidence that there is much in common, and the friends of both are much concerned about them. A mutual friend steps in and takes a hand. He makes it his business to try to effect a reconciliation. He tries to make the husband see the

wife's point of view and then tries to get the wife to look at things from the husband's point of view. He is working as a go-between, a middle man, a mediator, in his attempt to bring the two together again.

God and man were one time on the most intimate terms, and enjoyed a very close and holy relationship. Sin drove a wedge between them. Man became unfaithful to God. He sinned against his Maker. As the prophet Isaiah said, "your sins have separated between you and your God." They were separated, and became estranged to each other. Christ's office is to bring the two together again as a mediator that the holy relationship that one time existed might be restored and that man might once again enjoy all the blessings of his Maker.

Man was created with a free will to choose for himself, and God did not take away from him the power, nor right, of choice. He wants man to serve Him voluntarily, and will accept no other kind. Instead of using coercion to force man to obey divine law, God allows man to exercise his choice and waits for man to be persuaded. It became necessary for God, who wished to save his creatures, to provide a means whereby they could be saved, and yet his sense of justice not be outraged. God is a just and righteous God. He is all powerful. He has a high sense of right. Man on the other hand, is a lowly creature; weak and sinful, yet proud. As human beings, we think it would be impossible to find one who would be a good mediator between such a holy God and such sinful man. The two are so different. To do the job as a mediator between two such parties, it is necessary

to find someone who is equally related to both — one who is both God and man. In that event, he would be wholly unbiased. He would represent each side fairly. Even in our civil court cases today we do not allow a man to serve on the jury who has reason to be prejudiced, either for or against the person on trial. If a mere man were selected to serve as our mediator in heaven before God, he might be prejudiced in favor of man; and he would not be capable of discerning God completely. On the other hand, man would not appear to be fairly represented in heaven if his mediator were unacquainted with human experiences, human desires, and human weaknesses; who is not able to understand all the problems we face in trying to live right. An angel who has his habitation only in the spirit realm would hardly be qualified to serve in that capacity.

But to see that both man and the court of heaven are fairly represented in the effort to effect a reconciliation between man and his maker, God sent his only begotten Son into the world for that purpose. And the scripture says in Heb. 2:16 that “he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.” In other words, he came into the world as a human being, and grew up, and lived as a human being. He hungered and thirsted as a human being. The scripture says, “he took on him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.” During the thirty and three years that he lived, he experienced all the emotions, the joys, the sorrows, the pains, the temptations, and the disappointments that man faces in life. And again, the scripture says, “He was tempted in all points like as we are tempted, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15). Yes, he was man in the

fullest sense of the word. But he was more than a man. He was the God-man. When he was born into the world in fulfillment of prophecy, it is said, "And they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." The apostle John refers to him as "the Word" which was with God in the beginning, and then says, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." So there he stands — God clothed in human flesh to go through every trial of humanity. And he did not become our mediator until he went all the way and experienced the pains of death itself. Yes, he went on to the cross, the greatest instrument of torture, ignominy, and shame — then into the grave and hades. After his victory over all of these, he declared that all authority had been given to him in heaven and on earth.

It is a wonderful thing to know that we have such a one to stand at the throne of heaven to plead for us. That is one of the wonderful things about being a Christian. I know I cannot live a perfect life in the sense of never committing a wrong. And yet God demands perfection. Jesus died on the cross and shed his blood that my sins might be washed away by means of it. And not only that, but I often commit sins as a Christian. But there again, I can go to my mediator and find an advocate with the Father. John said, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

But this lesson would not be complete if I did not

tell you how this mediator works in trying to reconcile man to his maker. He is not trying to reconcile His Father to man, as is being taught in some of the prominent religious bodies today; but man is the offender, and God the offended. It would be an insult to the righteousness, purity, and holiness of God to even insinuate that he needed to be reconciled to the poor, puny, sinful wretch that man has become in his rebellion against God. On the contrary, he came to save man from his sins and thus bring about a reconciliation between the sinner and his Maker. And we need to know how he does this. It would be a grave injustice to you if I were to lead you to think that men will be saved just simply because the Christ has come, has made the sacrifice, and put himself in the position to save us from our sins.

We must be made to realize that we cannot be redeemed from iniquity and reconciled to God without accepting the terms of the one whom God has sent for this purpose. God has come to us in His Son, and we must meet with him there to be reconciled. Listen to what the scripture says in 2 Cor. 5:18-19. "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed us the word of reconciliation." So there it is. One can be reconciled to God **ONLY IN CHRIST**. That is where God is, and we cannot meet Him outside of Christ. As long as one is outside of Christ, he is in his sins. He is at enmity with God. He is lost. For salvation can be found only in Christ. Forgiveness of sins can be obtained only in Christ. It is only in him

that one is reconciled to God, so that God becomes his Father, and he has the promise of eternal life.

All this suggests to us the absolute necessity of being in Christ that we might have access to God and all the spiritual blessings that are provided for those who are obedient to God. Writing to the saints in Ephesus, the apostle said in Eph. 1:3, that he "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places in Christ." But to obtain these spiritual blessings in Christ, which come to us through our reconciliation to God, we must comply with "the word of reconciliation" that the apostle spoke of. That "word of reconciliation" comes from Christ himself, and is found only in his Testament. First of all, we find in his word that there must be a well grounded faith in Him. Jesus said in John 8:24, "Except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." Heb. 11:6 says "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." Then according to his word, man must acknowledge that faith before men. He said in Matt. 10:32, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." The scripture says in Rom. 10:10 that "with the mouth" this "confession is made unto salvation." According to his word further, there must be a true, genuine repentance. There can be no salvation without it. Jesus said in Luke 13:3, "I tell ye nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." But now that man has come to believe in Christ and has resolved to turn away from all sin, he is still not in Christ where the blood can cleanse him from those sins he has

repented of. This, too, can only be done in compliance with "the word of reconciliation." I cannot know how to get into Christ except as I am told in that word. So turning to it, we find exactly how this entrance into Christ is gained. Listen as I read it from Rom. 6: 3-4: "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." There it is. "Baptized into Christ." Cleansed by his blood. Reconciled to God, and blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. Do it today, my friends, that you may be with God and your soul rest in heavenly peace.

POWER TO BECOME SONS OF GOD

I want to talk to you at this time about the matter of becoming a child of God. This is a matter of concern to a great many people. Yet I wonder whether we grasp the full import of it. To be a son of God is a source of greatest joy. Higher privileges and greater honor have never been enjoyed by any of God's creation. We consider most unfortunate those boys and girls who are deprived of the joys, the blessings, and the comforts of a home; those boys and girls who are left to rove the streets and wander from place to place, without proper clothing and the privileges that others enjoy simply because they have no father to provide for them, nor a mother to love them. Their future is dim indeed and quite unpromising because they do not have parents to give to them the good things of life and to guide them, to educate and train them, both in the things of this life and the things that pertain to eternal life. But more unfortunate yet is the one who cannot claim God as a heavenly Father — a Father to whom he can go when forsaken by all others, one to whom he can go for comfort in time of sorrow, one to whom he can go for strength when he is weak, for help in time of distress; one who can provide for him an eternal home, who can guide him in the ways of truth and righteousness and lead him into eternal happiness. Indeed, the satisfaction of being a child of God is the greatest satisfaction that the human heart can enjoy.

Of all the creatures that exist, man alone can

enjoy the privilege of being a child of God. Even the angels have never enjoyed that relationship. In Heb. 1:5 the scripture says, "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a son?" So this renders the matter of becoming a child of God highly important. It should not be considered lightly, but should be given the most earnest consideration. We should take every precaution to make sure we know what it means, for all eternity is involved. We should search the scripture diligently for every bit of information regarding it, and let no man deceive us in the very thing upon which all our happiness in the world to come depends. It is your soul that you are dealing with. Why not try to make the eternal destiny of it secure? Have you ever taken the time to take the Bible and study this out of yourself? Have you searched the Bible long enough to make absolutely sure that you have the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, on the subject? Again, I say, it is your soul that you are dealing with. Don't let anybody rob you of the joys of that eternal home in another world by causing you to stop short of a faithful performance of all that God has required of you.

May I suggest now some things that are fundamental for you to consider. When John spoke of the coming of the Son of God into the world, he said in Jno. 1:11-12, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John was no doubt speaking of the Jews

when he said, "he came unto his own." They had long been considered the people of God. Yet, they, like all the rest of the world, had sinned against God and were lost. They, along with all others, needed a Saviour. Christ's mission was to them first, and then to all the rest of the world. They were the most religious people in all the world, and were best prepared for the Saviour when he came. To them had been committed the living oracles, and to them prophet after prophet had been sent for many centuries. And yet, even they as a whole did not receive the Lord when he came. But John said that as many as did receive him, "to them gave he power to become the sons of God." This simply means the "right," or "privilege," of becoming the sons of God. That is what is suggested in the word "power" used in this passage. Both the right, the privilege, and the ability to become sons of God were given. But that privilege was abused, and the ability was not used by many who had it. It was so then, and it is so now. They were ungrateful and unconcerned, as many are today.

The Jews had been shown special favor by God when he called them out of Egypt. In Lev. 20:26, God said, "Ye shall be holy unto me: for I, Jehovah, am holy, and have set you apart from the peoples, that ye should be mine." The law that is known everywhere as the law of Moses was given only to them. The institutions of it were intended only for them, and the blessings of it enjoyed only by them. God dealt with them in a special way, tutoring, training, and preparing them for the coming of His Son into the world. Then when Jesus came, he said in Matt. 15:24, "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Then there was another race of people that were a little closer to God than the other nations. They were known as Samaritans. This was a race of people that resulted from intermarriages between Jews and Gentiles. Though they did not worship God according to the law of Moses, they read those scriptures given to the Jews and entertained the same hope of a Saviour that the Jews possessed. In common with all Jews, they looked forward to the coming of the Messiah. And then the apostle Paul referred to all men as being the offspring of God. When he declared to the people of Athens the God who made the heavens and the earth, and all things therein, he said in Acts 17:28, "For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring." So, in reality, Christ came to offer the blessings of salvation to all men upon the same terms.

But there is one thing certain from the scripture read, and that is, that all men will not become the sons of God just simply because Christ came into the world and died for the sins that man had committed. We are very definitely told that some did not receive him. Some did not believe on him. And Jesus said in Jno. 8:24, "Except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." He also said in Matt. 10:32, "Who-soever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."

Another thing that is certain from the passage read is that one must believe on Christ before he receives the power to become a child of God. Becoming a child of God is infinitely more than just "accepting Christ and believing on him." One does not even

receive the power to become a son of God until he does that. There is an erroneous doctrine given great prominence today which says that if one will "accept Jesus Christ and believe on him he will be saved," or that "he is saved when he does that." But according to this scripture, there is a great deal more to it than that. The advocates of the doctrine of "salvation by faith only" refer to many passages of scripture which teach salvation by faith in an effort to prove that one is saved the moment he believes — that the very moment he believes he becomes a child of God. I believe every passage of scripture in the Bible, and I believe that every passage that speaks of salvation by faith should be strongly emphasized. However, I do not believe they should be used in an effort to teach something they were never intended to teach. Not one of them indicates that one is saved at the point of faith; and it is a reckless and sinful handling of the scripture to try to make them teach such a thing.

Let us look at some of these scriptures. In John 3:16, Jesus said, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Jno. 3:36 says, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." Jno. 5:24 says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." Acts 16:31 says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." And 1 Jno. 5:1 says, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." But did it ever occur to you that not one of these passages says, or even sug-

gests, that it is by faith alone? Similar statements are made in connection with "confession," with "baptism," and with "repentance." But just because the promise of salvation follows one of these conditions, it does not at all mean that it is the only condition. So why pick out any one condition, or requirement, that is made in connection with salvation and contend that one will be saved if he meets that condition? Why not take all the conditions given in the scripture in connection with salvation and meet all of them so there will be no question about whether we are doing the thing that God requires?

Now with reference to "faith," James states specifically in James 2:24 that we are NOT saved by "faith only." He says, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." Could there be anything in the scripture plainer than that? Should that not be enough to cause every person on earth to know that he must do something more than merely believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved? Whenever one suggests to you that man is saved by faith only, demand of him the scripture that says it. Here is one that says we are not, and we know the scripture does not contradict itself. It is not enough to say we are saved by faith. We all believe that. But we need to know what the believer must do in order to be saved. John said he receives "power to become a son of God," and he certainly is not a child of God before he receives that power. Since one does not receive the power to become a child of God until he becomes a believer, we know he does not become a child of God until after he becomes a believer, and not at the time he becomes a believer. That power is not given to infidels, but to people who believe

on the Lord. There is a possibility of one's not using that power after it is given to him.

We read in the scripture of various ones who came to believe on the Christ and still failed to become children of God. John said in Jno.12:42, "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." They believed on the Lord as much as anyone does today, but they failed to confess him. They loved something else more than they loved the praise of God. If it is God's favor you are seeking, then you must do the things he says after coming to believe in him. A failure to do so will keep one out of the kingdom of heaven. Jesus said in Matt. 7:21, "Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into th kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." These cowardly rulers believed on the Lord, but did not do what he said. They failed to use the power given to them to become children of God. Luke said in Luke 4:41, that "devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God." They believed the same thing that the others mentioned believed. And James said in James 2:19, that "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble." So that is the company that one puts himself in when he seeks to be saved by faith only. He places himself right along with the cowardly rulers in Jn. 12, with the devils mentioned in Luke 4, and with the devils mentioned by James.

When one contends that the devils were not human

beings and, therefore, could not be saved, let it be remembered that they not only had the power to sin against God and to suffer for their sins, but they also have the power to believe on the Lord and to confess him. If the fact that they could do this were absolutely meaningless, then why did both Luke and James mention it at all? It is quite obvious that James mentioned the devils believing to show that man can no more be saved by merely believing on the Lord than they.

To become a child of God, one must be born into His family. This is not a natural birth, but a spiritual birth. This is spoken of in the scripture as being "born again," and referred to by all students of the scripture as the "new birth." This new birth is for believers, and not for infidels. When one comes to believe in Christ and meets all the conditions of pardon set forth in the scripture, he becomes a child of God. John said, "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." This is the way one is born when he comes into the world, but not the way he is born when he enters into the kingdom of heaven." In the 3rd chapter of John, and verse 5, Jesus said, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." That was said to a man who was already a believer in Christ, but who yet needed to be born again. Even though Nicodemus said, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God," the Lord let him know that he must be born again or he could not see the kingdom of God.

There is only one birth by which people enter the kingdom of God. An effort is made sometimes to

make two births out of the one Jesus mentioned in his conversation with Nicodemus, but Jesus spoke of it as only one. He did not say, "Except a man be born again, and again," but just simply, "except a man be born again." That is one birth. One is not born of water and of the Spirit, but simply of "water and the Spirit." There are two elements in every birth – a male and a female. The two elements in this birth are "water" and "Spirit." They both have a part in our entrance into the kingdom. And we know there are three phases of a birth. There must be a begetting, a development, and a bringing forth. There is never a birth when one of these elements is lacking. If there is no begetting, there is no birth. After the begetting, if there is no development, there is not a birth. And after the begetting and a development, there must be a bringing forth before one becomes a living being. In order to be born into the family of God, one must be begotten of Him. And James said in Jas. 1:18, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures." So the word must be preached. And the "Word" has in it the "Spirit" which is the germ, or the life giving element. Jesus said in Jno. 6:63, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth (or giveth life); the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." When that life giving principle goes to work in the heart of the one who receives it, it works a change in that one's life. There is a development within his heart. His will begins to bend and to conform with the will of God. The heart is filled with sorrow for the sins that have been committed, and he resolves to do something about it. That is called "repentance." and is followed by a reformation of

life. Paul said this is another step in the direction of salvation. Remember, one is never brought to repentance until he first becomes a believer. And Paul said in 2 Cor. 7:10, "Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of." One is not saved until he repents, and one does not repent until he believes. Infidels do not repent. Only believers do that. And Jesus said in Luke 13:3, "I tell ye nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." But this development, or change of life alone, does not make one a child of God. There must be a change of state. Though he has become inactive in the things of the world, he must be delivered from the world and brought forth in Christ a new creature. Though he has repented of his sins, he must be cleansed from them.

The scripture tells us in 2 Cor. 5:17 that one has to be in Christ to be a new creature. There the apostle said, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." And that is also the state in which we are cleansed from our sins, for there is no cleansing outside of Christ. The entrance of the believer into Christ is spoken of in the scripture as a deliverance. The apostle said in Col. 1:13-14, that he "hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."

Now if we can find in the scripture the act by which we enter into Christ, we can know how we are brought forth as a newborn child of God. We are fortunate in that we are told in the scripture the

specific act that puts one into Christ. In Gal. 3:26-27, the Bible says, "ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." So this passage explains how the believer who receives the power to become a child of God becomes one. He said the believer is "baptized into Christ;" and "if any man be in Christ he is a new creature." How could a thing be made plainer than that? But as if that were not enough, we have another passage which tells us that we are baptized into Christ and begin living a new life from that point. Listen while I read it from Rom. 6:3-4. "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." If one were a child of God before he is baptized, he could only be a dead child of God; for it is from baptism that one is raised to walk in newness of life. If one were a child of God before he is baptized, he would be a child of God outside of Christ; for according to the scripture, we are baptized "into Christ." But now that both repentance and baptism are necessary to getting into Christ, where one becomes a new creature and begins to walk in newness of life, it becomes apparent that this is all included in the power to become a child of God that is given to the one who believes on him.

To receive Christ is to receive his word, for Jesus said in Jno. 12:48, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my word, hath one that judgeth him. The word that I have spoken. the same shall judge him in the last day." The one who rejects anything that Christ said

rejects Christ himself. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." The one who rejects any part of that rejects Christ. To receive him, one must receive every word given here. In order that the whole world might be able to receive him and believe on his name, that they might have the power to become the children of God, Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Being saved is the same as becoming a child of God, for one cannot be saved without it. When the gospel was preached in the city of Corinth, Luke said in Acts 18:8 that "many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." This was the means by which they became children of God. Listen to the apostle as he says to them in 1 Cor. 4:15, "Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." He did this when he preached the gospel to them, and they were brought forth into Christ as new creatures when they were baptized into him for the remission of sins. They had exercised the right they received to become children of God after believing in Christ. This same power is given to every true believer in him today. Don't stop when you come to believe in Christ. Go ahead and exercise your right to become a child of God. Repent of your sins, confess your faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and be baptized into him that you may be a child of God – an heir of God, and a joint heir with Jesus Christ. And the hope of that eternal inheritance will comfort you then through every dark hour, and you can turn your face toward heaven and say, "My father who art in heaven."

HEART FELT RELIGION

The religion of the Lord Jesus Christ is the only perfectly balanced religion that human beings have ever engaged in. It is designed to meet all the needs of mankind and appeals with equal force to the intellect, the emotions, and the will power of every individual. Any religion that appeals to either of these to the neglect of the others is contrary to that which God has ordained for man, and cannot lead him into peace and contentment here and eternal life hereafter.

Some religions are highly ritualistic and consist in the observance of ritual altogether. Others are based on a rigid discipline of the body in an effort to subdue all evil passions and thus free oneself from all the evils of nature. This is known as asceticism, and torturous methods are employed to bring about the total subjection of the body to the will that controls it. Another system of religion is characterized simply by emotionalism and is based altogether on the inward feelings of the individual. "Feeling" becomes the determining element of right and wrong in one's life and is the rule upon which he depends to guide him in all religious activities. These talk about a "heart-felt religion," and take "feeling" as a sure evidence of pardon. Many say they know they are right by the way they feel in their heart, and probably do not know what the Bible says about it. Prov. 28:26 says, "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool."

I should like to make it perfectly clear that I

believe in a heart-felt religion, but not the kind that we have just mentioned. Any religion that does not effect the heart is not the one ordained of God. But that is not to say that it is built strictly on emotionalism. First of all, we need to learn what the heart is that is spoken of in the Bible – what it does, and how it is to be effected to bring about the salvation of the soul.

Most people pat themselves on the chest when they talk about what they feel in their heart, and thus indicate a reference to the physical heart. But there are several reasons why we know the heart spoken of in the Bible that is to be right in the sight of God is not the physical heart. In Dan. 4:16 we read about Nebuchadnezzar's heart being changed and a beast's heart being given to him. No Bible reader understands that to mean that his physical heart was taken from his breast and a beef heart inserted in its stead. In 2 Sam. 15:6 we are told that Absalom stole the hearts of all Israel. What did he do with them? What did they do after their hearts were taken from them? Why surely no one believes that the physical heart is the thing referred to. Nobody believes that Absalom literally took the hearts out of their bodies so that they were left without any organ to pump the blood through their bodies.

On the day of Pentecost we are told that the people who heard Peter preach were pricked in their hearts. Acts 2:37 says, "When they heard these things, they were pricked in their hearts, and cried out, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Nobody understands this to mean that some thing was thrust into their heart as the spear of the Roman soldier was thrust into the

heart of the Lord as he hung on the cross. It was not a physical pain that caused them to cry out, but was something from within. In Acts 16:14 we are told that "The Lord opened Lydia's heart that she attended to those things that were spoken of Paul." Again, I say that this was not a literal opening of the heart of flesh within her bosom that sent the blood coursing through her veins. Reason alone will tell us that something else was spoken of in each of these cases than the physical heart — the heart of flesh. But now let us turn to the scripture to see what the heart does that we read about in it that we may determine with absolute certainty what the heart is that the Bible talks about.

In Gen. 6:5 we are told that "God saw that every imagination of the thought of man's heart was evil continually." Prov. 23:7 says, "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he." Jesus said in Matt. 15:19 that "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man." Now what do we learn about the heart from these passages? One thing; and that is, that the heart is where man's thoughts originate. But then as we read on, we find that the heart does more than this. Jesus said in Matt. 13:15, "Lest they should see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and be converted and I should heal them." We are also told in 1 Kings 3:4 that God gave to Solomon an "understanding" heart. So in addition to thinking with the heart, the Bible says that is where our understanding is. But it also tells us that this is where one's power to believe is. When the eunuch from Ethiopia expressed a desire to be baptized, the evangelist said, "If thou

believest with all thine heart, thou mayest," Acts 8:37. Then in Rom. 10:10 the apostler Paul said, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." And thus, the Bible says that the heart is the seat of thought, understanding, and believing. In the common parlance of man, this is called the intellect. And we would hardly refer to the lobe of flesh in the human breast as being the seat of one's intellect.

After having found now that the heart of man embraces his intellect, let us not conclude that this alone is what is referred to in the Bible as needing to be changed. There must be a change made all right in the intellectual part of man, but according to the Bible, there is more to it than that. We are told that this is where one's desires originate. Paul said in Rom. 10:1, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." In Matt. 23:37 Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." Then Solomon said in Prov. 3:5, "Trust in Jehovah with all thy heart, and lean not upon thine own understanding." In these passages we find that it is with the heart that one desires, loves, and trusts. This is known among us as the "emotional" nature of man. The emotions alone do not constitute the heart effected by the religion of Jesus Christ, but is a part of it. As we look further, we find other things that the Bible says about the heart.

In Heb. 4:12 the scripture speaks of "the thoughts and intents of the heart." The heart is where the "intentions" are formed. 2 Cor. 9:7 says, "Every man, according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give."

Here is the seat of "purpose." Then Rom. 6:17 says, "But ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you." From these passages we learn that man's power to intend, purpose, and obey is in the heart. This is what psychologists refer to as the will-power. This part of man's nature must be effected in our religion, or else it is not that which came from the Lord. A religion that is based on either of these alone will not satisfy the demands of God, and will not bring man fully into accord with divine nature and the blessings that may be enjoyed in Christ Jesus.

Now that we have seen what the heart is that must be brought into harmony with divine will, let us look into the scripture and find the change that is to be made in it. In the first place, God said in Isa. 55:7, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God and he will abundantly pardon." The thoughts must be changed. Then Solomon said, "Lean not upon thine own understanding, but trust in Jehovah with all thine heart." We must come to trust in Him alone. And then our faith must be centered in the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said in Jn. 8:24, "Except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." Thus, the whole intellectual nature must be brought into harmony with divine revelation and divine will.

Next, the emotions must be turned in the right direction. God said in Prov. 11:23, "The desire of the righteous is only good." The desires must be turned toward the righteousness of God always. The love

must also be centered wholly upon the Lord, Jesus said in Matt. 22:37, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." We must also trust him fully in all things. Paul said, "that they trust not in uncertain riches, but in the living God which giveth to us richly all things to enjoy," 1 Tim. 6:17. This is what it means to bring the emotional nature into proper focus with God.

Now with the thoughts, the understanding, and the faith in the heart all turned in the right direction, and with the emotions wholly given over to God, the next thing is to bring the will into subjection to the will of God. One must purpose in his heart to do the will of God and have a definite intention to carry it out in all things. Then he will be ready to obey from the heart the form of doctrine delivered us by Christ and his apostles that he might be freed from sin and become a servant of righteousness. All the emotions of the soul must be aroused before one will become a true servant of God; but a misguided emotion will fail so far as the blessings of God are concerned. It is only when one is properly taught that he may benefit from an emotional change. But the change of heart necessary to a new birth and acceptable service in the kingdom of God is not complete until all the will-power of the individual is used to bring him into full obedience to the commandments and ordinances of God.

The gospel of Christ is addressed to the intellect. God ordained that all men be taught. Jesus said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of

the Holy Spirit.” It is simple enough that all may understand and believe it. The love of God is expressed in the gospel and will produce love for God in the heart of all who believe it. And people who believe it will be willing to trust God to fulfill his promises. The commands of the gospel challenge the will of man. Those who are willing to submit will be willing to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. This is the change of heart that is necessary to salvation.

THE NAME FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

Today, I should like to discuss with you the name by which God's people should be called. It is a known fact to all Bible students that God gave a name for his people, and we should know what that name is and respect it above all others.

It is also a well known fact today that there are many religious names being worn by people who claim to be God's people. The people who wear these various names all mean well. They do not mean any dishonor to God by wearing the name that they do, but wear their name to identify them with a certain group of religious people, and with certain religious beliefs. People are generally proud of the religious name they wear, and of their particular religious connection. People are not responsible for the names given them by their parents at birth, and there is little they can do about it if they dislike the name given them at that time. But people take on their religious name voluntarily, and can give it up any time they like. So when anyone serves God under any religious name, you may rest assured that he is doing it by choice. Then why should we not endeavor to find out the name by which God wanted his people called, and glorify God in that name?

I have in my possession a book that was given me by a man who had worshiped under the name "Baptist" for many years until he began seeking a Bible reason for everything he did. The book was written by Mr.

George W. McDaniel, Pastor of the First Baptist Church in Richmond, Va. at the time he wrote the book. It is entitled, "The People Called Baptist." In the first paragraph of it he explains the origin of their name. It reads as follows: "The name 'Christian' was first applied, in derision, to the followers of Christ by enemies at Antioch. The name 'Baptists' was first given, in ridicule, by Pedobaptist opponents of the people who rejected the baptism of babies. Both names, like the cross, have been changed from marks of shame to badges of honor."

You will notice that no attempt was made here to give a Bible reason for wearing the name "Baptist". Indeed, there is no place in the Bible where any disciple of Christ was ever called a Baptist, nor where any people were ever called by that name. But in an attempt to justify the name "Baptist", it is suggested that the name "Christian" was given in derision — that the name "Baptist" was given the same way, and would be as acceptable to God for the same reason.

Every soul who is conscientious about this matter should search the scripture to see whether that line of reasoning will stand up. Let me read you what the Bible says about it. Are you listening? In Isa. 62:2, the scripture says, "And the nations shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory, and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of Jehovah shall name." We learn two things particularly from this passage. First, God's people were going to be called by a "new" name — different from the one they were wearing at that time. Secondly, it was to be a name "which the mouth of Jehovah shall name."

They were not to be called by a name given in derision. It would be given by Jehovah himself, and therefore, divine.

God had given the name that his people were wearing at that time. It was first given to Jacob, and then to the nation as a whole that came through him. God said to Jacob in Gen. 32:28, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for thou hast striven with God and with men, and hast prevailed." "El" is the Hebrew name for God. When they wore the name "Israel" they were wearing the name of God. In Num. 6:27, he said, "So shall they put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them." That name was given by Jehovah himself. It was divine; and He said he would bless them in that name. In Deut. 28:10, God said, "All the peoples of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of Jehovah, and they shall be afraid of thee." This name itself identified them with Jehovah God in the minds of all the peoples of the earth. It made all people know that the Israelites were a people of God and that God fought for them.

But the time was to come when they must leave that name as a curse to God's chosen people, and God would give a new name for his people. Isa. 65:15 says, "And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen; and the Lord Jehovah will slay thee; and he will call his servants by another name." Thus, the name by which they had been called for centuries was to become a curse to them, and God was to give them a better one. In Isa. 56:5, God said, "Unto them will I give in my house and within my walls a memorial and a name better than of sons and of daughters; I

will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.” Again, I say, the “new” name that was to be given for God’s people was to be given by God himself – not in derision; it would be better than all others, and would be everlasting. It should not be cut off.

God’s house was built in Jerusalem, as the prophet, in Zech. 1:16, said it would be, and was set up on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ from the dead. We never read of the church of Christ as an established fact before that time, but from then on, the scripture is replete with references to it. Christ was not made the head of the church until he was raised from the dead, as we are told in Eph. 1:20-23, and the church did not exist without a head. So the name for God’s people could not have been given before the resurrection of Christ, since the church did not exist before then, and the “new name” was to be given in God’s house – which is the church.

After the establishment of the church and the Gentiles had come to see the glory of the Lord, we find a new name given to the disciples of Christ. The scripture says in Acts 11:26 that “The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.” Now if this name were given in derision, will somebody tell us what the “new name” is that God said he would give? There is no other name in the scripture given to the disciples of Christ than the name “Christian.” So then, if this name was given by the enemies of God’s people, where is the one that God gave for them to wear? And where is anything in the scripture that would indicate that this name was given in derision?

The Lord told us who would bear his name before

the Gentiles and the children of Israel. When Saul of Tarsus was trying to destroy the church of Christ, and was on his way to Damascus for that purpose, the Lord appeared to him in person before he reached the city. Being blinded by the light that shined round about him, he was led into the city by the hand of those who journeyed with him. Then God sent Ananias, a disciple of Christ, to tell him what he must do to be saved. When Ananias hesitated, God said to him, "Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel," (Acts 9:15). It was Saul who was to bear the name of Christ before both Jews and Gentiles.

It was not until a congregation was formed of both Jews and Gentiles and Saul of Tarsus was brought in to them that the name "Christian" was given. Luke says in Acts 11:19-26 that "They which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch; who, when he came and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord."

We notice in this reading that both Jews and Gentiles are obedient to the Lord and are in the church together. Barnabas was sent to work with them. But God's new name had still not been given to them. Luke continues then by saying, "Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for he sought Saul: and when he had him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch."

The man who God said would bear his name before the Gentiles and the people of Israel has now come, and the new name is given when he comes. There is every indication in the scripture that the name "Christian" was given by "the mouth" of Jehovah, and nothing in the scripture indicating that it was given in derision. The name itself indicates possession — ownership, and identifies the wearer of that name with the one whose name they wear. It is given to people belonging to Christ, and identifies people who wear it with Christ. Christ is in the name "Christian," and one cannot say "Christian" without saying the name of Christ. The enemies of Christ hate that name, but the disciples of Christ glorify God in it.

It is significant to note that the name "Baptist" is never applied to the disciples of Christ in the scripture, either in derision, or any other way. Not only that, but it is a name that they themselves have adopted and hold onto tenaciously. People are not told in the scripture to glorify God in the name "Baptist," but the scripture says, "If any man suffer as a Christian let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this name,"

(1 Pet. 4:16). Jesus said in Rev. 3:12 that to the one who overcomes, "I will write upon him my new name." Then in Rev. 22:4, the scripture says, "And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads." If it is God's glory that you are seeking, let me suggest that you seek it in the name "Christian."

THE BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH

I want to talk to you today about the beginning of the New Testament church. It is extremely important that we know where and when it began as a matter of being able to identify it and to distinguish it from the many churches that men have built. The church that was built at the time and place given in the Bible for the beginning of the one the Lord said he would build, and by the plan that he gave; is of divine origin. All others are of human origin. Let us turn therefore to the Bible and find out where, when, and how the Lord's church was to begin.

In the first place, let me say, without having to stop just here to give the Bible proof for it, that "the house of God," the "kingdom of God," and "church of God" are all the same thing. I am assuming this morning that you understand that and would not feel it necessary for me to give you all the scriptures suggesting it. Also, I am assuming that you understand that these things are identified equally with God and Christ and are referred to both ways as God's, or Christ's. Now with this in mind, let us turn to some of the scriptures that tell us when and where the Lord's house, or church, would be built.

Isa. 2:2-3 says, "And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many peoples shall go and say,

Come ye, and let us go to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem.”

The things mentioned here were to come to pass “in the last days.” Heb. 1:1-2 tells us that we are now in the “last days.” Therefore, we are in the days that the prophet spoke of. Another thing, the law was to come forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. This lets us know something about both the time and the place that the house of the Lord, which the scripture says in 1 Tim. 3:15 is the church, was to have its beginning. But then in Zech. 1:16, there is another direct statement about where the church would be built. It says, “Therefore, thus saith Jehovah: I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies; and my house shall be built in it, saith Jehovah of hosts.” Any church, therefore, that began anywhere else could not be the one the Lord said he would build. That is one reason we know that the Protestant denominations are not a part of the church that we read about in the Bible. Not a one of them began at the place, nor the time given in the Bible.

Before we turn now to the New Testament to see what it says about the beginning of the church of the Lord, let me call attention to one other prophecy in the Old Testament.

In the second chapter of Daniel is the interpretation that Daniel gave to a dream that Nebuchadnezzar had. He had seen in his dream a great image with a head of gold, a breast and arms of silver, its

belly and thighs of brass, and its legs and feet of iron and part of miry clay. Then he saw a stone cut out without hands and roll down the mountain and smite the feet of this image and brake it in pieces and carry it away as the chaff of the summer's threshing floor. And the little stone became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. In his interpretation, Daniel said, "Thou, O king, art this head of fine gold," and after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and a third kingdom represented as brass, and a fourth kingdom that shall bear rule over all the earth." Then in verse 44, he said, "And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."

Thus, we have three world powers from that date that must be spent before the kingdom of heaven was to be set up on earth. After them was to arise a fourth, and during it, the kingdom of heaven was to have its beginning. The power of Babylon began in 600 B.C. and fell in 536 to the Medes and Persians. The Medo-Persian rule then expired in 333 when they fell before Alexander the Great. This marked the beginning of the Macedonian rule which continued until Rome cast her shadow upon Egypt in 30 B.C. and rapidly brought the rest of the world under her power. According to Daniel's prophecy, the God heaven was going to set up a kingdom in the days of those kings that would stand for ever.

It was at this time that John the Baptist began his

work as the forerunner of Christ. Matt. 3:1-2 says, "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Luke 3:1 says this was in "the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar." This is not the time that the kingdom began, but rather the time that John began his work of preparing the way for the Lord who was to come after him. John merely announced that "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." It was soon to come. When Jesus himself began his ministry, he also said, "The kingdom is at hand," Mark. 1:15. He sent out the twelve, and then seventy others preaching the same thing — "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." In Luke 10:9 they were told to say, "The kingdom is come nigh unto you." In Matt. 6:9-10 the disciples were told to pray for the kingdom to come.

In Matt. 16:18, Jesus said, "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." Thus, the church had not been built. The kingdom had not been established. John was already dead at this time, and the kingdom that he had preached the coming of had not come. Another reason we know it had not been established at that time, is the fact that the apostles were not in it. They were told in Matt. 18:1-3 that they have to be converted and become as little children before they could enter into it.

In Mark 9:1 we are given some idea about how near the coming of the kingdom of heaven was, and are

also told how it would come. Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, that there be come of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." From this, we learn three things: (1) The kingdom had not come. (2) It would come before some of the men then living should die. (3) It would come with "power" when it did come. Therefore, we know that all the preachers who claim that Jesus is yet to come back to earth some day to set up his kingdom are wrong — that is, unless they can produce some man who lived and talked with Jesus when he was on earth, and has never died.

If we can find in the scripture when the "power" that Jesus spoke of came, then we can know for certain when the kingdom had its beginning. After he was raised from the dead, he said to his disciples in Acts 1:8 that "Ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you." Acts 2 says the Holy Spirit came upon them in the city of Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. Then according to Jesus' own words, the kingdom that he came to establish had its beginning in the city of Jerusalem on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Since the church and the kingdom are the same, this is the time and place where the church that Jesus said he would build had its beginning. What would you say then about the churches that began in other places? and after the apostles were all dead? Would you say that they could be a part of the church that the Lord said he would build? If so, by what scripture can they be justified?

On the day of Pentecost is the first mention of any

additions to the church. Acts 2:41 says, "The same day there were added about three thousand souls," and verse 47 says, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Nothing like this was ever said before the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles on Pentecost and they were endued with power from on high. This is when the apostles began preaching "repentance and remission of sins" in his name among all nations. This is when "the law went forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." This is when the terms of pardon were laid down to rebel man, and is the place where you and I must go today to find out what we must do to be saved. Let me appeal to you today to accept the things preached on that occasion as the conditions of salvation, and that you may be a member of the church that had its beginning in Jerusalem at that time.

SALVATION IN CHRIST THROUGH HIS BLOOD

The scripture says in Eph. 1:3-7, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved: In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

In chapter 2:8, the same writer said, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." In these two passages of scripture we are told WHERE, WHEN, and HOW we are saved. It is by the faith of man and the blood of Christ, IN him, and reached WHEN we enter into him.

In last Wednesday's issue of the Daily Corinthian there appeared an article by Mr. M.E. Perry, Pastor of the South Corinth Baptist Church, in which he expressed a violent dislike for some things we said about these matters in the Back to the Bible column. No effort was made to disprove any statement we made, but almost the entire article was devoted to misrepresentation and misquotation. I am sorry that the

preacher for one of the churches in our city would stoop to such level in expressing his contempt for what the Bible says.

Since Mr. Perry has shown a disposition in the past to discuss in the public, and broadcast over the radio his disagreement with things that we teach, I have issued to him a formal challenge and mailed to him propositions for a formal public discussion of such differences. Moreover, I suggested to him that if he did not feel able to defend before an opponent in public discussion the things he teaches, that it would be agreeable with me for him or the church that he preaches for to select a man with more ability than he to represent them. If he declines to accept this offer, I shall consider it as an admission of their unwillingness or inability to defend the doctrine he teaches before an opponent. If the offer is accepted we will let you know when and where the discussion will be conducted. But when these differences are aired over the radio and through the press, I feel that the public is entitled to hear a frank discussion of these things by a representative of each side in a formal meeting where the disputants can meet face to face in their exchange.

Saying ugly things about one with whom we disagree is a cheap way of expressing one's disagreement. That is no answer to the arguments that he makes, and should be beneath the dignity of one who claims to represent the truth of God, and the people of God. Let Mr. Perry meet the arguments that we make on the essentiality of baptism and we will get somewhere in discussion. Ridicule and vilification only create prejudice, and prejudice blinds people's eyes to the truth.

In the passage that we read in the beginning, we are told that it is **IN** Christ that we have redemption through his blood. I challenge any man to show by the scripture that one can be saved by the blood of Christ **OUTSIDE** of him. That statement is repeated in Col. 1:14, where an apostle of the Lord said, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." If somebody could show from the scripture that one can have redemption **OUTSIDE** of Christ by his blood, that would be a direct contraction in the scripture. Since the Bible says, "**IN** whom we have redemption through his blood," one puts himself in direct opposition to the scripture when he says that one can have redemption **OUTSIDE** of him through his blood.

In Eph. 2:1-2, the scripture says, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Then in verse 12, the writer says, "at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." If one is not **IN** Christ, he is of the world. In that state, he is without God and without hope, this passage says. 2 Cor. 5:19 says that God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. Since God is in Christ, the one who is outside of Christ is without God and without hope, as stated in the passage quoted from the Ephesian letter.

Since it is definitely established in the scripture that the blood of Christ can only be reached in his

body, it logically follows that none are cleansed by it until they enter the body of Christ. If one can be cleansed by his blood elsewhere, will someone please cite the scripture that indicates it. If a scripture cannot be produced showing that men are saved by the blood of Christ outside of his body, all claims to that effect are empty claims. But since we KNOW that the Bible says "IN whom we have redemption through his blood," the next thing we need to know is HOW we get into him.

God has not left us to guess at this matter, and wonder how we can gain entrance into him. In the simplest terms that could be employed, the scripture says we are "Baptized into Jesus Christ." Rom. 6:3-4 says, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized 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." Then Gal. 3:26-27 says, "For we are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

How could language be plainer? This is just a simple statement, made twice in the Bible, that we are "baptized into Christ." If there is another way that we could get into him, that would be two ways — but there is not. God does not use one passage of scripture to make void another. No other scripture in the Bible, and no amount of arguments that men might make, will render untrue the passage that says we are "baptized INTO Christ." The thing that I maintain is, that one cannot be saved by the blood of Christ until he makes this entrance by this means. We challenge anybody to show by the scripture that he can.

People **MUST** believe **BEFORE** they enter into Christ — but remember that “redemption through his blood” is **IN** him. Therefore, one is not saved when he first comes to believe in Christ. James said in Jas. 2:19, “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.” If faith would put one into Christ without further acts of obedience, the devils would all enjoy the salvation in Christ; for they believe, and **KNOW** that Jesus is the Son of God. Now if somebody says, “Christ did not shed his blood for the devils, and that this passage has no bearing on the subject,” then will someone tell us why an inspired writer wrote it? If it has no meaning to us, why did God put it in his Book? But then take another passage. John 12:42 says, “Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”

No one can doubt that these were men for whom the Son of God died and shed his blood. If faith alone would bring one under the power of that blood, then who can say that these men were not saved, even while they refused to confess him? One certainly cannot be saved **BEFORE HE** comes to God; and God is in Christ, and man can **only** reach him **IN** Christ. But the scripture says in Heb. 11:6 that “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.” It is not the infidel that comes to God. He must be a believer **BEFORE** he can come. If one were saved by faith alone, then he would be saved **BEFORE** he comes to God.

The faith by which we are saved comes through hearing the word of God, which is preached to sinners lost in sin. That faith must lead one to obey the commands of Christ, and no one can be saved without, or before, this obedience. The scripture says in Heb. 5:9 that he became "the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him." Since one must believe BEFORE he obeys, and he cannot be saved until he obeys, we know he is not saved by the blood of Christ when he comes to believe. By faith, one must be led to repent of his sins. One will not repent until he DOES believe. None can be saved without repentance, which follows the act of believing. It is by faith then that one takes the step that brings him INTO Christ in whom we have redemption through his blood. The Bible says that step is baptism — "baptized into Christ." This is the reason we say no one can be saved by the blood of Christ until he is baptized. Jesus said in Mark 16:16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." When one takes religious hydrophobia and runs from the waters of baptism that God put in the Bible slobbering like a mad dog along the path of disrespect and contempt, he is to be greatly pitied. When one develops a phobia against anything in God's book, he should seek help, and not go on infecting others.

When God sent a man to tell Saul of Tarsus what he must do, and Ananias said in Acts 22:16, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord," we do not conclude that the water washed his sins away. The blood of Christ did that when he was baptized INTO Christ where men can have redemption through his blood.

CHRIST'S KINGDOM NOT OF THIS WORLD

In Jno. 19:36 Jesus said, "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." Herein lies one of the fundamental differences between Christ's kingdom and all others.

There are perhaps several ways by which a kingdom of this world might have been set up. One would have been by means of force. Of course, such a kingdom would then have been comparable to the Roman empire, and its king would have been a rival to Caesar. But that was not what the Master had in mind. In the garden of Gethsemane, one of his disciples drew a sword and struck off the ear of the servant of the high priest. But Jesus said, "Put up again thy sword into its place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." The Lord had no place in his planning for a government by force.

Then next, a kingdom might have been established by human authority in things spiritual, for it will be remembered that the Scribes and Pharisees stood upon the premise that they possessed the wisdom and the know-how in such matters. They were the ones who wanted to bind the mind and conscience of man by the traditions of the elders. But our Lord would have none of that. In Matt. 15:9 he put the label of "vanity" upon such matters. He said, "But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the command-

ments of men." So that would not do for a kingdom to be established on such principles.

A kingdom might also have been established on the basis of a new philosophy. Of course, such a kingdom would then have been a rival of the different systems of Grecian philosophy extant. That may have been the very idea in the mind of Pilate when he asked Jesus, "What is truth?" The different philosophies opposed each other, and nothing was ever settled, or proved by them. But Christianity is not a mere system of philosophy, and for that reason, the philosophers of that day did not receive it in a whole-hearted fashion. And that was why Paul wrote as he did in the first chapter of the first Corinthian letter, saying in vs. 23-26, "The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men." Thus, we see that there is no place in the kingdom of Christ at all for the very things upon which many of the systems of the world rest.

It is a regretable fact that some today have come to think that such means should be employed to propagate the kingdom of Christ on earth. Force, as seen in persecutions; human authority as seen in councils, and philosophy as seen in destructive criticism. Just think of the force that has been used by people who claim to be Christians — by institutions that claim to be Christian, in trying to support their cause and propagate their doctrine! Look at the councils — reli-

gious councils, that have been created by men and exist simply by human authority! Look at the work that has been done by skeptics working under the guise of "higher criticism" in their efforts to deify human philosophy! The kingdom of God and Christ has never been dependent upon these things, but has rather operated upon different principles altogether. Let us note the characteristics of Christ's kingdom which, on earth, is the church.

A logical place to begin our inquiry would be at the foundation of the kingdom, and so let us look into that matter. The foundation of the kingdom of Christ is **truth in religion**. It seems that such a foundation was practically a new thing in the world in the day of Christ, for because of their departure from God, men had lost the truth. Paul's description of the situation is found in the first chapter of Romans. Vs. 21-23 says, "When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things."

When men became vain in their reasonings, they tried to establish a so-called truth of their own, but this was a failure; for truth in religion cannot be evolved by the human mind. God must speak, and His spoken word is truth!

Going a bit further in our inquiry, we realize that the foundation of the kingdom of Christ is truth as

seen in Jesus Christ. In Jno. 14:6, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Heb. 1:1-2 says, "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 hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." So, here is truth – the truth of God, as it was dressed up in every day clothing and walked among men, that we might study it and determine its infallibility. He said while walking upon the earth, recorded in Jno. 8:46, "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" And no man ever raised his voice with proof of conviction.

Again, the foundation of the kingdom of Christ is truth revealed by Christ through his apostles. Jesus said to his apostles in Jn. 16:13, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come." When he gave them his final charge before leaving this world, he told them to wait in Jerusalem until they received this guidance. They waited for revelation from God through the Spirit. So, that limits the truth in Christianity to the New Testament. No other foundation can hold.

Leaving now the matter of the foundation, we move on to the program of propogating the kingdom. First of all, let me say that this is done by imitation. And we get the idea from Christ himself. In Jn. 5:19 "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he

seeth the Father do; for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.”

We also are to imitate Christ in God. Paul said in Eph. 5:1, 2, “Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling Saviour.” The followers of Christ are “learners” of him, and it can be only by this method that we serve him acceptably. Man has not been able to originate anything in the kingdom of matter. And he cannot originate anything in the kingdom of the spirit. As a matter of fact, if any man claims to do so, the truth of God is not in him.

Again, the propagation of the kingdom is to be accomplished by the use of testimony. The use of the word of God, is, of course, of prime importance here. Jesus said; “To this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.” And speaking to his apostles, he said in Acts 1:8, “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: And ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Testimony is not only to be by words, but is to be by life as well. Jesus said in Luke 17, “The kingdom of God is within you.”

Before Pilate, Jesus testified that God had a purpose in Him, and to that end he had been born into the world. Let me ask this question for you to think on: To what purpose have you been born? What is the reason for your presence here in the world? What is your life saying with reference to obedience to Christ Jesus? Have you been born anew — born of water and

the Spirit? Your life is saying something — what is it? Make it say the thing it ought to say. Make it express the truth of the Lord wherever you go. Truth, to be effective, must walk among men, and be seen as well as heard.

Last of all, we come to the finality of the kingdom — that kingdom which the Lord said is not this world. One of the most reassuring things that can be said of it is the fact that it cannot be shaken. The scripture says in Heb. 12:28, "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."

This is quite in contrast with the present unstable position of many earthly kingdoms. No man can predict the future, especially with reference to the fortunes of the empires. That is something about which there is no certain knowledge. But here is something that is sure with reference to that kingdom which is not of this world — that amid all the turmoil and strife of the troubled ages, it cannot be shaken. Into that kingdom one must enter to find redemption and lasting peace.

Not only is the kingdom of Christ secure, but it is universal in extent. All men throughout the whole world have the privilege of becoming citizens of it and enjoying the blessings of it. The gospel by which people enter into the kingdom is for the entire creation. Jesus sent his disciples to preach it throughout the whole world, offering to all men the blessings and protection of his kingdom through obedience to it. All men can believe on the Christ if they will. All

men can repent of their sins if they will. All men can confess their faith in Christ before witnesses, and they will do this if they love him. All who do these things, can, by the same gospel, be buried with the Lord in the watery grave of baptism, and, by the power of God, be raised up as new creatures in Christ and citizens of his kingdom. This will be the action taken by every person who is willing to surrender his all to the Lord and Master. Being then a citizen of that kingdom "that is not of this world" he can say that his citizenship is in heaven. And he will be sustained in his struggles on this earth by the divine assurance given in 1 Jn. 2:17 that "the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." May these blessings ever be yours through your acceptance of his word and a whole hearted obedience to all of his divine commands is my prayer.

CHRIST ON DAVID'S THRONE

In Acts 2:29-32, we have this reading: Peter said, "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses."

This is a part of the sermon that Peter preached on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ, and is a direct statement of the fact that God had at that time raised up Christ to sit on the throne of David. I think it quite timely that we consider this matter carefully this morning, for so many have been misinformed regarding it. People all over the world are being taught that when Christ comes back to the earth some day, it will be for this purpose. People are being taught that when Christ comes to establish his kingdom, all wickedness will be destroyed and righteous will reign supreme throughout the earth for a thousand years, and then the wicked will be given a second chance.

There are several reasons why I know this is not true. Starting with his birth, the angel said in Luke 1:32-33, "He shall be great, and shall be called the

Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." In John 18:36-37, "Jesus answered, 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. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." So Jesus said that was his purpose in coming into the world. The coming of Christ's kingdom had been prophesied for ages, but Jesus said in Mark 1:15, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." Then in Mark 9:1, he said, "Verily I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." Now if that kingdom has not come yet, some of those men who were living and present with the Lord on that occasion are still living in the world somewhere. If somebody wants to convince us that the kingdom of Christ has not yet been established, then let them produce one of those men who was living in Palestine when Jesus made that statement. He could tell us a lot of interesting things. Is such a man cannot be produced, the advocates of this premilleneal doctrine should keep silence until they can find one who can prove that he lived on earth when Jesus was here.

Another thing, Jesus said to his apostles before leaving the earth, "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. 16:19. Why would he give them the keys to something that would not even exist for several thousand years after they were gone? What use could they make of the keys? And what would be the point in their "binding" or "loosing" anything during their life time if Christ's reign did not even exist? Again, Paul declared in 2 Cor. 5:20 that they were "ambassadors for Christ." Were they ambassadors of a kingdom that did not even exist?

For still another consideration, Jesus said on the night of his betrayal, "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel," Luke 22:29-30. If that kingdom has not yet been established, then Christians do not have a right to eat at the Lord's table — for it was to be in his kingdom. And more than that, the apostles themselves were told that they should eat and drink at his table in his kingdom. How was that promise fulfilled unto them if the kingdom did not exist at all during their life time? And still further, if that kingdom has not yet been established the apostles are still without power — for they were to sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. If that kingdom has not yet come, then the words spoken by the apostles have no more power behind them than the word spoken by any other ordinary men. That conclusion would undermine the whole structure of the Christian religion and leave us without any authoritative guide whatsoever. It would mean that all who have continued in the apostles' doctrine have followed the mere precepts of men. But

this conclusion we are not willing to accept at all; but we vehemently deny it to be in harmony with divine truth, with fact, or reason.

The apostles themselves preached that Christ had already been made King as they went out preaching his gospel to a lost world, and that his kingdom was then in existence. In Acts 17:7 the charge was made in Thessalonica that "These all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another, one Jesus." They did not say "there will be," but "there IS" another king, one Jesus. In 1 Tim. 6:15, Paul said, "In his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of Lords." Not only did they say he was king then, but they claimed to be in his kingdom. Listen to what the apostle said in Col. 1:13. "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." How could they have been translated into something that did not even exist, and was not to exist for another few thousand years? Then the apostle said, "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ," Rev. 1:9. He said he was "IN the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ." Surely it existed at that time; and all who teach that it will not be established until Christ comes again are robbing all who accept their teaching of all the blessings of the kingdom of heaven and of eternal life itself. There is no eternal life outside of the kingdom of Christ.

Why would anyone preach on "the new birth" today if he believes the kingdom of Christ will not

exist until he comes again? The new birth is the means of entrance into the kingdom, and why preach it if there is no kingdom to enter? The theory that Christ will come some day to establish his kingdom is a contradiction of every passage in the Bible that refers to the coming of the kingdom. In Dan. 7:13-14, the prophet said, "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, what all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Notice. The prophet said they brought him "even to the ancient of days - " not FROM. He was given a kingdom, dominion, and glory when they brought him TO the Ancient of days. Paul said in Eph. 1:20-23 that when God raised Christ from the dead, "he set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." He said at that time that he was set "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all. " According to the prophet and the apostle, this is the time that Christ received his kingdom, dominion, and glory. This is why the apostles spoke of him as King of kings, and Lord of lords. This is why they said they were "translated into the kingdom of his dear Son." This is why the apostle John could say he was in the kingdom and patience of Jesus

Christ.

When Christ comes again it will be to deliver the kingdom back to the Father, and not to receive it. Listen to what Paul said in 1 Cor. 15:22-26: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." Notice, he said "at his coming." "Then cometh the end, (not the beginning) when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Here is another clear-cut statement of the fact that Christ is reigning now, and will do so until he comes again. The apostle said that will be the end, and he will deliver the kingdom up to the Father.

As a final consideration this morning, we learn from the scripture that Christ was never to be a king on earth. Zechariah said in Zech. 6:13, "He shall build the temple of Jehovah; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." Notice! He was to be a priest and king at the same time. Then we are told in Heb. 8:4 that "if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law." Since he was to be a priest and king at the same time, and could not be a priest on earth, he could not be a king on earth. David understood that his throne was established in heaven, and that the one who would sit on it would reign from heaven. He said in the 11th Psalm, v. 4, "The Lord is

**in his holy temple; The Lord, his throne is in heaven.”
Today if you will submit to the authority of Christ,
obey his commands as set forth in his testament, and
continue in the apostles’ doctrine, you too, will be a
citizen of the kingdom of Christ with all the blessings
of God promised to those who serve him faithfully in
it.**

THE CONVERSION OF SAUL

In the New Testament we have the beginning of Christianity. There, we find Christianity in its purity — before it was ever corrupted by the rise of religious denominations. Protestant denominations did not exist then, and were therefore not a part of Christianity. They have all come into existence long after the church of our Lord was established, the New Testament was completed, and the apostles and other inspired men were all gone from the earth. Since that time, many doctrines have originated, new religious systems have sprung up, and various forms of worship have been introduced.

In order to find out just how one really becomes a Christian, it is necessary to go back to the Testament of Christ and find what people did in the beginning. When we do what the apostles taught men in their day to do, we know we will be Christians. And as long as we continue in their doctrine, we will be only Christians. We will be members of the same church to which they belonged, and will worship God as they worshipped. No one can doubt that we are right when we do that.

All the conversions to Christ that are found in the New Testament are recorded in the book of Acts. They are put there for our profit, that we may know just exactly what conversion to Christ is and how it is brought about. Sometimes these conversions are grossly misrepresented to the public by preachers in

churches that are not found in the Bible and who have a human creed to defend and a human doctrine to justify. But any honest soul who truly wants to obey God can take his Bible and read these conversions and understand them without difficulty if he is not blinded by a human doctrine. He can learn by a simple study of the New Testament just the things that are involved in his becoming a child of God, a member of the church of our Lord, and being saved by the blood of Christ. I should like to examine one of the conversions found in the Testament of Christ with you and let you see how simple it is to learn what God would have one to do to be saved, and also let you see how some so grossly misrepresent it.

Let us examine the conversion of Saul, recorded in Acts 9, 22, and 26. Saul of Tarsus is introduced to us in the Bible as a man of unimpeachable character, a firm believer in God, a devout worshipper, and one who took an active part against what he deemed to be perversions of the law of God. But in spite of all his religious activities, he was the chief of sinners. Like thousands of religious leaders today, he was vigorously opposing the church of Christ and the doctrine of Christ as it is set forth in the Testament of Christ. There are more religious sinners than any other kind. The fact that one is an ardent follower of some religious movement, an active participant in his religion, and gives himself wholly to it, does not mean that God will take him home to glory some day. Before one can spend eternity with God, he must obey God. All preachers are not obedient to God, and not all churches are keeping His law.

Saul had obtained letters of authority from the high

priest to bring all who called on the name of Christ to Jerusalem to be punished. Acts 9:3-6 says, "And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city and it shall be told thee what thou must do." Saul did as he was instructed, and verse 9 says "he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink." The verses following tell about God appearing to a disciple named Ananias and sending him to Saul to tell him what he must do. In Saul's own account of his conversion in chapter 22, he said in v. 16 that Ananias said to him, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." He was still in his sins up to this point, even though he had been a firm believer in Christ for three days. The washing away of his sins was mentioned in direct connection with his baptism, and was the purpose of his baptism. When his sins were washed away, he was in a saved condition. No one is saved in his sins. He must be cleansed from sin before he can be saved. And he was told to be baptized in order to obtain this cleansing.

Last Sunday morning we heard over this same station some very bold assertions about Saul that are in direct contradiction to everything the Bible says about it. It was a plain denial of Bible facts and a

vigorous attempt to lead people into a rejection of God's plan to save man. We were told that Saul was saved when the Lord appeared to him on the way as he came dear to Damascus, and that he became a Christian at that time. That claim was based on the assertion that Saul confessed Christ then and there, and that "with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Then we were told that in Damascus, Ananias, an older Christian was sent to Saul, a babe in Christ, to instruct him; and that after Saul was saved he was baptized — not to be saved, but because he was saved. It is truly difficult to see how one could get farther from the facts than this, or how one could so stifle his conscience as to make such gross misrepresentations to support a denominational doctrine. When a religion has to resort to such reckless handling of the word of God for its support, it is built on a weak foundation, indeed.

In the first place, there is absolutely nothing in any account of Saul's conversion to indicate that he was saved when the Lord appeared to him on the way to Damascus. But there is every indication that he was not. When Saul said, "Who art thou, Lord?" this was not a confession at all. It was merely an inquiry. There are many times in the Bible where one was referred to as "lord" when there was no thought of "Christ" at all. When Jesus said in Matt. 24:50, "The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him," he certainly made no reference to the Christ. In Luke 16:1, Jesus said, "There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he wasted his goods." Verse 5 says "he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest

thou unto my Lord?" Instances like this in the Bible can be multiplied where the term "lord" was used without any reference to God or Christ. Saul simply used the term in address to one on this occasion whom he did not know. He wanted to find out, so he said, "Who art thou, Lord?" If he had been confessing Jesus here as the Christ, he certainly would not have asked, "Who art thou?"

In the next place, Saul had not learned as yet what he must do to be saved. Jesus said, "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." And still, some preacher wants to come along and tell us that this man was already saved before he found out what he must do to be saved. Neither God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, nor angels ever told a man what to do to be saved after Christ died for the sins of the world. On the contrary, we are told in 2 Cor. 4:7 that "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." We can find out only through men. Christ sent Saul into Damascus where he would be told what to do to be saved, and then sent Ananias, a Christian, to tell him.

Another reason why we know that Saul was not saved when Ananias came to him is the fact that he was still in a state of deep distress. He had neither eaten, nor drunk, for three days, but was in a state of deepest mental anxiety. When one is saved he always rejoices in the forgiveness of his sins instead of being turned into a state of anguish.

The suggestion that Ananias, an old Christian, was sent to Saul, a babe in Christ, contradicts all that Paul

himself said about it after being filled with the Holy Spirit. One is not a babe in Christ until he gets into Christ; and Paul himself said in Gal. 3:27 and Rom. 6:3 that we are baptized "into Christ." He said that was the way he got into Christ. He said in Rom. 6:3, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" Even preachers can know that if they will take the time to read it, and will not let their sectarian doctrine blind their eyes to it. Saul included himself in that number of people who were "baptized into Jesus Christ." Then he said in 2 Cor. 5:17, "Now if any man be in Christ Jesus he is a new man." This is something he had not done when Ananias came to him, for he knew nothing about it until Ananias told him.

When one says that Saul was saved before he was baptized, and then baptized because he was saved, you will notice that he never gives any scripture to support it — for there is none. No man living can point to a place in the Bible where a Christian was ever told to be baptized. On the contrary, they were baptized that they might be saved and be called Christians. Every place where salvation and baptism are mentioned together, a baptism always precedes salvation. In no place does it follow. If Saul was saved on the way to Damascus, he was saved before he was told what he must do to be saved, he was saved outside of Christ, and saved while still in his sins. Under the new covenant that God said he would make, he said in Heb. 8:12, "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." If Saul's sins had been forgiven on the road to Damascus, God would not have sent a man to him three days

later to tell him to “arise, and be baptized and wash away thy sins,” for when the sins are gone, God remembers them no more. May I urge you today to turn away from any denomination that you may have any connection with, and don’t let it stand in your way any longer of doing what God requires all men to do to be saved. Repent of your sins, as God commands all men everywhere to do; confess your faith in Jesus as the Christ, the son of God; and be baptized into him for the remission of your sins, and you will be a Christian as Paul was.

THE THIEF OF THE CROSS

When Jesus, the Son of God, was put to death, there were two others crucified with him. One of them has been discussed a great deal in connection with the salvation of man and I should like to examine his case with you this morning. Luke said, "And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise;" Lk. 23:39-43.

The last thief mentioned here, the one who called on Jesus in death and obtained a promise from him, has been the subject of more discussion than any other thief that ever lived before or since that time. He has been the subject of discussion from the pulpit, the radio and the press, as well as in private discourse. His wicked life is not the thing that is generally discussed, for he was not likely any more wicked than other malefactors. The other thief who died at the same time is forgotten, but not this one. The fact that he called on the Lord in his dying hour is not the point of emphasis in most discussions of him, nor that he obtained a promise from the Lord. Many wicked

people have called on the Lord in death. And many wicked people, people who had done much wrong, have made sudden change and obtained mercy from the Lord.

Surprisingly enough, this thief is not made the subject of discussion to show what he DID to obtain mercy from the Lord, but rather to show what he did NOT do to be saved. The exponents of the doctrine of "salvation by faith only" generally refer to this case in an effort to prove that baptism is not at all essential to salvation. The fact is not generally emphasized that this man did NOT obey a single command of the Lord, that he was NOT a Christian, that he had NO connection with the Lord's church, that he was NOT in the kingdom of Christ, and had NO part in the gospel of our salvation. The only desire seems to be to show that the man was saved without baptism. Well what about the other things we have just mentioned? Can one be saved without them? Would you advocate that?

We quite frequently hear men say, "Baptism never saved anybody," or, "All the baptisms in the world could not wash away man's sins." Then they point to the thief on the cross and say, "I never read where Jesus took the thief down from the cross and baptized him." And many think they have a case there. It is assumed that this particular thief was never baptized, and that everybody today can be saved the same way.

In the first place, let me say that the very preachers who point to the thief on the cross to prove that one can be saved without baptism advocate the necessity of

baptism. Even though they say one can be saved without it, they demand it of everyone who would become a member of their church. Now, why? If one can be saved without it, why require it of all who would become members of their church? Why make it binding upon people if they can be saved without it? Why refuse to receive into the fellowship of the church people who are not baptized if they are saved without it? Should we not fellowship all saved people? If not, why not? If one is saved, he will surely go to heaven. If we are not in fellowship with all the saved, there is something wrong with us. If a denomination requires something of people who would become members of it that the Lord does not require of them to be saved, then it takes more to get into that denomination than it does to get into heaven.

Let us see about the thief's being saved without baptism. Who can say with certainty that he was not baptized? It is true, he was not baptized after he was nailed to the cross. But whether he was baptized before that is merely supposition. Matt. 3:1-5 tells about John's work. V. 5 says, "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan confessing their sins." That is where this man lived. And why should one rise up and say, "We know this man was never baptized"? We simply do not know. But suppose he was not. Enoch was not baptized, and yet the scripture says he "walked with God." Elijah was not baptized; nor Abraham, David, Ezekiel, Daniel, nor the other patriarchs. John the Baptist himself was not baptized. So why not point to one of these to prove the point? If you say, "These were all before Christ," then I ask you, "Where is the dividing

line between them and us?"

Yes, there actually is a dividing line so far as God's requirements are concerned. No one will surely contend that God requires the same things of us that He did of them, nor that he required of them the things he requires of all men today. Then where is the dividing line? When was the change made in the requirements?

The Law that God gave to the Jews was not changed when Jesus came. He said in Matt. 5:17 that he did not come to destroy it, but to fulfill it. It stood until he did fulfill it, and it was fulfilled when he died. Jno. 19:26 says, "Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst." They filled a sponge with vinegar and put it to his lips. Vs. 30 says, "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." It was finished now. The law had been fulfilled, and it ended there. Col. 2:14 says he "took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." So everything that happened before Christ died, happened on the other side of the dividing line. It is true that Christ forgave sins while he was on earth, that he healed people, and that he raised them from the dead. But Matt. 9:6 says he had "power on earth to forgive sins" and he exercised that power in person as he would when faith in him was expressed in various ways. But when he died for the sins of the world, he gave a new law to men; and in that law he makes the same requirements of all men everywhere. Baptism is one of them, but was not made one until 43 days after the thief on the cross received a promise from the Lord.

After the Lord died and rose from the dead, he said in Mark 16:15-16, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. He that believeth not shall be damned." Now that had not even been given when the thief died. He knew nothing at all about it. He was on the other side of that dividing line. This charge was no more proof that one can be saved today without meeting the conditions of the gospel that Christ gave after that time than they would.

The thief on the cross is not the example that one needs at all to prove that one today can be saved without being baptized. In order to prove that, one would need to find among the conversions that took place after Christ died for the sins of the world, a man who was not required to be baptized. He would need to find among the activities of the apostles, who went out under the commission that Christ gave them after his resurrection, the conversion of someone who was not baptized. If one could find such example as that, then he might have some grounds for suggesting the non-essentiality of baptism. But of all the conversions found in the Bible this side of the cross, there is not one where baptism did not enter into it as an essential part of it. Let us note some of them.

The first preaching done after the commission that Christ gave this side of the cross is recorded in Acts 2. There we have the record of the first conversions this side of the cross. V. 38 says, "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." In Acts

8 we have the conversion of the Samaritans. V. 12 says, "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." In the latter part of the same chapter we have the conversion of the eunuch. V. 38 says, "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." In Acts 9 we have the conversion of Saul. He arose and was baptized, Acts 22:16. V. 48 says concerning Cornelius and his household, "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." In Acts 16 we have the conversion of Lydia and her household. V. 15 says, "And when she was baptized, and her household," V. 33 tells about the jailer and his house being baptized in their conversion. Acts 18 tells of the conversion of the Corinthians. V. 8 says, "And many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." In fact, there is not a conversion recorded this side of the cross without it.

But the thief lived on the other side of the cross, though in the days that ended with it. He lived under the law of Moses, and in the days when the Son of Man had power on earth to forgive sins, and on whatever conditions he saw fit. For that reason, he was not subject to the gospel that was given after he died and is intended for you and me. He would not be an example of salvation under it at all. Take your own Bible and read it.

Knowing that the promise of salvation is given to men today who believe the gospel and are baptized,

why even argue about it? If you want to be saved, why not do the thing that Jesus commanded that you might enjoy his promise. Why go back to someone who died before the gospel of Christ was given, and the requirements of it were made known to men, for an example of how men can be saved in this age? And after all, why would one who is really concerned about the salvation of his soul try to get around a thing that God requires of men today? The gospel is not mine. It is Christ's. The command to be baptized is not mine. Christ gave it. I can neither bless you for obeying it nor condemn you for rejecting it. But Christ, the Saviour can. My prayer and my plea is, that you will surrender completely to the will of God and obey this, with all other commands of the gospel, that you may enjoy the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

THE CHURCH OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

No. 1

I want to talk to you today about the church of the New Testament. This is always an appropriate subject, for so little is really known about it by the world. People seem to know a great deal about the Catholic Church, and many of the Protestant denominations, but when it comes to the church of the New Testament, there are not very many who can tell you very much about it. It is not because we cannot know about it, for we can. It is simply because so many people are willing to listen to what they hear, and what they see in the world, and so few who are willing to read the Bible for themselves to find out about the church of the Lord.

When I speak of the church of the New Testament, I am not referring to a religious denomination of any kind. I am simply referring to the church itself – the church as it is referred to in the Bible. If you are characterized by a partisan spirit of any sort, I should like for you to forget about any denominational concept of the church today and think of every scriptural reference as applying to all of God's people, and not to some sect that may have been formed among people who have separated themselves from all others by beliefs peculiar to themselves alone.

The church of the Lord is a divine institution, and is the only one that can do anything for us beyond the grave. Every thing that is of the earth must end with

the earth, but that which is from above will extend beyond this realm into the glories of another world. All people of the earth have benefited by the church of the New Testament, and do benefit by it one way or another, either directly or indirectly. Therefore, everyone should want to learn more about it.

Contrary to the thinking of a great many people, the church that we read about in the New Testament is not a meeting house. Stephen said in his last speech made before his martyrdom, "The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest?" (Acts 7:48-49). Saul of Tarsus, who was present when that speech was delivered, later was converted to Christ and became a member of his church. He said in Acts 17:24-25, "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breadth, and all things." So we learn from this that the church is not a house built with men's hands, and that God is not worshipped with mechanical devices, such as musical instruments, or things of that sort. The church is a spiritual house, and the worship is spiritual. Peter said in 1 Pet. 2:5, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." In 1 Tim. 3:15 Paul speaks of it as "the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." Then the writer of the Hebrew epistle spoke of "Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if

we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end," Heb. 3:6.

From these passages of scripture, we find that the church of God is the house of God, that this is a spiritual house, and that WE as Christians make up this house. We learn also from the same scriptures that the worship we offer is to be a spiritual sacrifice. Then we are told in Heb. 13:15 more about that spiritual sacrifice that we are to offer. There the inspired writer said, "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name." That is altogether different from offering praise to God on mechanical instruments, and the statement was made by an inspired man. It is not denominational, nor sectarian in any sense. I know that the Jews, long after God gave them their law at Mt. Sinai and the worship of the tabernacle, came to offer praise to God on mechanical musical instruments; but God did not authorize it even then, and later condemned it most severely. And nowhere in the Bible do we ever find a reference of any sort to people offering praise to God on mechanical instruments in the church that Christ established — either by precept or example. When people presume to do so today, it must be remembered that it is wholly presumptuous and totally lacking in scriptural authority.

According to the scripture itself, the church that we read about in the New Testament is a body of baptized believers — not just a body of believers, but of baptized believers. Paul's first visit of Corinth in Greece is recorded in the 18th chapter of Acts and

his activities there are described in the first 17 verses. Verse 8 says, that "Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." This marked the beginning of the church in that city. When he wrote the 1st Corinthian letter to them from Ephesus after he had been to Jerusalem, he addressed it "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." Then he said in 12:27, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." So he called this body of people who had come to believe in the Christ and were baptized into him, "the church of God" and "the body of Christ." It would logically follow that all people throughout the world who believe on him and are baptized in obedience to his gospel would constitute the church of the living God, or the body of Christ.

Neither of these expressions is denominational in any sense, and should never be used to designate a denomination. The body of Christ is one – essentially, one. It is ONE in the same sense in which all the other divine things are one. The apostle said in Eph. 4:4-5, "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." There is only one scriptural body, and one scriptural faith, and one scriptural baptism; just as there is only One God, one Spirit, and one hope. Every religious denomination constitutes a body of people within itself, all bound together by their particular faith, and designated by their denominational name. But the

body of Christ is not made up of all those religious bodies. Listen to the apostle of the Lord again as he says in 1 Cor. 12:20, "Now are they many members, yet but one body." That is all there is so far as God is concerned, and we had better be concerned about being members of that "one body, " and not just members of SOME body. If you ever got the idea that the church of the New Testament is made up of all religious denominations, you had better start reading your Bible and stop listening to preachers. Certainly, the preachers for these denominations are going to try to get you to believe that they are a part of the church of Christ. If they did not do that, they would have to admit that they have no connection whatsoever with the church we read about in the New Testament. Well, you had better read your New Testament, for the church that is in it is certainly not made up of these denominations that came into existence hundreds of years after the Testament was completed. It is not enough to be a member of some church — we need to know that it is actually the one we can read about in the Bible, and not just assume that it is connected with it in some way. May God have pity on any people who are wedded to a denomination and despise the church of the Lord.

Every denomination has its founder and head; and so does the church of the Lord. But the founder and head of the church that we read about in the New Testament is not the same as the founder and head of the other churches. The Pope is recognized throughout the world as the head of the Catholic Church; but I think everybody will agree that he is not the head, and never has been, of the church we can read about in the

Bible. The same can be said of the heads of the various denominations. Let me read to you from the Bible about the head of the church we read about in it. The apostle speaks in Eph. 1:20-23 of God's "mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet" — are you listening? — "and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." Now, there never was a Pope exalted to that position, nor the head of any denomination on earth. And the Lord's church has never had two heads. It has always had only one — that is the Lord himself. He is not the head of the Catholic Church, and never has been. The Pope is the head of it. He is not the head of any denomination. Like the Catholic Church, their heads also are human. Those churches are human, and their heads are human. The church of Christ is divine, and Christ, its head, is divine likewise. The church of Christ is divine, and Christ, its head, is divine likewise. The church of Christ has no other head, and never has had.

Paul said in Eph. 5:23, that "the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the Saviour of the Body." Now, of which church would you think he is the head? He is the head of his own, of course. And of which body would you think he is the Saviour? Certainly, it is the "body of Christ," and the Bible says that body is the church. When one subscribes to the creed of some denomination, he is following the head of that institu-

tion, and not Christ. Christ is not the author of those creeds. When one affiliates himself with some other religious body than the body of Christ himself, then Christ is not his Saviour. Christ is the head of the church (his church) and the Saviour of the body – His body. To submit to the head of the church we can read about in the New Testament and be a member of that saved body, one must reject all human creeds and leave denominational bodies, accept the teaching of the New Testament only and enter the body of Christ through obedience to it.

THE CHURCH OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

No. 2

The church of the New Testament is a great and glorious institution. Christ is the head of it and God has placed salvation in it. It is made up of the saved of the earth, is filled with the Spirit of God, and cleansed by the blood of Christ. It is a wonderful thing that we can sit down together with the Testament of Christ and study all about it.

There has no doubt been a question in the minds of many people about who the members of it are. Perhaps some of you have entertained some doubt whether you yourself are ready and truly a member of it, and how you can know for sure. The answer to every Bible question can be found in the Bible itself, and that is the only safe place to go to find out. We are told in Eph. 1:22-23, and 5:23 that the church is the body of Christ. Membership in that body is spoken of in Rom. 12:4-5 where the apostle says, "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." We know then, that to be members of the church, or body of Christ, we must be IN that body. If we are in it we are a part of it — members of it, and members one of another. To know absolutely, then, whether we are in that body and a member of it, we have only to turn to the Bible itself and find out how people enter into Christ. If we can find that out, we will know exactly how and when we become a

member of the Lord's church.

Without having to guess at it, to make any deductions, or to "interpret" something to find out, we can find it stated plainly, directly, and simply in the Bible itself. Listen as we read it. In Gal. 3:26-27 the scripture says, "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Now we don't have to "interpret" that. All we have to do is to read it and accept it. The scripture says, "baptized into Christ." That is not what I said, but that is what the scripture says. And since there is only one way to get into Christ, no one can get into him without being "baptized into" him. Now don't go off and say we teach that is all there is to it. We don't say that at all. We say nothing about it but what we read in the Testament itself, and we say ALL that it says.

Before one can be "baptized into Christ," certainly he must be a believer. An infidel cannot be baptized into Christ — only a believer can. And the believer is not in Christ until he is "baptized into" him. Have you ever found in the Bible any other way that a believer can get into him? 2 Cor. 5:19 says that God is in Christ, and that is the only place we can reach him. When one comes to God, he has to enter Christ to reach him. Now we are told in Heb. 11:6 that "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." Christ himself coupled faith with baptism in the commission he gave his disciples after his resurrection from the dead. He said, in Mark 16:15-16, "Go ye into all the

world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved. He that believeth not shall be damned." So it would do absolutely no good to be baptized without believing, or to believe without being baptized. Unless they are coupled together there is no way to enter the body of Christ where God promised salvation.

But we find from reading the Bible that there is more to becoming a member of the church than merely believing and being baptized. A lot of people would be willing to do that if they did not have to make any change in their sinful life. But if man is ever saved, he will be saved from sin, and not IN it. When one enters Christ he is saved from sin. He cannot carry those sins, nor even one sin, into Christ with him. In order to do that, there must be a genuine repentance of sin. Jesus said in Luke 13:3, "I tell ye, nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Salvation is in Christ, and everything outside of him is lost in sin. That repentance must take place then before one can be baptized "into him." In Acts 2:38, Peter said to the people who had come to believe on the Christ, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." I challenge anybody to show that these people had not come to believe on Jesus as the Christ before they were told to "repent, and be baptized, everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." If they were not believers already when they were told that, then one will have to admit that infidels can be "baptized into Christ." And on the other hand, to admit that they were believers at the time they were told to "repent and be baptized for the remission of sins," is to admit that they were still in

sin and lost, even though they were believers, until they repented of their sins and were baptized for the remission of them. My friends, it is just that simple. Why not comply with it as it is given in the New Testament and know that you are a member of the church you can read about there?

While we are talking about membership in the Lord's church, we might say a word about infant membership. I know there are a lot of denominations that practice infant membership – but I am not talking about denominations today. I am talking about the church we can read about in the Bible. In Matt. 18:8, Jesus said "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." He did not say, "except ye be little children," but, "Except ye become AS little children." There is a difference. Infants cannot do any of the things that are required of one in order to be "baptized into Christ." They cannot be "taught" the gospel of Christ. They cannot believe the gospel. And they are not capable of repenting of sins. And as we read the Testament of Christ through, we have no intimation of infant membership anywhere in it. On the contrary, they were people who were capable of acting upon their own. Let us notice some of the passages that speak of the members of the church which would necessarily preclude the idea of infant membership.

Acts 5:11 says, "And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things." This resulted from the news of the death of Ananias and Sapphira who lied to God about the offering they brought. Acts 8:3-4 says, "As for Saul, he made havoc

of the church, entering into every house, and hailing men and women committed them to prison. Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." Infants could not have been included in this. Jesus said in Matt. 18:17, "If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." Again, infants could not have been involved in this procedure. One is no lost until he is responsible for his own actions and is capable of acting on his own. Neither can one become a member of the Lord's church until he reaches that state in life.

It is also important that we know when and where the church of the New Testament had its beginning. The scripture says in Zech. 1:16, "Therefore, I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies, and my house shall be built in it, saith Jehovah." Isa. 2:2-4 says, "It shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many peoples shall go and say, come, ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem." That should settle all question about WHERE the church, or house of the Lord, would be built. The scripture simply says, "In Jerusalem." Any church that cannot establish its origin in the city of Jerusalem cannot rightfully be called the church of the Lord. And the time of its beginning is likewise important, for we can find in the Bible exactly when it was, and no church

that began at some other time can rightfully claim any connection with it.

The near approach of the Lord's kingdom, or church, was announced by John the Baptist, then by Christ and his apostles. Every serious student of the scripture must readily concede that the kingdom of Christ and his church are one and the same thing. They are used interchangeably by both Christ and his apostles. The beginning of the kingdom was the beginning of the church. And after announcing that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, Jesus told his disciples in Mark 9:1 how near at hand it was. He said, "Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." Thus, it was to come during the lifetime of some of the men who were living and present with Jesus at that time. It was also to come with power. The only thing that remains then, to know just when that kingdom came is to find out when the power came that he spoke of. In Acts 1:8, Jesus said after his resurrection, "Ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you." He had already been crucified, buried, and raised from the dead, and the power had not come. And consequently, the kingdom had not come. But he said the power would come when the Holy Spirit came. In Acts 2:1-4 we are told that the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost — that "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." We can say then with absolute certainty that the kingdom of Christ, or the church of our Lord, began at that time. There is no record of

where anyone after that time ever spoke of the kingdom as being at hand, or referred to the establishment of the church as being in the future. Every reference to the kingdom, or the church, after that was to the present existence of it. People were added to it from that day forth and were spoken of as having been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. You can be a member of that same church today by being baptized into Christ in obedience to the same gospel that they preached and serving God faithfully in it.

THE CHURCH OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

No. 3

The church that we read about in the New Testament is heaven born, blood bought, and Spirit filled. It is the place in which all the saved of the earth are to be found, and the only place where man's worship to God is acceptable. It has been here since the days of Christ and his apostles, and will be here when all other things of the earth are gone. It is built on an indestructable foundation, and the forces of hell itself cannot shake it. In it alone can man find peace with God and rest for his weary soul. In it alone can one find a solid foundation on which to build a character that will withstand the corrupting influences of time and eternity.

Several hundred years before Christ built his church, God said in Isa. 28:16, "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone of sure foundation: he that believeth shall not be in haste." This precious corner-stone of sure foundation was none other than the Lord Jesus Christ himself. When the Lord asked his apostles for an expression of their faith in him and their thoughts concerning his identity, the scripture says in Matt. 16:16-19 that "Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon

this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 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.”

The foundation upon which the Lord said he would build his church was not Peter, but the Lord himself. Peter had just said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” This was the ledge of rock upon which that great superstructure rests today. Aside from the language itself, we have another direct statement from the scripture itself that bears this out. In 1 Cor. 3:11, the apostle Paul said, “Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” That should forever settle the question about whether Peter or Christ was the stone upon which the church was to be built, and upon which it is to forever rest. Paul just said plainly that the foundation is Christ, and said there is no other. Peter had no more part in the foundation of the church of the New Testament than any other of the apostles. The scripture says in Eph. 2:19-20, that “Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.” The apostles and prophets all taught one great truth — they all had one central theme, and that is, that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God. All their teaching was built around him, and he has become the chief corner stone for the church, or house of the living God. Man’s salvation and the security of his soul must rest upon nothing less than that.

A question now that confronts the lost world is how one may obtain membership in the church of the Lord. How may one become a part of the church that we can read about in the Bible? This has become a very perplexing problem with a great many people because of the great number of conflicting voices that are heard in the world regarding it. The churches that men have started are many, and their doctrines are contradictory to each other. One religious body makes certain requirements for membership in it, and others make other requirements. Because of this jargon of voices heard on every side, many have despaired of all hope of ever knowing the real truth in the matter and have settled on the thing that seems best to them. But the truth of God is found in the Book of God, and the conditions of membership in the church of the New Testament are stated plainly in the Testament itself.

When men build a church, no one can deny to them the right of stating the conditions of membership in the church they have built. But these must not be confused with the conditions of membership in the Lord's church. The Lord built his church, and men have built theirs. The Lord tells us how to become members of his church, and men tell us how to become members of theirs; but I am concerned only about the Lord's church, and not about the churches that we cannot find in the Bible. No one can take the Bible and find out how to become a member of a human denomination, for none of the denominations are in the Bible. On the other hand, the things set forth in the creeds of the various denominations do not tell one how to become a member of the church of the New Testament. People "join" the denominations, but

we do not “join” the church of the Lord. We never read in the Bible about anyone “joining” the church. We read in the Bible about people obeying the Lord, obeying the commands of Christ, obeying the gospel of Christ, and the Lord adding them to the church — but there is no such thing in the Bible as one getting saved and joining a church. Let us notice what the scripture says on this.

On the day of Pentecost when Peter preached Jesus to the crowd assembled in the temple area and convinced them that God had raised him from the dead and made him both Lord and Christ, “they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit,” Acts 2:37, 38. Then verse 41 says, “They that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.” Now just what did these people do to be added with the apostles? They simply received the word taught by them and were baptized. Then verse 47 says, “The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” This is altogether different from being saved and then joining a church. They got into the church by being added by the Lord — and not because they had been saved, but that they **might be saved**. The Lord did not add them until they were first taught by the apostles, believed that God had made Jesus both Lord and Christ, repented of their sins, and were baptized for the remission of them. The Lord added all to the church who did that, but added no other. He still does the same today, because we

are still under the same gospel, the same law, the same covenant.

There are a number of figures in the scripture describing one's entrance into the church of the New Testament. Perhaps the most common one is "the new birth." This is not another way of getting into the church, but the same as that already described. The church and the kingdom are set forth in the scripture as one and the same thing. Christ used both terms in telling his apostles that he would build it on the truth confessed by them. And the church at Colossae was said to be the kingdom of God's dear Son. When the apostles preached the gospel and people believed it, they referred to it as a begettal. Paul said in 1 Cor. 4:15, "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." This is the first thing that is necessary to a birth. Then comes the period of development. The preaching of the gospel produces godly sorrow for sins that one has committed, and causes men to confess with their mouth the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Then in obedience to the same Gospel, man is "baptized into Jesus Christ" for the remission of sins. And the scripture says in 2 Cor. 5:17 that "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." And thus, the birth has been completed. He has been born again and become a new creature. He is now a child of God, redeemed by the blood of Christ, and a member of the church we can read about in the New Testament. This is the same as becoming a Christian, or being saved.

The church of our Lord must never be ruled out

as something that is non-essential. It is as essential to be a member of the church to be saved as it was for Christ to die. The apostle said in Eph. 1:22-23 that the church is the body of Christ, and then said in 2:15-16 that he "abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." If, then, it was necessary for Christ to die for us, it is necessary for man to be reconciled to God. And if this reconciliation with God is necessary in order that one might be saved, it is necessary for one to be in the church; for that is where man is reconciled to God by the cross of Christ. When people speak lightly of the church, and say that one can be saved outside of it, he is ruling out altogether the reconciliation with God through the blood of his cross.

One cannot reach the blood of Christ outside of the church. Eph. 1:7 says, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Acts 20:28 says he purchased the church with his own blood. So that is just another reason why one cannot be saved outside of the church we read about in the New Testament. Then as a final consideration this morning, I would call your attention to the scripture found in Eph. 5:23 which says that "Christ is the head of the church: and he is the Saviour of the body." Would you want to take your stand with those who say that Christ is the Saviour of those in his church, or those who are in the kingdom of Satan? There is no other state in which accountable being may be found. He is

either in the kingdom of Christ – the church of Christ, or he is in the kingdom of Satan. God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should be saved. Are you willing to come today into the place where God promised to save you – into the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood, and to which he adds all those who will be saved?

TWO WAYS OF LOOKING AT THE BIBLE

I want to talk to you today about two ways of looking at the Bible — two ways of regarding it, or two ways of dealing with it. It is thought of generally as the Book of God, yet there are two ways that men look at it, or regard it. First of all, many regard it as a book of broad principles and good moral maxims — as a general code of moral ethics. These believe that man is guided in a general way by it, and that the details are left to his judgment — that he may do them, or leave them off, as best suits his purpose under the circumstances. They say “if the heart is right” it does not matter whether he complies strictly with the details in all matters. This view suggests that the scriptures must be interpreted in the light of the twentieth century — that it is adaptable to the age in which we live according to the circumstances that surround us. It is suggested that in religion we are allowed to do anything that seems right to us unless it is expressly “forbidden” in the scripture.

On the otherhand, there are those who make a definite distinction between God’s word and man’s. Such distinction was made in the days of the apostles, and by their insistence. In 1 Thess. 2:13 Paul said, “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.” Thus, the apostle

wanted them to get the difference between what God says and what man says. Man's word is not to be put on a par with God's word. God has always wanted man to make this distinction. A stern warning was given to the prophets in regard to this matter. God said in Jer. 23:28, "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully." Man is required to speak God's word faithfully in all ages, and all men are required to deal with it faithfully.

People who make a clear distinction between the word of God and man's word believe that God means what he says, and says what he means. And God is far more capable of saying what he means than man is of telling us what he means. According to the apostle in 1 Cor. 2:13, God selected the very words with which to express his will to man, and we cannot select words that will do it better. We are not to trifle with the words he has given and change any of them to express what we think he should have said. We need to learn to accept all that God has said and be satisfied with the way he said it. Even in the business world today, men in authority will not tolerate a change in their orders by those under them. When the high command in the military service gives specific orders to be carried out, they must be carried out as they are given, or else the one who presumes to change them is punished severely. Why should man be less strict in dealing with the orders that the Captain of our salvation has given? When a man operates an Authorized Ford agency, he must do it in compliance with the regulations of the Ford Motor Company. When he fails to do that, he may lose the agency. But suppose the

Ford dealer becomes so liberal in his dealings that he wants to satisfy the general public and says, "I think one automobile is just as good as another and I will give the public anything they want;" and he stocks a good selection of all the most popular makes of cars on the road. Instead of trying to sell Fords, he is just interested in selling cars. Now maybe any of these cars are as good as a Ford, or even better, but that is beside the point. I doubt that there are many car manufacturers that would allow their authorized dealers to handle a competitive line of cars along with theirs, or to send their cars to a competitive shop for repairs.

As the car dealer who is representing some automobile manufacturer is bound by the regulations of the company he represents, so are the worshipers of God bound by the regulations of the God whom they serve. As the orders of no company nor military command are to be changed down the line, the word of God must not be tampered with by man. We do not have the right to change it to suit our convenience, to look lightly upon anything God has said, or to interpret it to mean something that God never intended. We are allowed to do only the things in religion that are expressly set forth in the covenant God made with man through his Son Jesus Christ. That covenant is called the New Testament.

There are numerous examples in the Bible showing us how very strict God is in his requirements of man. The first one is given early in the Bible when man yet dwelt in the Garden of Eden. When God told man not to eat of the fruit of the tree that was in the

midst of the garden, he said, "neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." No amount of reasoning on this matter could change God's will regarding it. Even to "touch" the forbidden fruit meant death. Some may think God was too strict in this, but that is the difference between God and man, and between God's word and man's. We can look back on that incident today and see the consequences of dealing lightly with what God has said. All the suffering and misery in the world today resulted from putting a loose construction on God's word.

Soon after being driven from Eden was another incident similar to the first. Cain and Abel both brought an offering to God, a sacrifice from his possessions. But God rejected Cain's and accepted Abel's. The reason was, that Abel offered his by faith, as we are told in Heb. 11:4, and Cain did not. Reason dictated to him, while Abel was guided all the way by God's word. The scripture says in Rom. 10:17 that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Abel listened to the word of God, but Cain regarded it lightly.

After all men had corrupted their way upon the earth, and God said he would destroy every living being in whose nostrils was the breath of life, all living things, including man, he instructed Noah to build an ark. Specific instructions were given by God and carried out by Noah. We can look back upon that scene today and see the results. Noah and his family were saved, while all others were destroyed. They did not believe in adhering strictly to the word spoken by Jehovah. They were in the majority, but

the majority was wrong. They no doubt interpreted the word of God in the light of their present surroundings; but God does not give his word to be interpreted by man. He gives it to man to be accepted and obeyed. If God's word needed an interpreter, God would have furnished such interpreters, but his word was addressed directly to man through the apostles and prophets, and given in a language that man could understand. When we see a sign written in English saying, "All traffic turn to the right," we don't need an interpreter to tell us whether that means just on rainy days, or when the traffic is heavy, or all the time. If we respect the sign we will turn to the right day or night, rain or shine. When God says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," we don't need an interpreter to tell us whether this means "by faith alone," or whether one has already been saved, or whether we are to do it in order to be saved. If we respect God we will be baptized through our faith if we want to be saved.

When God gave the law to Israel, he said in Deut. 4:2, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it, that ye may keep the commandments of Jehovah your God which I command you this day." Thus, we see that God wanted his law to be accepted exactly as he gave it. Every detail of it was to be regarded strictly. When they went forth under that law they were blessed as they kept it, and punished for the slightest deviation from it. In Lev. 10:1-2 we are told that Nadab and Abihu, two priests under that law, "took each of them his censer, and put fire therein, and laid incense thereon, and offered strange fire before Jehovah, which he had not commanded them. And there came

forth fire from before Jehovah, and devoured them, and they died before Jehovah." This was the fate of those who offered something that God had not commanded. In Numbers 15:32-37 is the record of the stoning to death of a man who picked up sticks on the sabbath day — just a minor offence in the eyes of the people, but an open violation of God's law in his sight. Then we are told in Heb. 2:1-2 that "we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?"

The gospel of the Son of God is the power of God unto salvation when strictly obeyed from the heart and kept in all its details. But any change in it whatsoever, the omission of a single item in it, or the addition of one thing will damn the soul of the one who so trifles with it. The apostle Paul said, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed," Gal. 1:8. He had said in the previous verse that "there be some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ." To make any change whatsoever in the word as spoken by the apostles is to pervert the Lord's gospel and bring upon the one who does so the curse of God. In Rev. 22:18-19, the severest penalty is prescribed for the one who adds anything whatsoever to God's word, or takes anything at all from it. This can mean only one thing; and that is, that God's word as he gave it is adapted

to man as God made him and must be kept strictly in every detail. The richest blessings are promised those who do so, and the severest punishment for those who do not so regard it. When people are told by the Lord's apostles to "repent, and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit," there is absolutely no way whatsoever that man can change that and receive the blessing promised. And to receive the blessings of Christianity along the way, the baptized believer must continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and prayer as the early disciples did. This will bring one safely into the joys of the celestial city when faithfully carried out.

THE FAITH THAT JUSTIFIES

I want to discuss with you a theme today that is discussed quite generally among religious people, and yet quite differently. I have reference to the subject of Faith — the faith that justifies. All people who claim any connection with Christianity believe in salvation by faith; but all people are not agreed on HOW man is justified by faith, or WHEN his faith saves him. It is not enough to know that men are saved by faith, but we need to recognize the fact that there are different kinds of faith spoken of in the Bible, and different degrees of faith. Then too, we need know what faith must do in the life of an individual before he can be saved by it.

Faith kept in the head and heart alone has never brought man into favor with God, and never will. Faith must be active in the life of an individual, or else it is considered dead. James said in Jas. 2:17, "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." Then in verse 24 he says, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified and not BY FAITH ONLY." One thing for certain: man is not justified by "faith alone" according to the Bible. James proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that faith must act before God will receive the individual. Man is not justified by a "dead faith," but by a working faith. Paul said in Gal. 5:6, "In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." Paul said this is the only thing that avails — a faith that works. James

sets forth this same identical thought in James 2: 14-26.

When Paul wrote to the saints in Rome he said in Rom. 16:24-26, "Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began. But is now made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations **FOR THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH.**" The revelation of the mystery, Paul said, is made known **FOR THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH.** This is the kind of faith by which man is saved — an obedient faith; and he is not saved by faith until he **DOES** obey. Jesus said in Jno. 3:36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

There are a number of examples in the Bible of man being justified by faith, and perhaps we can better understand the principle by taking a look at some of those examples. In Gen. 22 is the record of God's telling Abraham to take his son, his only son, even Isaac whom he loved, and offer him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that God would show him. Abraham made ready, took his son, the wood and the fire to make the offering, and the knife with which to slay his son. When the altar was erected and the wood laid in place, Isaac was bound and placed on the altar, and Abraham took the knife to slay his son, God called to him out of heaven and said, "Abraham, lay not thy hand upon thy son; for now I know that

thou lovest me, seeing thou hast not withheld thine only son whom thou lovest.”

Now Abraham had been a believer in God for a long time before he built that altar, and all that he did in preparation for that sacrifice was done in faith; but James said he was not justified by faith until this time. He said in Jas. 2:21-24, “Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faint wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” Not only was Abraham justified by works; but James says this is the way that all men are justified – by works, and “not by faith only.”

In Heb. 11:3 the scripture says, “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain; BY WHICH he obtained WITNESS that he was RIGHT—EOUS, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he being dead yet speaketh.” The record of their sacrifice is found in Gen. 4:3-8. Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto Jehovah,” And Abel brought “the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof.” The scripture says “And the Lord had respect unto Abel and his offering; but unto Cain and his offering he had not respect.” Both of those men believed in God, but only one of them did what God said. Abel’s offering was made by “faith,” and Cain’s was not; and yet, they both believed in the same God. But we are told in Rom. 10:17 that “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” That spells the

difference. Abel's offering was according to God's word, and Cain's was not. But we are talking in this lesson about WHEN and HOW man is justified by faith. This is just another example to show that man is justified by faith when he does what God says, and not before.

Heb. 11:7 says, "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Here, we are told that Noah built the ark by faith and 1 Pet. 3:20 says he and his family were saved IN the ark. Now if you want to know WHEN and HOW Noah was saved, or justified, by faith, just take a look at the record. According to the scripture, he was not saved by his faith until he built the ark and went into it. That also answers the question of HOW he was saved by faith. It was by DOING what God told him to do, and not "by faith only."

We are also told in the 11th chapter of Hebrews about the children of Israel walking around the walls of Jericho by faith for thirteen times before God threw those walls down and gave them the city. There are many other such examples in the Old Testament; but let us take a look now at some of the things said in the New Testament about our being justified by faith and see the same principle at work that we saw back there.

In Rom. 5:1 the scripture says, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through

our Lord Jesus Christ.” Many have concluded that since justification here is predicated upon faith, that our salvation is by “faith only.” But that is not what the scripture says, nor does it even intimate such. Millions of people are led to believe that man is saved at the point of faith, without further acts of obedience, but that is contrary to every example that we find in the Bible. Eph. 2:8-9 says, “By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not of works lest any man should boast.” And many people take this as clear, positive proof that man does not have to do anything to be saved.

Now we know that the scripture never contradicts itself. It would not be true if it did; and if there SEEMS to be a contradiction in the scripture, we would have no way of knowing which passage was true, and which one was not. As a matter of fact, ALL the scripture is true, and there is absolutely NO contradiction in the scripture whatsoever – not even the slightest. We just need to respect them as they are given; and not try to get around the ones that we don’t like, as so many are trying to do. I am told that a Bible teacher in one of the religious schools in this state told his class one day that he would give them seven ways to get around Acts 2:38. Think of it! my friends, somebody trying to figure out some way of getting around what the Bible says. All the people fighting against God are not in the Communist party – many of them are in the pulpits of America.

God has given things to test man’s faith; and Peter said in 1 Pet. 1:7, “The trial of your faith, being more precious than of gold that perish, though it be tried

with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." Baptism is one of the things that tries the faith of everyone who would become a child of God. In Mark 16:16 Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." In Acts 2:38, Peter said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." In Acts 22:16 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." Rom. 6:3-5 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."

Every passage cited here was given by the inspiration of the God of heaven. In each of these passages, baptism precedes the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, and is the act that brings the penitent believer into Jesus Christ where he is justified, pardoned, saved. Would you contend for one minute that one can be saved by faith without obeying these commands that God gives to those who believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God? If you do, you had better go back and take another look at all the examples found in the Bible of men being justified by faith. You had better go back and take another look at all those passages that speak of man's obedience and what will happen to those who obey not. Man must believe before he can obey, but he is not saved until he obeys. Listen to the apostle in Rom. 6:17-18 as he says, "Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine that was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye

became the servants of righteousness.” Being **WHEN** made free? When ye **OBEYED**. Again to 1 Pet. 1:22, “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth.” How? In **OBEYING** the truth. Then last of all, to Rev. 22:14, “Blessed are that **DO HIS COMMANDMENTS**, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” This my friends, is **when** and **HOW** man is justified by faith – when it leads him to obey God.

ALMOST PERSUADED

When the great apostle Paul stood one day before an enterprising young king by the name of Agrippa, he declared to him from the scriptures of the Old Testament prophets that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. And he said, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," Acts 26:27-28.

There are many wonderful lessons that we can get from this account of Paul before Agrippa given in Acts 26, but I should like to impress upon you just two or three things today in connection with it. First of all, I call your attention to the fact that Paul was trying to persuade a man. I emphasize the fact that he was trying to persuade a man because the very opposite of this is so often set forth among men today, and a great deal of the practice in religion is based upon it.

That you may know what I am talking about, and that I am not guessing about the matter, nor misrepresenting anybody in their religion, I give you here a direct quotation from the creed book of one of the very popular denominations among us. And that no one will be prejudiced against what I am going to say, I shall not read the name of the creed book nor the church that is built upon it. If you are interested in know what it is, just write or phone me and I will give you the name of the book, the page on which the quotation is found, and the number of the article. But

will you listen now as I read from it. "The Son, who is the Word of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin; so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided, whereof as one Christ, very God and very man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men."

There are three basic errors in this one article quoted here from this one popular creed book — all based upon this idea of man's needing to persuade God instead of man. First, that two natures were joined in the womb of the Virgin never to be divided. Second, that Jesus suffered, bled and died to reconcile his Father to us. And third, that he made the sacrifice for original sin. There is no such thing in the Bible as "original sin," or "original guilt." That is merely theological dogma without foundation in fact, or scripture to support it. So far as the two natures being joined in the womb never to be divided — Jesus dwelt in the flesh only during his stay on the earth, and then laid the robe of flesh with its fleshly nature aside and went back into the heavenly realm in his glorified state divested of all fleshly desires and appetites.

And so far as his coming to reconcile his Father to us — that is actually an insult to divine majesty. God is pure and holy altogether. His righteousness is unto all generations. With him there is no shadow that is

cast by turning. He is the same yesterday, today and for ever. On the other hand, man is a sinful creature. Early in the Bible, we are told that all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth. In the New Testament, the scripture says, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God," Rom. 3:23. And I say it is an insult to divine purity and holiness to talk about the holy God being reconciled to sinful man. But based upon that idea, men are trying today to persuade God instead of man.

But Agrippa knew that Paul was trying to persuade him, and not trying to persuade God to accept him as he was. Paul said in writing to the church at Corinth, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade man," 2 Cor. 5:11. God does not need to be persuaded. The scripture says in 1 Tim. 2:4 that "God will have all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth." Peter said in 2 Pet. 3:9 that he "is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." God has done everything that he can to save man, and is always willing. But man, on the other hand, has not done much to be saved and does not always show a willingness to be saved. Paul was trying to persuade Agrippa to do something about the salvation of his own soul. First, man has to have a desire to be saved. He must desire salvation above everything else in the world. A willingness on the part of man to be saved implies a willingness to give up all of his sins and do all the things necessary on his part to be saved. It implies a willingness to change his life and live a life of true holiness.

Paul knew the wrath of God that will be revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteous-

ness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness, and said, "Therefore knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." He knew about the terror of the Lord in the days of Noah. He knew the terror of the Lord when the wicked nations fought against people of God. He knew the terror of the Lord in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah. And he knew about the terror of the Lord in the days of the revelation of the wrath and righteous judgment of God. That is the reason why he was trying so earnestly to persuade men to obey the Lord.

The next thing that I want to emphasize this morning is the fact that Paul was trying to persuade Agrippa to be a Christian. That is quite different from what most men today are trying to do. Most men today are trying to persuade others to be members of their denomination. Agrippa did not know anything about a denomination. Paul had not mentioned one to him. None of the Protestant denominations existed at that time. It was only the church of Christ in that day, and they were referred to everywhere as "the churches of Christ," so stated in Rom. 16:16. The members of Christ's church were simply Christians. There was nothing else in that day among those who were members of the Lord's church — just simple Christians. A Christian is one who belongs to Christ, and all who belong to him should be known simply by that name. God had said long before He sent His Son into the world that he would give "a new name" for his people, Isa. 56:5. That name was to be given by the mouth of Jehovah, within his house, and was to continue forever.

After the Gentiles had been brought into the

fold of God with the Jews, the scripture says in Acts 11:26 that "the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch." Then the apostle Peter said in 1 Pet. 4:16, "If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this name." That is exactly what they did in the early days of the church. They honored and glorified God by wearing the name of the Christ who died for them. But now that men have started the Protestant denominations, they are all known by different names. The members of those denominations are trying to persuade others to join them and wear their name instead of trying to persuade them to simply be Christians. They equate membership in their denomination with being a Christian and are highly insulted if one suggests that they are not the same.

For instance, all in the Catholic Church are trying to make Catholics. Those in the Mormon church are trying to make Mormons. Those in the Baptist church are trying to make Baptists, the Presbyterian Church, Presbyterians, etc. That is not a misrepresentation. Everybody knows it to be a fact, and they will all tell you that is what they are trying to do. Now if one becomes a Christian in becoming a Catholic, he does not become a Christian in becoming a Baptist. And if one becomes a Christian in becoming a Baptist, then he does not become one in becoming a Presbyterian, or a member of any other denomination. And I say today, Friends, in all kindness, that in the days of the apostles, people became Christians without becoming any of these others. And if people could become Christians then without becoming denominational members, such as we have just mentioned, they can do the same today. And we can safely say that one does

not become a Christian in becoming something else. There is only one way to become a Christian; and when people do what was required of one in the days of the apostles to be a Christian, he will be one today — not a Catholic, Mormon, Baptist, Presbyterian, or something else — but just simply a Christian.

Persuading others to become denominational members actually hinders their becoming a Christian, for they are led to believe that they are accepted by God when they are received into some denomination whether they have obeyed the Lord or not. A lady attended our service one night. She said when she came out of the building that the teaching she heard that night was the most reasonable thing she had ever heard. She was invited into our home to discuss the matter of salvation. She took a Bible and read the conditions of salvation as given by Christ and his apostles, and said she wondered why somebody had not pointed those things out to her before. She wanted to go immediately and be baptized into Jesus Christ for the remission of her sins after confessing him as the Son of the living God. When a friend of hers found out what she had done, she phoned her and began to cry and tell her how much she wanted to see her be a Baptist. The lady did not understand why she should be a Baptist since she was a Christian, and she had never read in the Bible where any follower of Christ was ever called a Baptist. But the friend kept calling her, and visiting with her, and trying to get her to be a Baptist, until she gave up religion altogether. This friend was trying to persuade her to be something besides a Christian and finally drove her into infidelity. That person will have to answer for a lost soul

in the day of judgment, while on the other hand, those who persuade others to become a Christian can rejoice in the day of judgment to know that they led another soul to obey the Lord and be saved.

After one comes to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and confesses him as such, repents of his sins, and is baptized into Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, that one is a Christian, redeemed by the blood of Christ, and a member of his body where all the blessings of salvation are. We urge all men to do that and enjoy the blessings of salvation.

REGENERATION

In Matt. 19:27-28 is a question that was asked Jesus one day by one of his apostles, and the answer that he gave to it. We can learn a great deal about the life that one should live to please God and the salvation he has provided for man by considering the questions that were raised and the answers given.

In this account, Matthew says, "Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." The Lord spoke here of the "regeneration" and the power that would be given to the apostles. They had not entered into the regeneration at that time, and the apostles had not yet received their power to sit upon thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel. The regeneration and the exercise of the power of the apostles would begin at the same time. If we can find when one began, we can know when the other began, for they cannot be separated.

Though "regeneration" is discussed a great deal in religious circles, and a lot of people do not understand much about it, there is one thing that practically all people understand. And that is, that regeneration is necessary to salvation in the kingdom of God. People may not understand fully what it is, nor how it is

brought about, but they do know it is necessary to one's entrance into the kingdom of heaven. Another thing, all people who speak about regeneration think of it in connection with the new birth. People think of them as being the same thing. There is really no way of separating them, or of making two different things out of them. People may not agree on how this regeneration is brought about, and just what it takes to constitute the new birth, but we agree nevertheless on the importance of it, and that it is the door of entrance into God's kingdom. Then it behooves us to find out all we can about it and to be sure that we ourselves have done the things the Bible describes in connection with it.

In the first place, we know that the new birth did not begin before the regeneration did. It could not have begun first if they are the same thing, and there is no living being who can show that they are not. So we will need to learn just when the "regeneration" began to know when the first people were born again — born into the kingdom of God. I think there can be no doubt at all but that when Jesus spoke of "the regeneration" in Matt. 19:28, he was speaking of the period of regeneration. That is, the period when people would be born again, and thus enter into the kingdom before it was established, and the birth into it is the only birth contemplated in speaking of the "new birth."

Jesus told his disciples when the period of regeneration would be. It was to be "when the Son of man would sit in the throne of his glory." The regeneration would begin at the time he was seated on the throne

of his glory. According to the scripture given in Jno. 7:39, Jesus was to be glorified before the Holy Spirit came. John said, "The Holy Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified." When he was "glorified" the Spirit would be given; and in Acts 2:1-4 we learn that the Spirit was given on the day of Pentecost. That is when he began his reign on the throne of his glory, and that is when power was given to the apostles to reign with him. This lets us know beyond the shadow of a doubt that the period of regeneration began on the day of Pentecost. Hence, no one was born again before that day.

This is in perfect keeping with other things that both Jesus and his apostles said about it. According to Luke 24:26, Jesus had to die before he entered into his glory. He said, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" This was a statement that he made to his disciples after his resurrection from the dead. Then after the Holy Spirit had come upon the apostles at Pentecost, Peter said in Acts 3:13, "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go." This is just simply another means by which we can know that the Son of God did not begin to sit on the throne of this glory until after his death and resurrection, and hence the period of regeneration did not begin until that time.

Another thing that we learn from the scriptures relating to this matter is, that the "glory" into which Jesus entered after his resurrection, and his "kingdom"

are the same thing. In Matt. 20:20 the scripture says, "Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom." In Mark 10:37 where the same request is made, they said, "Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy entering hand, in thy glory." So they understood that his entering into his glory and entering into his kingdom were the same.

Peter said in Acts 2:30-32 that God raised Jesus from the dead to sit on his throne, and that he was at that time at "the right hand of God exalted. He and the other apostles began exercising on that day the power that was given to them to sit on thrones and to bind and lose on earth. The kingdom now had its beginning and all the people who obeyed the commands given them by the apostles were translated into it. The apostle Paul said to the saints in Colossae, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son," Col. 1:13. The apostle John said in Rev. 1:9 that he was "in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ." They had truly received the kingdom that had been appointed them. Jesus said in Luke 22:29-30 on the night before he was crucified, "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." So the apostles could say after Pentecost, "We have received that kingdom now, and have the privilege of eating and

drinking at his table.” Whenever Christians come together on the first day of the week to eat the Lord’s supper, they are meeting around the Lord’s table in the Lord’s kingdom. And if the kingdom has not come yet, as many claim it has not, then no one has a right to eat the Lord’s supper. The Protestant denominations are preaching that Christ is coming back some day to set up his kingdom. Well if he is, they should never meet again to eat the Lord’s supper until he comes; for the only place the Lord’s table can be found is in his kingdom. The Lord is coming back some day all right, but it will not be to set up his kingdom. It will be to raise the dead, destroy death and hades, and judge the world.

Another thing, if the Lord’s kingdom does not exist now, no one has a right to preach the new birth; for it is the means of entrance into the kingdom. How could one be born again if there is no kingdom to be born into? It is quite obvious from the scriptures we have cited that the regeneration did not begin before Jesus was raised from the dead to sit on the throne of his glory. Thus, no one was born again before that time. Beginning with the advent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, we were brought into a new period — a period of regeneration, and the reign of the apostles. They are now binding and loosing on earth by the words they spoke; and the things they bound upon people are an essential part of the regeneration. The things they bound upon people for the remission of their sins were the terms of entrance into the kingdom of Christ’s glory and constitute a regeneration, or a birth, into it.

They preached first of all, that Jesus has been raised

from the dead and made both Lord and Christ. When people came to believe that and cried out to know what they must do, they were told to "repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." What authority did they have to issue such command? Why, they had simply been given power to sit upon thrones and to bind and loose upon the earth. The people recognized that power and obeyed the commands laid down by the apostles. When they did, their sins were forgiven and they were brought under the rule and reign of Christ; for he had told the apostles that whatsoever they bound on earth would be bound in heaven. The people who obeyed these commands were added by the Lord to the church. This was the process of regeneration by which they were born into the kingdom of heaven.

The apostles themselves said that in being baptized, one is baptized "into Christ," Gal. 3:27. And they said in 2 Cor. 5:17 that "if any man be in Christ Jesus he is a new creature." Thus, we know that repentance and baptism are a part of the regeneration by which one is born again and made a new creature in the kingdom of Christ. This is spoken of in Tit. 3:5 as a "washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" has reference to baptism in water where one receives the Holy Spirit, let us look at what is said by a man whom God sent to tell a sinner what he must do to be saved.

Saul of Tarsus had seen Jesus face to face and heard the voice of his mouth. He became a firm believer in him and asked what he must do. He was told to arise and go into the city where it would be

told him what he must do. Then God sent Ananias to him to tell him to "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord," Acts 22:16. He then received the Holy Spirit and was a new born child of God.

My friends, this is something of what is meant by "regeneration." This is something of what it means to be born again that one might be a citizen of the kingdom of heaven and saved by the blood of Jesus.

MAN MUST DO SOMETHING TO BE SAVED

In Matt. 7:21, Jesus said, "Not everyone that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Then as we read on through the chapter, Jesus contrasts those who hear his word and do it with those who hear and do not. That is the way he ended the sermon on the Mount.

If there is nothing else that we learn from this passage, we learn that man must do something to be saved. In that sermon on the mount, Jesus laid down the principles upon which the kingdom of God should forever rest. The one fundamental principle of it is that of **doing** the will of the Father in heaven. The difference between the wise man and the fool is the difference between **DOING** what Christ says and **NOT DOING** it.

The Christian religion is a **DO** religion from beginning to end. The people who have the idea of being saved without doing anything have the wrong religion. They do not have the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. They may think they have, but they don't even know the religion of Christ. Everything connected with it is based on **DOING**. Jesus said, "My Father worked hitherto, and I work." The apostles referred to themselves as the servants of Christ and spent their lives working for him. Jesus spoke a parable of the kingdom saying, "The Son of man is as a man taking a

far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch," Mark 13:34. He intended for "every man" to work. And Paul said in Phil. 2:12, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

There is no need to sit back and argue that man does not have to do anything to be saved — just read your Bible. I don't care how many passages of scripture one may read in connection with salvation that do not specifically mention "work," God does not have but one plan of salvation; and it is based upon doing the will of God all the way through. And no passage of scripture that one might read will negate those passages in which man is required to DO something to be saved.

Moses was the lawgiver and redeemer of Israel. Stephen said in Acts 7:22 that "Moses was mighty in words and deeds." His words were powerful, and have come down to the present day. But all of his oratory, or his words in whatever form they might have been delivered, could not have saved Israel apart from what he did. When Luke began the Book of Acts, he said, "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilis, of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the day in which he was taken up." Our salvation today depends on what he said and DID. The words that he spoke might have been delivered to us without his having to come to us in the flesh and work day after day until his body was weary and needed rest, and without his having to encounter the opposition that he did among the religious leaders of that day, without his

wrestling with the arch enemy of mankind in his temptations, and without his having to suffer the tortures of death on the most cruel instrument of ignominy and shame, and then grapple with the powers of the grave and hades. But his words without all of this could not have brought about our salvation.

As man could not be saved by the words that Christ spoke without the things he did to redeem us, neither can we be saved by accepting those words without doing what he says. Jesus said in Luke 6:46, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Certainly, man cannot earn his salvation. No one is contending that he can; but at the same time, he cannot be saved without putting forth an effort — a strenuous effort, to be saved, If you call "doing the will of the Father" a work, then it is a work without which no man can be saved. Jesus said a man is a fool who hears his word and does not do it. Paul said in Rom. 2:13, "Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified."

People in the days of Jesus on earth, and in the days of the apostles, understood that there was something that they would have to do if they were to be saved. It was not until the Protestant denominations began several hundred years later, that men began to teach that people can be saved by faith alone and do not have to do anything to be saved. To admit that one has to obey the commands of Christ to be saved would be to deny their doctrine of salvation by faith only, which almost all Protestant denominations teach. The doctrine of salvation by faith only, and doing the will of the Father which is in heaven, are contradic-

ory to each other. One cannot subscribe to both any more than he could subscribe to the doctrine of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ and salvation through Buddhism at the same time, that denies faith in Christ.

In Matt. 19:16 the scripture says, "And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" He was told immediately to "keep the commandments." He was living at that time under the Law of Moses in which they were told what NOT to do. They were Not to kill, NOT commit adultery, NOT steal, etc., and this man said he had observed all of these all of his life. And yet, he realized that to enter into eternal life he must do more than that. Moral goodness alone is not enough, and people are not saved on what they do not do. They are saved on what they DO. This man realized that the positive element was lacking in his life that was necessary to secure for him eternal life, and hence, he wanted to know what it was that he MUST DO. One does not reward people in his employ for the evil that they have not done, but rather, for the good that they do. You don't hire people to sit around and not break out your window lights, not curse your family, not steal your chickens, not lie about you, and not molest your daughter or your wife. You expect them not to do those things; but at the same time, you expect them to do something worthwhile. God has not promised to reward people with eternal life for not lying, stealing, murdering, committing adultery, and so on, but for obeying his law and laboring in his service.

On the day of Pentecost when the apostles preached

the first gospel sermon after the Holy Spirit came upon them, they endeavored to convince the people that God has made that same Jesus whom they had crucified both Lord and Christ. When they were convinced of that, they cried out saying, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" In response to that question, they were told what they must do. They were told to "Repent and be baptized, everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." When Saul of Tarsus saw the Lord face to face on his way to Damascus, and heard the voice of his mouth, He said, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" He was told immediately to "Arise, and go into Damascus where it shall be told thee what thou MUST do."

After he had been in Damascus three days praying and fasting, waiting for somebody to come and tell him "what he must do," Ananias came to him and said, "Why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized and wash away thy sins calling on the name of the Lord." This is what he MUST do if he was to obey the Lord and be saved. After doing that, he began immediately preaching Jesus that he is Christ. No one has a right to preach the gospel of the Son of God until he gets up and is baptized to have his sins washed away.

When Saul was later preaching Christ in the city of Philippi, he was beaten and cast into prison. An earthquake occurred that night and the whole place was shaken up. The jailor in his fright, came in to Paul and Silas and brought them out of their cell and said, "What must I do to be saved?" As sore as their bodies were, and as difficult as it must have been for them to get around, it would have been a good time to tell

them that they did not have to do anything, if indeed he could have been saved without it. But Paul knew that salvation did not come that way. Paul told him to "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Which means, of course, that he had to get his family up and listen as these men preached the gospel to them; for faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God, Paul said in Rom. 10:17. The things they must do to be saved were set forth in the words that they spoke to them in order for them to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. When the jailor heard those words outlining the things that they must do to be saved, the scripture says, "he took them the same hour of the night, and was baptized the same hour of the night, he and all his house," Acts 16:34. This is what they did to be saved by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and no one can be saved by faith in him without it.

In each of these cases where salvation was enjoyed, "these sayings" of Christ's were heard, and the people did them. Man's reward in the day of judgment will not be based on what one has believed, or rather, whether one has believed, but upon what he has done about it. In the last chapter of the Bible, Jesus said, "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be," Rev. 22:12. Jesus said the reward would be according as our work shall be. In Jno. 5:28-29 Jesus said, "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 to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation." Again, it is based on what we have DONE.

In 2 Cor. 5:10 Paul said, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in the body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or whether it be evil." In all these passages, we are told that judgment will be according to what we have done, and not just whether we have believed on the Lord. The only ones who will enter heaven at that time are those who have obeyed the commandments of the Lord. Jesus said in Rev. 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." This is all further evidence that the Christian religion is a DO religion.

BACK TO JERUSALEM

The church of the Lord Jesus Christ was set forth in prophecy long before he came into the world to establish it. I should like to begin today with a prophecy regarding the establishment of it, point out some of the New Testament scriptures descriptive of it, and then make a few observations on its existence in our time.

The scripture says in Isa. 2:2-3, "And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and all nations shall flow unto it. And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Israel, and he will teach us of his ways, and we shall walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem."

From this passage it will be observed that Jerusalem was to be the beginning place for the Lord's church, and that God's word and His law would go forth from that place. Any theory or doctrine that has the church beginning in any other place, or goes to any other place for its doctrine or its pattern of worship is out of harmony with the scripture. There is nothing in the holy Bible to indicate that Rome was ever to be a place for the headquarters of the church, nor a place for God's law to go forth from, nor a place for his worship to be established. The same can be said for any other place on earth that has come to be

thought of as a religious center, and a place to which people might go for the truth on any religious matter.

The Holy Spirit came upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost as they were assembled in a room in the temple in Jerusalem. They began immediately preaching the gospel that Christ had told them to preach among all nations in his name and telling people what they must do to be saved. They spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance and convicted men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. When they cried out to know what they must do, they were told to "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" saying, "For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all them that are afar off," Acts 2:38-39. The people who received the word spoken by them were baptized and about 3000 were added by the Lord that day. That marked the beginning of the church, and the last verse of that same chapter says, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

That is the first time this message was ever preached to men, and the first additions to the church found in the Bible. As we read from that point on through the Bible we read about the church to the very end of it. The scripture says of these people in Jerusalem who had gladly received the word and were baptized for the remission of their sins, that "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers," Acts 2:42. Since they continued in the things taught by the apostles, they continued only in that which was

inspired of God; for they spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance. Thus we know that what they did were the things that Almighty God wanted them to do. Both their doctrine and their worship were ordained of God, and they could not depart from it without departing from God, and they could not change it without rebelling against God.

After the church had been firmly established in Jerusalem and they had filled Jerusalem with their doctrine, there arose a great persecution against the church and non-believers went so far as to kill some of them and they were scattered abroad. But that did not stop the church. Those who were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word. Churches were established everywhere they went. Since the members of the church in Jerusalem all believed the same thing – the things taught by the apostles, they all preached the same thing everywhere they went, and the people who believed what they preached all believed the same thing. That means that they were also the same in their teaching and practice. It means that the churches established by them were all the same. They were all alike. And when Paul sent greetings to the saints in Rome, he said, “The churches of Christ salute you,” Rom. 16:16.

In the 16th chapter of Acts we read of the activities of Paul and Silas going through Asia Minor preaching the gospel that went forth from Jerusalem, and Luke says, “As they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep that were ordained of the apostles and elders in Jerusalem,” Acts 16:4. The church throughout the world was to continue only in that which was established in Jerusa-

lem, and any departure from it was termed "heresy" by them. Heresy was severely condemned by the apostles, who are referred to in the scripture as the "ambassadors of Christ," 2 Cor. 5:30. They listed heresy as a work of the flesh and said those who practice it "shall not inherit the kingdom of God," Gal. 5:21.

But God knew that men would not abide in the truth and predicted a departure from it. Paul said in 1 Tim. 4:1-3, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth." God himself said there would be a departure from the faith. He said men would be led away from it by the doctrines of devils. Then he listed "forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats" as doctrines of devils. Both of these are taught by the Catholic Church today and people hail them as eternal truth because they came out of Rome. But when God says they are "doctrines of devils", I will neither honor nor respect them as having any right to be taught in religion. One cannot accept them without departing from the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

In 2 Thes. 2:1-4, the apostle predicted that there would be "a falling away" before Christ comes again, and the man of sin would be revealed, "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, showing himself that he is God." After the death of the apostles the church fell away as they predicted it would. The man of sin began to rule in religion who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, and sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. He is referred to by his devotees as "Lord God the Pope," but is referred to in the scripture as "the man of sin." He claims the right to make laws for the church and changes them at will. And a great segment of the religious world has long since ceased to look to Jerusalem and the apostles for the doctrine that is to be taught and the worship that is to be engaged, but to Rome instead. Men over the world appeal to the Pope for a ruling on things that come up in religion and look to him instead of God.

After the church of the Lord apostatized from the faith and a system from Rome was established in its place, men became so sick of the corruptions of it that they set out to reform it. Protestant churches were started in protest to the corrupt doctrines and practices that came out of Rome. A great flood of these denominations flowed out over the world, as the scripture says in Rev. 12:15 that "The serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood." There were many honest men who were caught up in the headwaters of this flood who began to see the evil of what they were doing. So they began an effort to get back to Jerusalem and the things that were ordained of the apostles and elders there. They began to realize that they were not only teaching and practicing things for which they did not have a "thus saith the

Lord” and which were not found in the church that began in Jerusalem, but that they were not teaching and practicing the things that WERE found in the church in Jerusalem. Hence, they resolved that “where the Bible speaks, we will speak; and where the Bible is silent, we will be silent.” They came to believe that “if any man speaks, he should speak as the oracles of God.” So they began telling men in the language of the apostles to “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. When they read that “The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch,” they ceased to wear any other name in religion. When they read that “the disciples came together on the first day of the week to break bread,” they began meeting on the first day of the week to eat the Lord’s supper. When they read that Christians were told to “Let every one of you lay by him in store on the first day of the week as the Lord has prospered him,” they began making weekly contributions based on the amount of their income.

When they read that the Christians in the days of the apostles were told to “sing and make melody in your hearts to the Lord,” and “Let us offer a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips,” they began celebrating the praise to God in song and refused to go beyond that which is written and use mechanical musical instruments in their worship. All who are interested in worshipping God in truth will do the same thing today. That will mean the abandonment of all human creeds, of all denominational names, of all doctrines and commandments of men, of everything in worship to God that was not

ordained of the apostles and elders in Jerusalem and taking the Bible as the only guide in religious matters. Then God's church will be exalted upon this earth, his name will be glorified, souls will be saved, and those who worship God in this way will have his blessings upon them in life and will live with him in eternity.

THE ELECT OF GOD

I want to talk to you today about "The inheritance of God's people." The apostle Peter wrote a general epistle to Christians in Asia Minor and said, "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, how are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time," 1 Pet. 1:3-5.

Though this was addressed to the Christians in that section particularly, it applies equally to all Christians everywhere in all ages. God does the same for all of his children. They all have the same promises with the same hope to inspire them, the same conditions in life to meet, and the same worship to engage in. The promises, of course, are based upon our faithfulness in worship and service to Him, and the way we meet those conditions of life.

Christians are all children of God, and the only children that He has. They make up the great family of God, and he has no children outside of his family. The scripture speaks in 1 Tim. 3:15 about "the house of God, which is the church of the living God." The house of God is simply the "family" of God, and not a material building made as a place for God to dwell in. Paul said, "God that made the world and all things

therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands," Acts 17:24. The church of God is made up of living people – people who have been cleansed by the blood of Christ and redeemed from all iniquity, who have become "new creatures" and made alive in Christ.

A letter addressed to the saints in Rome – the people who made up the church in that place, says, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together," Rom. 8:16-17. When we think of an inheritance, we think of the heirs. Or, when we think of the heirs, we think of the inheritance that they will receive. Since Christians are the children of God, and the children are the heirs of God, they are the ones who are begotten to this inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for Christians, and only Christians,. If you are not a Christian, you have no such inheritance to look forward to, and no such hope to comfort you in your sickness and your sorrows. How dark the future will be when you come to face death itself.

The figure of an inheritance to indicate future blessings is a common one with the writers of the New Testament. In Paul's last meeting with the elders of Ephesus, he said as he was about to leave them, "Now I commend you to God and the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified," Acts 20:32. He wanted to leave them with the thought of the inheritance which they would enter into one

day in the Father's house if they remained faithful to God.

When Saul of Tarsus received his commission from the Lord, he was told that he was being sent both to the Jews and the Gentiles, "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me," Acts 26:18. Thus we learn that both Jews and Gentiles receive the promise of this inheritance in becoming a Christian — when we repent and turn to the Lord in obedience to his commands. When one repents and is baptized for the remission of sins, he receives the gift of the Holy Spirit, which promise is given to all, as many as the Lord our God shall call. Paul speaks of this in Eph. 1:13-14 as "being sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." It is when one is baptized into Christ for the remission of sins that he receives the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a seal of God placed upon the one thus purchased unto him by the blood of His Son, and this seal is the earnest of that inheritance. It is made sure unto us only by this means. That inheritance can never be taken from us as long as we remain faithful to God. Peter says, "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time," 1 Pet. 1:5. God's power does not fail. Our faith may, but his power does not. As long as our faith does not fail — as long as it is not shipwrecked or overthrown, as long as we do not cast it off and cease to walk in it, just that long

will we be kept by the power of God unto that salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. It is then that we will enter into that inheritance.

The Christian's hope of this inheritance is a "living hope." It is a living hope because it is based upon the promise of God that never fails. As long as the Christian lives with God upon this earth, he has that hope. Not only is the hope a living one, but the inheritance itself is incorruptible, undefiled, and fades not away. It is immortal, imperishable, undying, and enduring. Earthly possessions, regardless of how precious and satisfying they may be to us, are corruptible. They can be destroyed, and if not destroyed by the hand of man or hand of fate, they will in time pass away. Moths and other living organisms will corrupt. Rust and corrosion will eat away until the strength and beauty of our possessions are gone. But these things will not be known in the land where the Christian's inheritance is realized. The crown for which the Christian strives is said in 1 Cor. 9:25 to be incorruptible. We speak often of "the home of the soul." And this inheritance of which we read in God's Book is for the soul of man. That is the part of man that is not corruptible.

Christian women are told to let their adorning "be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price," 1 Pet. 3:4. And then Paul says, "But though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day," 2 Cor. 4:16. That is the part of man that lives, and the part that is begotten to a living

hope, to an inheritance that is incorruptible. The word of God itself, by which we are begotten to this living hope of an incorruptible inheritance, is incorruptible. In 1 Pet. 1:23 the apostle Peter says the Christian is born of "the incorruptible seed, by the word of God which lives and abides for ever."

The Christian's inheritance is not only incorruptible, but it is also undefiled. This world is defiled by sin, and the things that are in it are defiled by the same influence. If there were no sin in the world, man would not be defiled while living in it. If there were no evil in the world, our cities, and communities, and homes would not be defiled. There would be purity and beauty everywhere. There would be no distrust among people and every place would be a safe and desirable place to live. But because of sin, the world is filled with violence, and corruption is everywhere. There are unholy schemes and plotting on every hand. There is distrust, and greed, and selfishness. Characters are defiled, virtue is soiled, and homes are broken. Hearts are made to bleed, and sorrows press down upon us sometimes as burdens almost too heavy to be borne. But in that inheritance into which the faithful Christian will enter when he passes through the door of death into another world, death will be no more and sorrows will all have flown. The tear stains will all be wiped away by the hand of an eternal God and loving Father, and joy will be complete and everlasting in that home that is free from defilement. When the description of that wonderful place is given to us by the one who prepared it, we are told that "there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life,"

Rev. 21:27. That is the reason there will be no defilement there. There cannot enter into it anything that defiles. No one with an evil heart or evil thoughts can go there. It will be entirely safe and delightful for those who do enter it.

This inheritance of which we read does not fade away. Things here fade. All things of time fade, but not in eternity. Flowers fade. Buildings fade. The glow of health fades from one as he grows older. The eye will lose its sparkle and the hair its brilliance. The frame will grow weak and the step will become feeble. Memory will fade and past joys will be forgotten. But nothing fades in the home where the soul of man never dies. For one thing, the "river of water of life" is there. It is the water that satisfies the thirst for ever more, and from which all who are there will drink and never die. The "tree of life" is also there, from which all may eat and live on in that state of bliss. And the health will never fade, for its leaves are for the healing of the nations. Such inheritance should inspire everyone to strive to enter into it.

That inheritance is "reserved" for those to whom it is promised. No one will crowd in ahead to take it, nor slip in to occupy it before the one to whom it is promised can enter. In this affluent society of ours with crowded conditions and the mad rush everywhere, we realize the need for reservations. But according to the Lord himself, the crowd is not going in that direction. The rush is not for the city wherein dwelleth righteousness, and comparatively few people have even thought of making a reservation now for that home that we would like to enjoy then. Since

this inheritance is only for the righteous, and will be realized in the city wherein dwelleth righteousness, one will have to become righteous in this life, live a life of righteousness and die the death of the righteous to enter into it. You can start in that direction today if you are willing to confess your faith in the Son of God, repent of your sins and be baptized into him for the remission of sins and live a faithful life of obedience to him in all godliness and purity.

“CHURCHES OF CHRIST SALUTE YOU” (Rom.16:16)

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