

HALL, S.H.-BIBLE STUDIES #2

by Hall sh

The second volume of Hall's educational Bible study series, continuing the structured classroom approach with additional lessons and practical teaching advice for instructors working with students at different levels of biblical knowledge.

26 Chapters

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04 FOREWORD

FOREWORD

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After the earnest solicitation of many who have used Volume I of Scripture Studies, setting forth the teaching of the New Testament on the church of Christ and its work, I have decided to give to the reading public Volume II, consisting of twenty-four more lessons, mostly pertaining to the life and work of members of the church of our Lord.

These lessons are suitable for Bible drills, prayer-meeting topics, ladies' Bible classes, and the regular classwork in Lord's-day schoolwork. The lessons are so presented as to be easily comprehended, and may be used by all students old enough to be members of the church. The lessons are prepared primarily for members of the church to give them a better appreciation and understanding of the Bible as a book from above, and of the church as the most glorious institution on earth. These lessons were prepared for the purpose of enabling members of the church to present, in a more effective way, the teaching of our Lord, and are designed to help those who are not members in their search for the "Old Paths" wherein we are commanded to walk. It is the hope of the author of these studies that all who use them will be edified and encouraged to adorn the doctrine of our Lord with a life of real service in extending the kingdom of heaven among men, and that many who are not Christians who study these lessons will be led to Christ.

These studies are sent forth with a prayer that God's name may be glorified and his Son exalted in the hearts of the people.

S. H. HALL.

05 A Word to the Teacher

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It is hoped that everyone who conducts class meetings in these studies will be one who loves the Bible and one who will make an effort to know the lessons well before going to the class. One should not undertake to teach who is not interested enough in the work to know something to teach. Many classes have failed because the teacher was unprepared for the lesson. A teacher cannot lead a class who does not keep ahead of the class in the knowledge of the Bible. The desire to study with the class is good, but see to it that the students do not get ahead of the teacher.

There is no reason why these lessons cannot be taught in every grade. There is nothing in them too hard for a child old enough to obey the gospel. But for the smaller grades it is suggested that the teacher divide each lesson into three parts. In some cases one lesson may be finished in two class meetings. Here the teacher must judge of the ability of the class. It would be well even for adults to divide some of the lessons. Stay with each lesson until the class knows it before passing to the next.

We are giving no questions at the end of the lesson; hence, would suggest that you read the lessons together, discussing fully each topic and reading all the Scriptures cited. May God use these lessons in building up his children and making them to become "steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel." May he, in turn, use them in leading those out of Christ into him that they may be saved. Work hard to make the class grow and increase in numbers. The best way for the teacher to do this is to know his lesson every time he goes before his or her students. - S.H. Hall

06 1 Regular and Utility Scriptures

1 Regular and Utility Scriptures

1. Regular and Utility Scriptures

INTRODUCTION

2 Timothy 2:15 says: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." This text has been used for many sermons on the proper division of the word. Let us use this text, an old text, in somewhat of a new way. This is a day of athletics, and it is in order to use some of our games just as Paul did in (1 Corinthians 9:24-27), illustrative of the lesson before us. In the baseball game, the one with which many are familiar, we have two kinds of players—viz., (1) the regular players; (2) the utility men. The regular players are the ones we expect to see in every game—first baseman, second baseman, third baseman, shortstop, right field, center field, and left field. But we have some men sitting off yonder on the bench whom we call utility men. They are there for emergencies that may come up that call for special men to drop in due to these emergencies.

Now, do you have it all visualized? If so, under this imagery, let us study this old text in a new way.

1. The Regular Scriptures. By this is meant those Scriptures that teach us how to be saved and stay saved. There is the alien sinner out there. What must he do to be saved? Is it possible for any question to be answered more clearly and unmistakably than this question is answered. The apostles were commanded to go and teach all nations and baptize the ones they taught into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:16-20). And you will note this instruction is backed by all the power and authority God has in heaven and on earth. Mark 16:15-16 says: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." In Luke 24:45-53 it is stated, as plain as day, that this preaching must begin in Jerusalem, and not to begin until the Spirit came to guide these teachers. For this reason, after being so commanded, they returned to Jerusalem and waited for the promised Spirit. Now turn to Acts 2 and you have a full account of the Spirit's coming and the first preaching done by Peter who had the "keys of the kingdom" (Matthew 16:18-19) with authority to bind on earth the conditions of pardon that our Lord had bound in heaven. Study that chapter carefully, and you learn that when souls were convinced that Christ had emptied the sepulcher by his resurrection, had returned to heaven and had been made both Lord and Christ, they asked what they must do and were commanded to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of their sins. This about three thousand souls did, and on that day the Lord added them to his church because they had become such as should be saved. Could anything be made plainer than this? Then you follow these apostles and other preachers sent out by them, and in every case of the conversion of aliens, you find them first taught, and this teaching resulting in faith, repentance, and baptism, no one rejoicing and being recognized as saved until these things had been done. Here there is no room for doubt.

These are regular Scriptures. They come in every conversion without an exception. But do we know these baptized believers were taught to live and conduct themselves as individuals in their homes, at their business, and as citizens? Most certainly we do. Do we know how they must conduct themselves when bound together in a local church? Do we know how to meet and work and worship as local congregations, that the gospel by us must be sounded out, the hungry fed and the naked clothed? Certainly all of this is made as plain as day. This is what is meant by regular Scriptures. They teach us how to become Christians and how to live the Christian's life. They are so plain that "the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." (Isaiah 35:8).

2. The Utility Scriptures. By "utility Scriptures" is meant all the other Scriptures in the Bible. There are lots of Scriptures in our Bible that you may never know and yet go to heaven. By this I simply mean that you can learn what to do to be saved and do it, then how to live the Christian's life and live it, and your eyes closed in the sleep of death and you pass on to be with your Lord without knowing a great many things in the Bible. Who is it that does not know this is true? This thing that you call salvation requires but few things, and they are the most simple things as conditions on which it is bestowed on us. Get it: (1) The gospel, God's power to save, for every creature, and every creature that believes it not shall be damned. (Mark 16:15-16). Some of the creatures on earth are slow to learn, uneducated, and have just sense enough to be accountable. But the gospel is for them, and they will be damned if they do not believe it. Could God be just in damning a human soul for not believing something that is not simple, easily seen, as facts to be believed or commands to be obeyed? You answer the question. Some of us are making the gospel hard and difficult by adding to it things to be believed that are not essential. We had better go slow here. (See Deuteronomy 4:2; Revelation 22:18-19). (2) Could God be a just God and damn those of us who add to his conditions of salvation and take from them, if just what is essential were not so plain that we are wholly without excuse for such adding and subtracting? (3) Could he be a just God and damn both men and angels for preaching another gospel, which simply means the good news of how we are saved and can stay saved, if the limits and bounds of this gospel, its real content, were not outstanding and as plain as the noonday sun? To ask such questions answers them. (See Galatians 1:6-9).

Here let us read again 2 Timothy 3:16-17 : "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." If every Scripture inspired of God is profitable, then there are none that are unprofitable. Do you get this? Every Scripture by inspiration given has its own utility. The purpose of the regular Scriptures, we have already stated—viz., to teach us how to be saved and stay saved. But what about all the rest of the Bible? They must have a utility, for every one of them is profitable. Well, we shall see what their utility is.

3. God Foreseeing. The Bible speaks of "the scripture, foreseeing." (See Galatians 3:8). This can only mean that the God who gave us the Scriptures could foresee our needs and put certain things in the Bible because of this foreknowledge. And may I say that, in this "foreseeing," he foresaw every error that would arise after the Bible was finished by John on the Isle of Patmos in A. D. 96. Yes, thousands of false ideas, false doctrines, have come before man since the church was established and since the Scriptures were fully revealed. And God foresaw each error and intentionally placed a statement in the Bible to keep us from believing the error when it arises. Here is the most undoubting evidence that the Bible came from one above and beyond man. The

mind that superintended it being written foresaw every need of man, as new needs would arise through the centuries, and placed a statement in his good book to meet each need. Who is it that but knows that no man nor set of men, with only finite minds, could produce a book like this. All the brains on earth compacted into one gigantic brain could not foretell all of our needs for one year ahead of us, or even one day ahead. But the mind that wrote the Bible foresaw every need, so far as the welfare of our souls is concerned, and met that need by placing what I am pleased to call a utility Scripture in the Bible, comparable to the utility men on the ball team, to meet these needs. And just as a game can be well played and a glorious victory won without using a single utility man, just so thousands, doubtless, have gone home to glory without needing any of these utility Scriptures. But not so with others.

4. Some Exemplifications. Let us now study a few of these utility Scriptures, that you may see the goodness of our God in placing them in the Bible, and look for others as needs arise in our lives as we journey onward and upward to glory. Who is it that does not know you can live and die and be saved forever without ever thinking of whether the earth is round or flat? Millions have been saved without this knowledge. Some say that the writer of the Bible speaks like he thinks the earth is flat; for this reason he is accused of being an ignoramus. And since God could not be this ignorant, if he is what we claim him to be, they conclude the Bible was written by ignorant men, and there is no God such as we claim for the Bible.

Well, the Bible claims only to be a book of science on how best to live while here on the earth. It was written for the masses of humanity and Paul declares that God in writing it "calleteth those things which be not as though they were." (Romans 4:17). It would have been most unscientific if our God had gone aside into explaining every little thing that appears in this old world as it really is not. Hence, he speaks of things as they appear and not as they are in fact. The Bible is a book of the science on right living, and where is the man or set of men who can produce another just as good and use not its own thoughts and doctrine on right living? Here is a book of science on how best to live that cannot be improved upon. The best man in the world is that one who comes most nearly living as the Bible teaches us to live. This you know. But let us look into the rotundity of the earth. It was Copernicus, in 1543, who first advanced in a definite way the idea that the earth is round and rotates on its axis. Galileo, years later, championed the theory, and for so doing was considered by the church as a heretic and was persecuted. This shows how deep in the darkness of ignorance man was as to the physical facts about the heavens and the earth. But the question arises: Did God know, all the while he was writing the Bible, these facts, and did he foresee that we would need to know that he knows? Most certainly he foresaw this need. He foresaw the attack that would be made upon the Bible because of his speaking of things as they appear to accommodate himself to the masses; hence, he placed the following on record:

(1) He inspired Job to write, more than three thousand years before Copernicus was born, these words: "He stretcheth out the north over empty space, and hangeth the earth upon nothing." (Job 26:7). Here Job is telling us what God did. But Job knew not the meaning of these words. This proves beyond doubt that "the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter 1:21). And let it be said, the book declares that much they said they themselves could not understand. Study 1 Peter 1:8-12. Certainly none of the writers could see the exact fitness and importance of these statements the Holy Spirit guided them into making, for their need did not then exist. There is not a scientist on

earth who can frame a sentence that more exactly fits in with the physical facts of the heavens and the earth than this sentence found here in Job. And not until a few years back did man discover that, out beyond the north live there are no planets—just empty space.” With this one statement, the Davids of today, who have undoubting trust in the living God, can pick this smooth stone from the brook of God’s truth and bury it between the eyes of any modern Goliath that comes out to challenge the God of Israel today.

(2) He inspired Isaiah to write: "It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth." (Isaiah 40:22). (3) And note how shrewdly our Lord left it on record that he knew the physical facts about the earth, night on one side while it is day on the other, by stating to his disciples that when he comes the second time it will be day and also night. "In that day" two will be in the field at work, one taken and the other left. "In that night" two will be in the bed, one taken and the other left. These words provoked no discussion among the disciples. Jesus so made these statements that his disciples would not raise the question as to the condition of the earth. (Luke 17:30-31; Luke 17:34; Luke 17:36). But we all very well know now that, so far as the physical facts are concerned, it will be both day and night when Christ comes—day on one side of the earth and night on the other side.

(3) The mode of baptism. Of what does the act, sometimes spoken of as mode, consist? You know it is claimed by some that sprinkling, pouring or immersion, any one constitutes a scriptural act of baptism. Loose talk gets us far removed from the Bible. Sprinkling and pouring are spoken of, as a rule, as modes of baptism. Nothing could be more unscriptural than such thoughts, and, besides this, further removed from the meaning of the words. Baptism, without any kind of doubt, is an immersion in water and a resurrection therefrom. In it the subject is buried, planted, and resurrected. Study Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12. For this reason it took place where there was much water (John 3:23); there was a coming unto the water (Acts 8:36); going down into the water (Acts 8:38); and a coming up out of the water following the act of baptism while in the water (Mark 1:9-10; Acts 8:39). Now as to the mode of this burial and planting in the water, you could do it face foremost, or lay the candidate backwards, as it is usually done, or lay the party down sidewise. More than once, I have immersed crippled people by having them seated in a chair, lower the chair into the water, and when resting on the bottom of the baptistry, and after the proper words are said, lean the chair backwards until the body was buried or covered with water, then bring the chair back to its proper position. All of these are modes of immersion, but never could be thought of as a mode of sprinkling. Now, would it not be unthinkable to so speak of them? Then why speak of sprinkling as a mode of immersion? You may have different modes or manners of sprinkling. For instance, pour a little water on the fingers or dip the fingers in water and sprinkle the water on from the tips of the fingers, or pour the water on the end of a piece of a bushy shrub or dip the end of it in water and sprinkle the water from it on the one to be sprinkled. These would be different modes or manners of sprinkling, but never of immersion. But a utility Scripture is in order here. Turn to Acts 8:36-39. In this brief account of the act of baptism, given by the Holy Spirit, it says five times that the baptismal act took place while both the one who was baptized and the one doing the baptizing were in the water. You say you do not quite see this? Well, you shall see it. Is not the pronoun they used twice, stating that "they both went down into the water" before the baptism, and then "they came up out of the water" after the baptism? If it merely read, "They went down into the water and he baptized him," this would put the baptism in the water. But if it said nothing about going down into the water, but simply read that "he baptized him. And as they were

coming up out of the water, the Spirit caught Philip away," this would put the act of baptism in the water. But it not only uses them twice, saying "they went down into the water" and "they came up out of the water," but the word "both" is used twice, and the parties renamed—"both Philip and the eunuch." There you have it. That simple statement of this baptism says five times that this baptism took place in the water.

One who was highly esteemed in his own eyes approached me once and was pitying me for my ignorance of simple prepositions. He said that "into the water," in the account of the eunuch's baptism did not mean they got into the water, but at or near by the water. I quickly replied that he had me in trouble. Said I unto him: "If, when it says they both went down into the water, it means they stayed out of the water and never got in. then we would have to take the position that when it says they came up out of the water, they stayed in and never got out. If not, why not?" He failed to tell me why not, and the soul does not live who could tell. It is too plain to be misunderstood. Certainly "The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." (Isaiah 35:8).

Now words are signs of ideas, and each time the Spirit speaks, it has an idea to drive home to our hearts. Babbling is condemned in the Bible in the strongest way. To babble is to talk without some thoughtful, definite purpose in view. Are you ready to accuse the Holy Spirit of being a babbler? Well, the Holy Spirit certainly babbled if we do not have to go down into the water to be baptized, and then come up out of the water.

"Every scripture inspired of God is profitable." What is the profit of this Scripture? This was driven home to a mother once who had been sprinkled and had had her two daughters sprinkled. It was insisted that she tell exactly what the Spirit had in mind when this Scripture was placed in our Bible. She finally admitted that it could not have been put there for any other purpose than to offset the teaching that sprinkling will do for baptism, and she was immersed and so were her daughters. But there is another interesting part of the above story. Her husband was skeptical, made so by the divided state of the religions in his community. After she saw this utility Scripture, turning to the husband he was asked if he knew that the author of the Bible foreknew all of the false doctrines that would be advanced and put something in the book to keep us from believing these errors when advanced. He said he had never thought of the Bible this way. Soon he was convinced and he too was baptized into Christ. The Bible, as we have it, is without doubt, "Jehovah's greatest wonder and the miracle of the ages." In 2 Corinthians 12:1-9 you learn that Paul was caught up into the third heaven, into paradise, and that he saw things, heard things, learned things; but that when he came back to the earth it was not "lawful for a man to utter" what he saw, heard, and learned. There it is. Certainly you can learn what to do to be saved and how to live the Christian's life and die and go to heaven without knowing that Paul was caught up into the third heaven. But if you were confronted with the Adventist and knew that the whole Adventist hope rests on the claim that Mrs. Ellen G. White, their prophetess, went to heaven, right into paradise, and that she came back to this world and began to do lots of talking and writing about learning the Sabbath command belongs to the New Covenant, and that the Adventist Church is built on her teaching, then you would need this statement of Paul's. All you have to do is to ask them if Paul was caught up into the third heaven. Of course, they have to say yes. Then ask if it were lawful for him to tell what he saw and heard while there after returning to the earth and they will tell you no. Then ask, how it comes about that it is lawful for Mrs. White to tell about what she learned when unlawful for Paul. The fact of the business is Mrs. White was not caught up there. But God foreknew her claim and

put this in the book to spike it when it was made. All that man needs to know has been revealed and is found in the gospel, God's power to save. (Romans 1:16-17). It matters not how many people go to heaven and come back or how many angels come from heaven to earth, they dare not preach or teach anything that tints gospel does not contain. Read it in Galatians 1:6-9. And when people come making such claims, just know here is the Scripture God placed in the good book to enable you to do exactly what you are commanded to do in 1 John 4:1 : "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." But enough for utility Scriptures in this chapter. Others will be named as we study other subjects.

07 2 Miracles of Jehovah and Miracles of Satan

2 Miracles of Jehovah and Miracles of Satan

2. Miracles of Jehovah and Miracles of Satan

INTRODUCTION

We know that the God of the Bible has performed miracles from the very beginning of his giving written revelations to man. And the purpose of these miracles is declared. Study John 20:30-31; Mark 16:19-20; Hebrews 2:1-4.

But the very same book that tells us of these miracles also declares that Satan works miracles. Study Revelation 13:13-14; Revelation 19:20 :2 Thessalonians 2:3-9. Reading Matthew 24:24, you find that some of these miracles shall be startling and calculated to deceive the strongest among us.

The question of practical importance is: How may we tell a miracle performed by Jehovah from one performed by Satan? The task that is before us we now enter.

FIRST CONFIRMED REVELATION MUST BE USED TO CONFIRM SUBSEQUENT REVELATIONS

Just as true and certain as the first proposition in geometry is used to prove or demonstrate the second and these two the third and on throughout your mathematical series until you have finished calculus, just so the first revelation confirmed by miracle must be used to prove or confirm subsequent revelations. Some, who have not gone the route in the mathematical field, may not get this, but suffice it to say that from the first movement in the mathematical field until you have reached the topmost rung of this ladder, there is perfect accord, as links in a great chain pull together and depend one upon the other.

Since miracles were used by Jehovah to confirm revealed truth, it stands to reason that after God first revealed himself to man on any point, that all subsequent revelations must agree with and never conflict with previous revelations confirmed by miracles. God's miracles are given to confirm truth. His word is truth. (John 17:17). And since he never contradicts himself, but his word harmonizes, from beginning to end, you will never find any of his miracles used to confirm anything out of harmony or contradictory to what he has previously revealed and confirmed by miracles. Do you get it?

The burden of his first revelation, given through Moses and confirmed by stupendous miracles, was to establish in the hearts of the people that there is but one God, that all things were created by him, and from him all the rules of right living must come. God's appearance to Moses in the burning bush (Exodus 3:2), the signs he performed before Pharaoh and the children of Israel, the giving of the law from Mount Sinai amidst the thunderings, and the lightnings that made even Moses himself quake (Hebrews 12:18-21; the whole book of Exodus)—all of these to prove

beyond doubt that Moses was his selected write). and teacher of the first fundamental truth—viz., "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord" (Deuteronomy 6:4) and "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3). I say again that, while the law of right living was given in detail through Moses, the first fundamental truth contained in this, the first written revelation we have from God, was to lay heavily upon the hearts of the people then and ever thereafter that we have only one God and we dare not recognize another.

EXEMPLIFICATIONS

Study Deuteronomy 18:15-22. This prophecy looks forward to our Lord. Study Acts 3:22-26.

In verse 20: of the above you note a curse pronounced on that prophet that should presume to speak a word in God's name that he does not command or that should speak in the name of another God. Note that speaking a word in God's name, which he does not command, or claiming to do it by his authority, is placed on a level with speaking in the name of another God.

Now study verse 21 and you see here God anticipates a question that naturally would come up in his peoples' hearts—viz., "how shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken?"

Now study verse 22 and you have the answer. If the prophet shall offer a sign or prediction and the thing come not to pass, then you may know he has spoken presumptuously of the deceit of his own heart.

But suppose the prophet gives a sign and it does come to pass, is this the final proof or evidence that it is from God? No, you must check up and see if the content of the message is in exact harmony with other revelations confirmed by miracles. Drop back now to Deuteronomy 13:1-5. Study these words closely. Here is a prophet that gives a sign and it comes to pass, but the content of his message is to go after other gods. Certainly we should have sense enough to know God would not establish the law that he is the only true and living God and we dare not listen to another, then come along and work a miracle to get us to go after some other God. Do you get it? So each teacher or prophet who comes among us, regardless of how many miracles he can perform, the content of his message, his teaching, must be compared with what God has already revealed and confirmed by God never contradicts himself. He never sends out different teachers with different doctrines. This is enough to prove that the two or three hundred churches now in existence teaching contradictory doctrines came not from God, but from the evil one.

But go back to Deuteronomy 13:1-5. Why does our God allow such to come among us? The answer is easily seen: "For the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul." Here commit to memory Deuteronomy 6:4-7. Here is the fundamental truth of the whole Bible.

And begin with Genesis, the very first verse of the first chapter, and thoughtfully travel right on through the sixty-six books of the whole Bible until you come to the closing words of the last book, the book of Revelation, and you find no writer of any of these books recognizing any God except the one true and living God by Moses revealed unto the people. And you find, in almost the last words of the Bible, a warning to those who would add to what God says or take a word from what he says. How wonderful are these things! Hold your mathematical ladder up before you. Do you see the very first principle in that ladder connected and agreeing with all the other rungs until you

reach the topmost rung yonder? Now hold the grand old book up before you and see the very first words in the first book and behold the perfect unity and harmony between these words and all subsequent words it contains until you reach the topmost rung yonder where John says: "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen." In that first book you find paradise lost, the remedy promised, and in the last you have paradise regained and the words of the promised Redeemer assuring us that he will come, when he does come, "quickly" to take us home to our lost estate to bask in the sunlight of his presence forever. "And they shall see his face." (Revelation 22:4). What a blessed hope!

THIS PRINCIPLE EMPHASIZED IN NEW TESTAMENT

Christ claimed not to be the Messiah merely because of the miracles he could perform, but the harmony of all of his teaching and actions with what before had been written and confirmed by miracles was looked to as the final proof of his claim. Here study Luke 24:44-47; John 5:45-47; Matthew 5:17-19. Not only is this true of our Lord's teaching and action, but his apostles were careful to teach that all that they taught and believed about Christ was the culmination and fulfillment of what was before written. Study 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. Note verses 3 and 4, "According to the scriptures' here, that Timothy had known from childhood and that were able to make him wise unto salvation (2 Timothy 3:15), are old Testament Scriptures. The coming of Christ, from his conception until his ascension, the establishment of the church and kingdom, the coming of the Holy Spirit, and everything connected with the church of God today were all contained in the old Testament in type, promise, and prophecy.

Now study Galatians 1:6-9. The question could be asked, Why say "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"? if it were never possible for an angel from heaven to come with another gospel. No position is taken here. But certainly the Holy Spirit here puts us on guard for teachers claiming miraculous endowment and backing. Let it be here noted that every teacher who comes among us must be proven and tested by what has already been revealed and confirmed by miracles. The claim to miracle-working power is not enough. The content of the message must be in perfect harmony with what has already been revealed.

Miracles real and pretended. In Revelation 13:13-14 you find it said: "And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast." This clearly teaches that there is something connected with these miracles that are deceptive. But the words of our Lord in Matthew 24:24, "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect," clearly teach that miracles would be performed that would be calculated to deceive even the strongest among us. There is no need of our undertaking to prove that Satan can perform real miracles and wonders or whether they are all pretended. Such things are spoken of and of such we are warned. And another thing, we must keep before us:

(1) that all true miracles are performed for the purpose of drawing us closer to every word God has spoken; (2) but all miracles of Satan are given to lead us from something God has spoken. Here is how we may tell one from the other.

Is it not correct to say that every religious order not mentioned in the Bible started with the claim to the miraculous? Take the Adventist's (Mrs. Ellen G. White) claim that she was caught up into the third heaven, into paradise, and there is where she learned that we must keep the Sabbath under the new covenant. Get her early writings and see for yourself. But something has been said about this in the chapter on "Regular and Utility Scriptures." Turn and read it again. The Mormons lay claim to the miraculous. And even among so respectable groups as our Baptist and Methodist friends, take their theory of conversion, and you find the miraculous there. A mysterious, miraculous operation of the Spirit in conversion that they make their converts believe in, leads them to set aside the plain-as-day teaching of our Lord on the essentiality of baptism in salvation. What else is there about these religious orders but this claim that leads them to repudiate baptism for the remission of sins? They had this miraculous experience, and it is evidence to them that their sins are forgiven and that they are children of God before baptism; hence, this so-claimed miracle leads them to repudiate the words of our Lord. And for this very reason we know it is a miracle that Satan is using and not one God has introduced. So on with every religious order not named in the Bible. Think this through. The Catholics certainly lay claim, in a very large way, to the miraculous.

One more exemplification. A call once came to preach at a schoolhouse for the purpose of quieting a community much worked up over the claims of a woman preacher who said she was baptized in the Holy Spirit and could speak in tongues. To abridge the story, preaching was done from Sunday night over until Friday night in the schoolhouse. This woman was in attendance and asked questions almost every night. On Friday night, having her claims in, we were ready to weigh well all of her theories by the Scriptures. Right in the midst of the expose, given in the kindest of words and in the spirit of gentleness, she arose and came down the aisle shouting and dancing the holy dance, as they call it. At first, it was thought she recognized the fact that her doctrine had been torn into shreds, as indeed it was, and she meant to drown the speaker out. He jumped up on the front bench and raised his voice and continued to preach with all the heart he had. In this way he held the attention of the people in spite of her noise. Finally she swooned and fell upon a long bench to his left. It was presumed she swooned—it may have all been pretended. But the sermon was concluded and the gospel invitation extended with two souls coming to accept Christ. After attending to this the speaker quietly went back to the rostrum and stated: "It would be a mistake not to say something kindly about what this woman has done here tonight. Will each one of you listen?" The speaker said: "And especially I want you, Mrs., _____ to listen. You claim to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and that the Spirit moves you to do all that you do and say. There is a problem before us that you good people will have to help us to solve. Turning to 1 Corinthians 14:23-40 we have our Lord's orders just how the people were to conduct themselves when spiritual gifts were actually possessed and exercised by the early Christians. In the directions we find here it plainly says: 'Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.' Now we know that this is what the Holy Spirit really did say over eighteen hundred years ago when writing through Paul. (See 1 Corinthians 2:13). 1 Corinthians 14:37 says: 'If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.'

"Now, do you all have it? This is what the Holy Spirit actually did say! when this chapter was written. Now are we to believe that this same Spirit made this woman get up here tonight and talk and dance all over it? Can this be true? Do -we not know that the Spirit that moved Paul to write this is not the Spirit that moved this woman to do what she has here done tonight? It was another spirit, though she may be deceived and thinks it was God's Spirit.

"But we want to anticipate her. She will tell us doubtless that the Spirit struck her and she had to holler and dance. But God foreknew that such would be said and right here in 1 Corinthians 14 declares, 'And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophet.' That is, you can control yourself and speak only when no one else is speaking."

Well, that ended this trouble in that neighborhood. Now go back to the chapter on Utility Scriptures and take the above as one of them.

QUESTIONS THAT SHOULD BE ASKED

I Have Seen an Angel. Some have said: "I know I am saved because I have seen an angel." Very well, let us look into that. We have on record a case where a man saw an angel. See Acts 10; Acts 1-6, 22; Acts 11:12-14. Did the angel you think you saw talk to you like the angel that Cornelius saw? That angel told Cornelius to send for Peter and he would tell him what he should do, words whereby he and his house should be saved. Did the angel you saw tell you that Peter had the "keys of the kingdom" (Matthew 16:18-19), that he opened the doors to the Jews on Pentecost (Acts 2:36-41) and to the Gentiles at the household of Cornelius, and to go to Acts 2 and see just what the conditions of pardon are and do them because Christ has bound in heaven what Peter bound on earth? Just remember, Paul says: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." (Galatians 1:8).

I Have Seen Jesus. Some say: "I have seen Jesus, hence I know I am saved." It is well to study this claim. What did Jesus say to you when you saw him? Did he talk like he did to Saul of Tarsus when he met him? Turn and read this account in Acts 9:1-6; Acts 22:16. Our Lord told Saul plainly where to go and he would learn what he must do. He then sent the right man to him to tell him what to do.

It is an undeniable fact that never did an angel appear to a man to save him or tell him he was already saved. And our Lord has never appeared to any human soul to tell him he was saved without doing what he himself has said we must do to be saved. See Mark 16:15-16. Let us remember that there are "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ," and that even "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." See 2 Corinthians 11:13-15. You do not have to bother your mind as to how far the miracles that Satan works are real or faked. The one thing to remember is that it matters not by whom performed, and if so startling that it would almost deceive "the very elect" (Matthew 24:24), if they lead you not to believing and doing what Christ and his apostles teach they must be rejected as from the devil. Commit to memory 2 John 1:9-11.

Could there be a better way to close this chapter than with the words of Isaiah that read as follows:

"And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isaiah 8:19-20 : And then with the words of 2 John 1:9-11 : "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." And how significant that the secret of how we may tell a miracle God performs from one of Satan's signs is introduced in the old Testament in connection with the prophecy of the coming of our Lord and God's finishing written revelation through him and his chosen apostles.

Certainly, in the Bible we have "Jehovah's greatest wonder and the miracle of the Ages."

08 3 Jehovah's Faithfulness in His Promises to Abraham and David

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INTRODUCTION

Much is said in the Bible about the promises of God. That we are "heirs according to promise"; "that the promise may be sure to all the seed"; "that he might confirm the promises given unto the fathers"; "his precious and exceeding great promises," through which we become partakers of the divine nature, are a few of God's references to his promises. In this chapter we wish to emphasize God's faithfulness in fulfilling his promises to Abraham and David.

GODS PROMISE TO ABRAHAM

"And in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Genesis 12:3) This promise is repeatedly stated in the old Testament, and in the New Testament we find that it was fulfilled in Christ.

"And the scripture [old Testament Scripture], foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all the nations be blessed. So then they that are of faith are blessed with the faithful Abraham.... Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." (Galatians 3:8-16). This covenant to Abraham was made and confirmed by an oath four hundred thirty years before the law was given, and to this promise the law was added because of transgression that sin might be shown to be exceedingly sinful. Jesus came and redeemed us from the law "that upon the Gentiles might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." (Galatians 3:13-17).

ALL NATIONS BECOME ONE NOW

Since God's promise to Abraham has been fulfilled in Christ, the promised seed, and the old covenant is removed, all nations become one in this promise. "There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise." (Galatians 3:28-29). This culmination of God's promises to the fathers takes place in the church of our Lord, known as "God's house" or "family." Of the two, Gentiles and Jews, he has created "one new man," and reconciles both unto God in "one body," which is his church. (Ephesians 2:11-16).

GODS PROMISE TO DAVID

"My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven."

(Psalms 89:34-37). This covenant that God made with David, with all of its promises, was comprehended in God's promise to Abraham and grew out of it. It looked forward to the calling of the Gentiles and blessing all nations through Abraham's seed and making all the peoples of the earth one in the kingdom of Christ.

"For I say that Christ hath been made a minister of the circumcision [fleshly circumcision] for the truth of God, that he might confirm the promises given unto the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.... Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.... And again, Isaiah saith, There shall be the root of Jesse, and he that ariseth to rule over the Gentiles; on him shall the Gentiles hope." (Romans 15:8-12).

"And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit." (Isaiah 11:1). This refers to Christ.

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this." This prophecy is of Christ, and all of his ruling here is to be core while upon David's throne.

THE PROMISES REAFFIRMED

These promises were reaffirmed at the conception and birth of Jesus. "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: 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." (Luke 1:31-33). Mary expressed this in her song of joy: "He hath given help to Israel his servant, that he might remember mercy (as he spake unto our fathers) toward Abraham and his seed for ever." (Luke 1:54-55). Zacharias also expressed it in his song: "And hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David (as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been from of old)... to remember his holy covenant; the oath which he sware unto Abraham our father." (Luke 1:69-73).

Both Jew and Gentile are comprehended in this rejoicing. So sang Simeon when Jesus was presented to him: "Then he received him into his arms, and blessed God, and said, Now lettest thou thy servant depart, Lord, according to thy word, in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." (Luke 2:28-32). These promises were also reaffirmed at his resurrection. "Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would set one upon his throne; he foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he left unto Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified." (Acts 2:30-36).

Well does J. W. McGarvey comment here by saying: "He made him Lord by causing him to sit on God's own throne to rule over angels and men; and he made him Christ by causing him to sit on the throne of David according to promise." Christ has all the all authority that God has now, both in

heaven and on earth. "David's throne" was the delegated authority God gave to him here on earth, but it certainly looked forward, with the promise God made to Abraham, to some day comprehending all the nations and peoples of the earth. David's throne was cast down because of the unfaithfulness of his successors, and for a time there was no one to reign.

THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID REBUILT THAT GODS PROMISES MIGHT BE FULFILLED

"After these things I will return, and I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; that the residue of men may seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who maketh these things known from of old." (Acts 15:16-18). Note that Amos says: "I will build it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the nations that are called by my name." The rebuilding of David's tabernacle as in the days of old was done that the Gentiles might be saved. The Gentiles have come in and are being saved; hence, the rebuilding of David's tabernacle has been accomplished. There was a king on David's throne in the former tabernacle "in the days of old," and there is a King, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of David, on David's throne now, else it would not be as it was "in the days of old." The resurrection of Jesus from the dead fulfilled and accomplished everything that God had promised both to Abraham and David. "Brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and those among you that fear God, to us is the word of this salvation sent forth. And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers, that God hath fulfilled the same unto our children, in that he raised up Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he hath spoken on this wise, I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David." (Acts 13:26; Acts 13:32-34).

THESE PROMISES TO DAVID AND ABRAHAM HAD A DOUBLE APPLICATION

Temporal. The promise included the land of Canaan. (Genesis 12:7; Genesis 13:14-15). To David it was "from Dan even to Beer-sheba." (2 Samuel 3:10;

Spiritual. This earthly kingdom was a shadow of better things to come, David being a type of Christ, and his kingdom a type of the eternal kingdom that Jesus came and established. God's promise that one of the Davidic lineage should reign here on earth on David's throne was conditional—viz., "If thou wilt... do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and mine ordinances." (Psalms 10; Psalms 6-12). But the spiritual application of the promise was unconditional: Christ must come regardless of their unfaithfulness, and David's throne would be reestablished forever in our Lord Jesus Christ. The land of Canaan was a temporal promise to Abraham's fleshly seed and to David, but there is another seed contemplated. Read Romans 9:6-8 : "For they are not all Israel, that are of Israel: neither, because they are Abraham's seed, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, it is not the children of the flesh that are children of God; but the children of the promise are reckoned for a seed." And remember, Paul says in Galatians 3:29 : "And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise."

THE GOOD OLIVE TREE

Paul calls the descendants of Abraham and David the "natural branches" that have been broken off of the "good olive tree." The Gentiles are spoken of as branches from the "wild olive tree."

When the church or kingdom was established in the city of Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, as God before declared it should be, remember that only the natural branches of the good olive tree—viz., the Jews, constituted its first members and citizens. Christ, of the seed of David, was crowned in heaven, and set up his rule or authority here on earth in his church and kingdom, beginning in Jerusalem. (Luke 24:46-47). The people of the house of Jacob constituted this kingdom in its beginning. It was the little stone cut out of the mountain. (Daniel 2:44-45). Thousands of Jews flocked into it. After thus running for a while, the Gentiles were brought in according to promise, and the kingdom stood complete so far as its national representation was concerned. (Ephesians 2:11-17).

It is denied that Christ is now on David's throne; that "inseparably connected with David's throne is David's people, the nation of Israel, the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the territory the land which God swore to them for an everlasting inheritance." And certainly I agree here, so far as the temporal application of the promise is concerned. But God said: "It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven." (Psalms 89:37). But we are told that David's throne was never meant to comprehend anybody but Jews, and no territory except from Dan to Beersheba, which would be "a limited, subordinated sphere of rule," and that Jesus is not now on such a throne, but that he will some day come to Jerusalem and reestablish David's throne because the Jews will return there and be converted. Let us grant, for argument's sake, that the Jews will return and be converted to Christ. Let me ask: "To what place will they come to be saved?" Let the reader turn to Romans 11:11-24 and read thoughtfully. Note the following in verses 16, 17, 23, 24: "If the firstfruit is holy, so is the lump: and if the root is holy, so are the branches. But if some of the branches were broken of and thou, being a wild olive, wast grafted in among them, and didst become partaker with them of the root of the fatness of the olive tree; glory not over the branches.... And they [the Jews] also, if they continue not in their unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wast cut out of that which is by nature a wild olive tree, and wast grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which are the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?"

If this does not teach that the Gentiles are now exactly where the unbelieving Jew must come if he is ever saved, tell me how language could express it. He must cease his unbelief and be grafted again into the "good olive tree." The theory that Christ is to come back to the earth and save Israel, that they will be converted separate and apart from the saved Gentiles, or in any other manner or place, is wholly false. We have David's throne now and Christ on it, in heaven. I repeat, let Christ do whatever the fancy of the human mind can conceive for the Jews, we stand where they must come if they are ever saved.

"Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Many passages were placed in the Bible to offset errors which God foresaw would arise. What is the profit of the following Scriptures?

"Wherefore we henceforth know no man after the flesh: even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him so no more." (2 Corinthians 5:16).

It puts to death the theory that Jesus is to come to Jerusalem and sit on the throne that David once occupied. This could not be without our knowing him after the flesh. If so, how? "For there is no

distinction between Jew and Greek." (Romans 10; Romans 12). Bring Christ back to the earth and reestablish David's throne as he once occupied it without making a distinction, if you can.

Why discuss the regathering of the Jews to Jerusalem and their conversion to Christ? If such should take place in my day, I shall see it and rejoice. But this I know: if this is ever done, they will come to the place where I now am—viz., grafted into the "good olive tree," from which the Jews by unbelief were broken off, and into which they must be grafted again as life from the dead, if they are ever saved. David's son is in heaven, reigning over the Israel of God today, and every promise to Abraham and David is ours to enjoy. May God help us to get the Jews to see this.

Let us not deceive them by causing them to believe that they could reject Jesus about two thousand years ago on the grounds that he gave them not then exactly what he promises to give them some time in the future.

Remember the stone that was cut out of the mountain without hands (Daniel 2:34-35) became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. In Revelation (Revelation 11:15), when the seventh angel sounded, there were great voices in heaven exclaiming that "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." All of this has not been accomplished as yet, but we can rest in undoubting assurance that all of these prophecies will be accomplished in God's own way. But the kingdom then, when all of these things are accomplished, will be the same kingdom that it was when it began its extension here on earth in A. D. 33. May the Lord bless us in ever having in our hearts his Spirit, without which we are none of his. (Romans 8:9 b). May we "let brotherly love continue" among us that all men may know we are indeed the disciples of Christ. (Hebrews 13:1; John 13:35).

09 4 Helping God Find His Man

4 Helping God Find His Man

4. Helping God Find His Man

Quoting from the American Revised Version, we have these words, in Jeremiah 5:1 : "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that doeth justly, that seeketh truth; and I will pardon her." This certainly reads like men were scarce in Jerusalem at this time, and it tells us beyond a doubt exactly when we have found the man for whom God is looking—viz. (1) The man who doeth justly, and who would die before he would knowingly be unjust to any human soul, and (2) the man who seeketh the truth, and only the truth about every person or subject he considers. These are the marks or characteristics of God's man. And let it here be noted that man here is not restricted to sex, but that it stands for character, without any regard to sex. God is looking for that soul, let it be man or woman, who loves to be just to all, and would rather die than be unjust to anyone. And then he is looking for the man or woman who wants the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth about all subjects or persons about whom he thinks and speaks. It is sinful to think an unjust thought or to think an untruthful thought about others. Our Lord perceived and condemned evil thoughts in the human heart, and he said that these were some of the things that defile man. Of course, when expressed, they do more harm, for they harm and hurt those about whom you speak. But they certainly curse your own heart when you entertain them. (See Psalms 66:18). How very, very important it is that we do exactly what we are commanded to do in 2 Corinthians 10; 2 Corinthians 5 : "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." This is the character for whom God is looking to preach the gospel, to function as an elder, as a deacon, as a husband, as a wife, or a son or daughter in the kingdom of his dear Son. The burning question that is put to you and to you and you who are now reading these lines is this: Are you such a character? So the first question, of a practical nature, in this study is:

HOW TO GO ABOUT HELPING GOD FIND HIS MAN The very first thing we must do in helping God to find his man is to see to it that he finds the character for whom he is seeking in us, that he finds in one's own heart a passion to be just to all, and to think and speak only the truth of and about all of whom he thinks and speaks. Is this not true? Does not each heart that reads this know how everlastingly true this is? Then let us do this first. We should do this for our own soul's sake. For never can we enter heaven until we shall have established such a character. For that one, of whom it is said that he is not man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent (Numbers 23:19), declares: "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie." (Revelation 21:27). All liars, whoremongers, sorcerers, idolaters, murderers, and the abominable will have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone which is called the second death. (Revelation 21:8). So, for our own soul's sake, we must let God find in us the one for whom he seeks.

Most certainly we could not join God in seeking to find those who do justly and seek only the truth, if we ourselves are not such to begin with. The world could be taken for Christ in our own day and generation if that number on earth now claiming to be disciples of our Lord were just such beings as the man for whom God is seeking in Jeremiah 5:1. You could not lead such a soul off with false doctrine. This man has to be shown that your teaching is the truth before he takes it. With him everything has to be proven before he will hold it fast. And this is what we are commanded to do. (1 Thessalonians 5:21). And certainly such a soul would not withhold the truth from others or be found trying to tear down and destroy others. Commit to memory:

Psalms 15 "Jehovah, who shall sojourn in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?

He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, And speaketh truth in his heart;

He that slandereth not with his tongue, Nor doeth evil to his friend, Nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor; In whose eyes a reprobate is despised, But who honoreth them that fear Jehovah;

He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not;

He that putteth not out his money to interest, Nor taketh reward against the innocent.

He that doeth these things shall never be moved."

"He that sweareth to his own hurt," as you find it in the above words, is that man who so loves the truth that he tells it when he knows that the truth will be against him. And think how much it means to you to speak the truth when even it is against you. For if you have done or said something that is wrong, to lie about it multiplies your troubles and sends your soul that much further on the downward road to the place prepared for the devil and his angels. Not only should we think of what it means to be that character that "sweareth to his own hurt," but get every statement in this wonderful short psalm well fixed in our hearts. To "walk uprightly," "work righteousness," and "speak to truth in our hearts" should not be forgotten. Psalms 51:6 declares that God "desirest truth in the inward parts." In 2 Peter 2:14 we are taught that souls can so exercise in evil practices that they "cannot cease from sin." If you can go in the wrong direction so persistently and so long that you cannot cease from sin, why is it that you cannot practice doing right and speaking only the truth about everything until you cannot knowingly lie or do one unrighteous thing? You can do this. There are souls on earth who have made it the rule of life to do only the right thing that you could not get them to knowingly do one wrong thing.

Think of what it means to "slander not with your tongue," to "do no evil to your friend" or "take up no reproach against your neighbor." Have you harmed anyone with that tongue of yours? You had better have it cut out and enter life without a tongue than to go to hell with one because of its wrong use. (See Mark 9:43-48). And think of doing evil to your friend! Have you ever seen it done? That one who had been helped and befriended all along by another, and then prove to be an ingrate and turn upon the very one that has helped him most. Some get so low down that they can do this. And as to taking up a reproach against your neighbor, you just will not do it. When the reproach gets to you, instead of taking it up, you cut its head off and throw it into the garbage can where it belongs.

"Putteth not out his money to interest" has no reference whatever to borrowing money in the business world. Such is legitimate. When a man borrows your money for the purpose of so using it as to make himself money, justice demands you share in his profits, and this is done by charging him interest that the law allows. But when you find a brother in need and help him as such, you have no right to make charges for such service. The very next statement: "Taketh reward against the innocent" throws light on the "interest" question. You find a brother in a tight place financially and take advantage of him and profit from his misfortune. All that we do for our brethren in distress must be done as freewill offerings and not done for profit. "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother hath need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (1 John 3:17). This is the thought when Jehovah condemns letting money out for interest. The question of our letting another have money in his business to be used to make money is not in the mind of God in this statement. When we let others have our money for the purpose of using it for gain, justice, as before stated, demands that we share in that gain, hence collect interest.

How wonderful is the teaching of our God! Fail not to commit Psalms 15 to memory. Along with this, commit to memory Psalms 1:1

3. Make it a part of your very life to keep these words in your heart daily, and your meat and drink to live them out in your daily life. They will keep you back from sin. David says: "Thy word have I laid up in my heart, that I might not sin against thee." (Psalms 119:11). Live as Psalms 15 teaches you, and you will never be moved. Is this not reward enough for so living? Live as the first three verses of the first psalm teaches you, and all that you do will prosper. Here we have the simple and sublime law of right living. We stay here but a little while, then we step out into eternity. Is it not worth our while to commit such Scriptures to memory, to keep them laid up in our hearts, and by them daily live? To do this enables us to be happy that we have lived in this old world. To fail to do this will make us wish we had never been born.

THE GREATEST MAN—

Is he who knows his weaknesses and stands guard against them.

Is he who chooses the path of duty with the firmest determination.

Is he who resists his temptations from within as stoutly as those from without

Is he who is most fearless in the midst of threats.

Is he who lifts the heaviest burdens with the greatest cheerfulness.

Is he who is least deflected from his purpose by petty criticism.

Is he who places the greatest reliance in truth and God.

—Roy L. Smith

10 5 Freedom from All Condemnation

5 Freedom from All Condemnation

5. Freedom from All Condemnation

INTRODUCTION

Theorizing about salvation is good mental exercise, but undoubting faith must rest on the plain-as-day teaching found in the gospel, God's power to save. (Romans 1:16-17). For, in the gospel of Christ, we are taught most emphatically just where, when, and why we are free from condemnation. To the task of picking these great truths up and holding them before our readers I now set myself.

WHERE?

One brief quotation declares the "where." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Romans 8:1). Freedom from condemnation, then, is in Christ, not out of him. And note that it teaches that we are free from all condemnation. A few other quotations will serve to emphasize the thought. 2 Corinthians 1:20 : declares that "how many soever be the promises of God, in him is the yea" and "through him is the Amen." There are no promises out of Christ; they are all in him. Ephesians 1:7 says: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Colossians 1:13-14 declares the same thing. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says: "Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 1 John 5:10-11 teaches that those who believe not "the record that God gave of his Son" make God a liar, and then declares, "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. " And Revelation 14:13 declares that the blessed dead are those who die in the Lord. And 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 teaches that God does not want us to be ignorant of the fact that those who sleep in Jesus he will bring with him when he comes again. So where salvation is found is placed beyond a doubt. It is in Christ. Freedom from condemnation is a promise made only to those who come into Jesus and then walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

WHEN?

Having learned beyond a doubt where freedom from condemnation may be enjoyed, let us now ask: "When do we come into such freedom?" It is a very important question, and the answer is too plain to be misunderstood. Since freedom from condemnation is in Christ, we obtain it the very moment we go into Christ Jesus. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Galatians 3:26-27). And Paul again 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. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." You will find this statement in

Romans 6:3-5, and you observe that the baptism here that puts us into Christ is declared to be a burial, a resurrection, and a planting. Now, when you come to verses 17 and 18, note that it is called a "form of doctrine" which we obey from the heart; and, when thus obeyed, we are then made free from sin. Here let us read it together: "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." Can there be any doubt now as to when we obtain freedom from condemnation? This blessing is in Christ, and the book says we are baptized into him. This form of doctrine is baptism, for it is obeyed from the heart, not in the heart. Faith is exercised in the heart. So is repentance. But baptism is a burial of the whole being in water, a planting of the whole body in water, hence must be done from the heart and not in the heart. This is why it takes much water to baptize. See John 3:23. This is why the one who does the baptizing and the one baptized go down into the water where the burial in water and resurrection, from the water may be accomplished. Read Acts 8:36-39. Could God make it plainer?

WHY?

It is highly important that we ask: Why is the man in Christ Jesus free from all condemnation? The answer is simple and easily found. The one who, from the heart, obeys that form of doctrine, by penitently being buried with Christ in baptism and being raised into the new life in Christ, the? is freed from all past sins. But this is not all—he is then made free from "the law of sin and death. " "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," into which we come when we are raised from the watery grave, frees us "from the law of sin and death." (Read Romans 8:1-2). This is the reason assigned by the Holy Spirit for the man in Christ Jesus being free from all condemnation.

Just here let us observe that what is known as the "law of works," declared in Romans 8:2 to be "the law of sin and death," was just, holy, spiritual, and good. (Romans 7:12; Romans 7:14). That law is based on God's holiness and demands sinless perfection. It condemns every sin that it is possible for us to commit in thought, word, act, or imagination. There is nothing bad about a law like this. But the trouble is found in us—we are not able to meet the demands. In the eyes of this law, every accountable being on earth is condemned. For the only way we can be justified by it is to live from the very day we are accountable before God until death without sinning in thought, word, act, or imagination. It is "the law of sin" because it condemns all sin and shows us all to be sinners. It is "the law of death" because the penalty of sin is death and shows that we are all deserving of death. Remember the book declares: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezekiel 18:4). There is nothing that meets the demands of "the law of sin and of death" except the death of the sinner.

Here it would be well if space would allow it—but it will not—to quote the many Scriptures that declare that man, at his very best, sins in some way. 1 Kings 8:46 says: "For there is no man that sinneth not." David asks the timely question, in Psalms 19:12 : "Who can understand his errors?" You answer this, if you think you are living without, in some way, violating the "law of works. " Solomon says: "For there is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." (Ecclesiastes 7:20). James says. "For in many things we all stumble." (James 3:2). John says: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.... If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." (1 John 1:8-10). Romans 3:19-20 : declares that, before the law of works, every mouth is stopped and all of us shown to be guilty

before God. Paul says in Galatians 3:10; that those who are seeking justification in the eyes of the law are under the curse because that law says "cursed is every one that continueth not in all things... written in the book of the law to do them."

Then how does this freedom from all condemnation come? How easily seen! Paul tells us that "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Galatians 4:4-5) Christ was born under the law that demanded sinless perfection, and after he reached the age of accountability, he lived the life that law demanded—a life of sinless perfection. Paul declares, in Romans 10; Romans 4 : "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Here he is talking about the baptized believer; for we are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus, if we have been baptized into him, but most certainly we are not, if we refuse to be baptized into him. Read again Galatians 3:26-27. Note in Romans 10:5 Moses declared that the only way to be justified by the law was to live the life it required. You are justified by the law by living a life of sinlessness. Jesus came and did this for us. He became the end of that law for all of us who are baptized into him. Note the words of Paul, in Php 3:8-9, where he says he "suffered the loss of all things and do count them but refuse, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." When you go to the judgment, there will be two books opened. First, there will be the law of works. " that demands sinless perfection and says we are damned if we do not attain it. Will you expect to pass if this is the only law by which you are to be judged? But there will be "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" which teaches us that our Lord lived the life the law of sin and death demanded and he took it out of the way when he died on the cross for all of us who will come into Christ and take him as our righteousness, sanctification, wisdom, and redemption. (I Cor. 1:30, 31). The baptized believer will not be judged by the law of sin and death, for he is not under it. But all who die out of Christ have nothing else to be judged by. Now do you see why it is that the "blessed" dead die in the Lord. Now you can see why those of us in Christ are complete. Have you read it? "And ye are complete in him. " (Colossians 2:10). If you are out of Christ, the only way to be complete is to live a life of sinless perfection. None of us can do this, hence all out of Christ are condemned. Do you get it? Come into Jesus by penitently being baptized into him. Then be faithful until death, and our Lord will present you perfect to the Father because of his perfection and not because of our perfection. Study Colossians 1:27-28.

"Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with the blood of an eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good thing to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen." (Hebrews 13:20-21).

WHAT WE SHOULD DO TODAY Do something today to bring gladness To someone whose pleasures are few. Do something to drive away sadness Or cause someone's dream to come true.

Find time for neighborly greeting And time to enjoy an old friend—

Remember, the years are so fleeting That life's final day soon will end. Do something today that tomorrow Will prove to be truly worth while;

Help someone to overcome sorrow And greet the new mom with a smile; For only through kindness, and giving Of service and friendship and cheer, Can we learn the glory of living And find heaven's happiness here.

11 6 Walking on the Water

6 Walking on the Water

6. Walking on the Water

Let us first get a picture well fixed on our hearts by reading Matthew 14:22-32 : "And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away. And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased." With a prayer on our hearts, let us now see what there is in this thought-provoking story.

WE ARE SENT ON A MISSION

Just as certainly as our Lord sent his disciples across the sea to the other side, just that certain has he done some sending, so far as we are concerned. He has left in the lap of the church the responsibility of letting every creature on earth hear the gospel of Christ, God's power to save the soul, in our own day and generation. The apostles, whom Jesus sent into the world, under the Great Commission, as we often speak of it (see Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:44-53), accomplished the purpose for which they were sent out in about thirty-one years. For they received the commission in A. D. 33, but in A. D. 64 Paul could declare the gospel had been preached to every creature which was under heaven (see Colossians 1:22-23). And just so should we endeavor to carry the gospel to every accountable being living in our day. Don't say it cannot be done, for it was done by the early disciples. Besides this, we know there are religious cults existing today that have sent their peculiar doctrines to the four winds of the earth. If a religious sect can send error to all the world in one generation, why cannot God's people send the truth in one generation? Yes, we are sent on a mission, and we can accomplish it if we will. Let us not forget: OUR LORD IS PRAYING For just as certain as he was in the mountain yonder praying while his disciples were endeavoring to carry out orders to cross to the other side, just that certain is he in heaven now praying for us as we sail on life's stormy sea. How I love to read it and meditate upon it! Listen to Paul in Hebrews 7:25 : "Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Do you, by faith, see him yonder in heaven, every moment of the day, in our behalf? If he has any other business in heaven I do not know what it is. Listen to Hebrews 9:24 : "For Christ

entered not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us." Yes, he is now at God's right hand praying for us. Oh, that every child of God on earth would let this truth lay hold of his heart!

ARE NOT WE TOO ON A TROUBLED SEA? For just as certain as those disciples were undertaking to cross a troubled sea that distressed their hearts, so are we out on life's troubled sea undertaking to carry out our Lord's orders. Yes, life's troubled sea! And what a troubled sea it is just now! It is enough to bring distress to our hearts—first, not only because of world conditions, but church conditions as well.

How important that we remember God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. (Psalms 46:1). It is good to have present help in time of trouble, but our God is more than present; he is very present. How good it is to be in Christ, to be in his church and kingdom! Think of these words. "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen." (Ephesians 3:20-21). Yes, when the sea got too rough, Jesus came walking on the water. Just so he does for us—he is with us instantly in every hour of need. Keep this in your heart, weary pilgrim, as you travel on. But let us ask:

WHY DO WE BEGIN TO SINK?

Peter began to sink out there on the water, so do we often begin to sink along our journey. But what makes us begin to sink? The answer is simple: "But when saw the wind, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, Lord, save me." Peter began to look at the waves instead of keeping his mind on Jesus. How true it is with us. We begin to look at trouble and allow fear to come into our souls because of troubles that arise, and certainly we begin to sink. And how many right now are sinking because of fear, because they have taken their eyes off of Jesus and have them fixed on the storms of life. In running the Christian's race, as commanded in Hebrews 12:1-2, we are instructed to look unto Jesus the "author and finisher of our faith."

Listen to this promise: "The Lord is at hand. In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." (Php 4:5-7). And just before these words, Paul says: "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice." The fact that he repeated this certainly should make us know our Lord wants us to rejoice and be happy, and in nothing to be anxious and so troubled that we really have not sense enough to see him out on our troubled waters. The disciples saw something out there on the water, but their fears made them unable to recognize who or what it was. They thought it was a ghost. Jesus said: "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." How sweet are these words! And how glad we are that he did not scold them for being afraid. But he does not want us to be afraid. Let us hear this voice even today, let us see him by faith as certainly as they saw him with their physical eyes. And let us know that Jesus, in every storm and difficulty, comes our way. He permits these things to try us and test us. He wants to know if we are doubting him. He wants to know if we really believe him when he said: "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matthew 28:20 b). Why have we allowed ourselves to see him only in the sunshine and never in the storm? Yes, he certainly comes in every trial and trouble if we are really his. Has he not said: "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose"?

(Romans 8:28). But get it: Sink we must when we put our hearts on troubles and keep them not on Jesus.

Hebrews 13:5-6 says: "Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have: for himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee. So that with good courage we say, The Lord is my helper; I will not fear: What shall man do unto me?" Is it not enough that he hath said it? One of the most needed lessons to the church today is this one I am now giving. The idea of taking from God's people the consciousness of his greatness— infinite in power, his knowing our every need, his omniscience and omnipresence, and his boundless goodness. Take this not from us; it is the only thing that keeps us from sinking. The reason we have so many derelicts on life's sea is because we have taken from our Lord's people this life of trust, faith, and hope.

We should fight any effort of this kind viciously as we would the deadly adder. Paul says we are the true church if we hold fast our confidence and rejoicing in hope steadfast unto the end! (See Hebrews 3:6). But now look: A HAND IS STRETCHED FORTH IMMEDIATELY When Peter recognized he was sinking, he cried out: "Lord, save me." HOW much we need to make this cry today. But the cry had not died upon the winds until "immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and took hold of him." So will he do to you, my brother. The important thing is to get you to see that if you are not living this life of faith and trust, you are sinking. How sad that some, because of their faith and trust, should be marked as unsound and unsafe today. But this is one of the things we must quickly get away from. Don't give much thought about what man says. Paul says: "It is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment." (1 Corinthians 4:3). Let us be, as was Paul, unmoved by the criticisms of men! Learn what the book teaches and take it with the whole heart and with a grip that knows no breaking. Our Lord gently reminded Peter of his little faith, and put the question that should be put to everyone: "Wherefore didst thou doubt? " Who will say he has not found himself, at times, sinking and that the sinking was started by doubting?

Well would it be for us to turn to Psalms 78:19-22 and see that it is a sin and rebellion for us to limit God's power to help his people. Here is what David said: "Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also, can he provide flesh for his people? Therefore the Lord heard this, and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel; because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation."

STAY IN THE SHIP This effort of Peter's to go to his Lord by walking on the water perhaps was a mistake. Think of it as much as you please, was there any reason for Peter's wanting to walk on the water? None whatever. He was too much like some of us today—wanting to do the spectacular, something that others could not do. Did he hope for Jesus to save him out there in the water? If so, what about the other disciples he had left? No, Jesus was headed for the ship, meant to enter the ship, as he later did. And don't forget the wind did not cease until he had Peter back in the ship. Had we not better let this ship represent the "old Ship of Zion," the church of the living God, and know that our security is to be found in it? Had not our Lord constrained the disciples to get into the ship and cross to the other side? The work he had assigned them could be done only in the ship. Just so it is with us today. "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end," is the declaration of Paul in Ephesians 3:21. It is all right for the Lord

to walk on the water, but there is no reason in our undertaking such. We have lots of miracle-mongers these days—people who want to do things our Lord did while he was here just because he did them. You had better abide in the ship and keep busy doing what he has assigned to you as your duty in the church. When you get out of the church or away from the life a normal Christian should strive to live, sooner or later you will begin to sink. Stay in the ship. Our Lord will come whenever he is needed. If he has to walk on the water to get to us, this he is able to do; but our part of the program is to stay in the ship. It is in the church of our Lord that we have instructions to enter and cross to the other side of life's stormy sea. Our Lord did lots of things we are not supposed to do. He could look into a man's heart and see what was there. We cannot do this. He needed that no one testify to him of man, for he knew what was in man, so declares John 2:24-25. Hence, he called men whited sepulchers, hypocrites, fools, and children of the devil. To say the least of it, our being too free to thus speak to and of people is questionable. Our duty is to preach the gospel, God's power to save, in all of its fullness, and leave results with God. Stay in the ship, and stop getting out and trying to walk where our Lord could walk with perfect safety, but where we will get into trouble if we undertake it. A study of Psalms 139 teaches that our Lord is everywhere and from his presence we cannot flee. But this does not justify us in trying to be everywhere. The only place for us is in the church of our Lord. All that he has commanded us to do is to be done in the church just as all he had commanded those disciples to do could be done only in that ship. Stay in the ship, I say, and when storms arise, be all the more determined to abide in the ship. We are too prone to get out of the ship and run off with our own heart impulses and ways. Only in that place where he has recorded his name has he promised to come and bless us. (See Exodus 19:21). His name is recorded in his church and not out of it. Our Lord allowed Peter to try walking on the water to teach him the futility of the effort of trying to do something just because the Lord could do it. What soldier who has any sense at all but that knows he is not expected and that it would be altogether out of order for him to try, to do all his captain is supposed to do. It is well that we remember this and not call people hypocrites, whited sepulchers, fools, children of the devil, and give as our reason for this manner of speech the fact that the Lord did it. Why not go all the way and try to open blind eyes, make the maimed whole, and raise the dead? Stay in the ship, preach the simple gospel, and live as you are commanded to live.

RESOLUTION Let me be a little kinder, let me be a little blinder. To the faults of those about me; let me praise a little more;

Let me be, when I am weary, just a little bit more cheery;

Let me serve a little better those that I am striving for.

Let me be a little braver, when temptation bids me waver;

Let me strive a little harder to be all that I should be;

Let me be a little meeker with the brother that is weaker;

Let me think more of my neighbor and a little less of me.

— Selected.

12 7 Walking With God

7 Walking With God

7. Walking With God

INTRODUCTION

Think of the beauty of the following words: "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him. " (Genesis 5:24). These words suggest harmony, agreement, concord, fellowship, companionship. In Amos 3:3 the question is asked: "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Do you think you could walk with God if you do not agree with him? Paul teaches the same great lesson in 2 Corinthians 6:14-16 when he puts to us the following questions: "What communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial [or Satan]? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Please get the lesson: We must be in concord and agreement with God if we are to walk with him.

A PROBLEM TO SOLVE

Here we have a problem to solve. God's ways and thoughts do not agree with ours. In Isaiah 55:8-9 it says: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." What are we going to do about this? Will God get out of his thoughts and ways and walk with us in ours? Or will we have to get out of our thoughts and ways and walk in his? You know as well as you know that you live the correct answer to these questions. In Jeremiah 10:23 the writer exclaims: "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." We cannot afford to think, for one moment, of holding to our thoughts instead of God's thoughts. Solomon says: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Proverbs 14:12). Just because a way seems right does not make it right. The "way" here that seemeth right is the doctrine that just so you serve the right Object, the true and living God, any way will do. Please note that "way" here is singular in number. It has reference to a doctrine, a theory. But you will also note that this way or theory gives birth to a multiplicity of ways. It says the "end" of this "way," the fruitage of it, are "ways of death." The most popular doctrine on earth today is the theory that just so you worship the right object, the true and living God, any way will do just so you are honest and sincere in your worship. You can see that this theory gives birth to as many ways of worship and service as we have likes and dislikes. The doctrine is of the devil, and we should hate it. David says: "I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way." (Psalms 119:128). Moses said unto the children of Israel: "Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes." (Deuteronomy 12:8).

THE SECOND LIE THE DEVIL TOLD MAN

It is well that we get fixed in our hearts the second lie the devil ever told, so far as the record goes. We know very well that, as a result of that first lie, man fell and was driven from the Garden of Eden. To get man down is not enough. He wants to keep man down, so he gets busy to influence man to so change God's way that God cannot accept what he does, hence keeps him down. This is exactly what sound thinking would expect to see the devil do, and this he most certainly did. Let us read together:

"And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto Jehovah. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And Jehovah had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And Jehovah said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shall it not be lifted up? and if thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door; and unto thee shall be its desire; but do thou rule over it. And Cain told Abel his brother. And it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him." (Genesis 4:3-8).

Here is the first religious difference and controversy that ever arose between men, and it came up in the first family that existed on God's earth and between two brothers in the flesh. It is highly important that we get this lesson right here. Whatever Cain's mistake was, it has ever lived since his day, and will continue to live so long as the devil is allowed to operate on earth. For more than four thousand years after Cain's day, in A. D. 66, we find our God warning his people with the following words: "Woe unto them! for they went in the way of Cain, and ran riotously in the error of Balaam for hire, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah." (Jude 1:11). So the "Way of Cain" was still living and people were running riotously into it when Jude wrote in A. D. 66. It is true that the way in which Abel walked still lives, and will so continue so long as faithful souls live on this earth. In A. D. 64, Paul, in Hebrews 11:4, declares: "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he hath witness borne to him that he was righteous, God bearing witness in respect of his gifts: and through it he being dead yet speaketh." So here we have it—two brothers in the flesh, believers in the same God, worshiping God at the same altar, yet one is in the way of life and salvation and the other in the way that leads to death. May we ask for the:

DIFFERENCE IN THE WAYS OF CAIN AND ABEL?

They did not differ in that one believed in God's existence and the other did not, for they both believed in the same God. It was too close to the beginning for the devil to try to get these sons to doubt God's existence. Their father and mother had walked with God, talked with God, and seen him face to face. As soon as they fell, God at once extended his arm to lift them up and bring them back to their lost Eden. In doing this, he established an altar of worship on which altar he called for a bleeding victim as their sacrifice for a sin offering typifying the coming of the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world. (John 1:29).

These two sons did not differ in that, though they believed that God existed, one was regular and prompt in his worship and the other was not. Cain was just as prompt in his worship as was Abel. Here they are: two brothers in the flesh, believing in the same God, believing this God should be worshiped, and they both worshiped God promptly, yet one in the right way and the other in the wrong way. What is the difference?

Well, here it is. Satan slipped in and taught that God should be worshiped, that you could not think of having any other object of worship, but the how you worship him is not important, just so you are sincere in your worship. Cain fell for the doctrine, hence brought an offering of his own choosing, an offering God had not "testified of" or said bring, but Abel brought not an offering of his own choosing, but rather one that God did "testify of" or said bring. (Read Hebrews 11:4). Can you not see that they differed in the way of worship? This difference is not a difference between atheism and Christianity, but it is a difference that comes up between believers who worship God. It is identically what Solomon was talking about when he said: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Proverbs 14:12). Note that this "way" that seemeth right unto us is in the singular number. It has reference to a theory. That theory is just so you worship the right object, any way will do if you are honest and sincere. It gives birth therefore to a multiplicity of ways. The worshipers spoken of in Matthew 15:9 where Christ says, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" were worshiping the right object, the true and living God, but they were doing this according to the teaching of men—Cain's way. This is the second lie the devil told man. Cain fell for it, but Abel stood up and contended for the good and right way—viz., that the true way of worship is to worship the right object, the true and living God, and this worship must be done in his own way. Here is the good and the right way. I know of no doctrine so popular as that of Cain, or rather the doctrine that the devil got Cain to accept. It looks right to man. God says it looks right to us. This is why it is so dangerous. Does not Paul warn us in 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 of "false apostles" and of the fact that even "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light"?

We often think of Cain's great sin in murdering his own brother, but you must drop back of the actual murder to find the trouble. Let us read it together: "For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." (1 John 3:11-12).

What were their works? It says that in the process of time Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto Jehovah. How could this be evil? For no other reason than that he pushed God out of selecting the offering and brought one of his own choosing. Remember it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. We had better let God direct us as did Abel, for Abel brought an offering that God "testified of" or said bring, hence it was an offering of faith. This God declares is righteous, but that it is evil to bring offerings of our own choosing. May God help us to see the importance of letting God have his way. Who is it that cannot see that Abel's way binds us to the heart of our God, while Cain's, though pretending to love and follow God, actually leads us from him.

THE PROBLEM SOLVED The only solution to this problem is to let God tell us the way in which to walk, and walk in that way. We find God in his own way and in his own thoughts, and never can we find him out of them. In Exodus 18:20 : it says: "Thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do." Leviticus 26:3; Leviticus 26:12 says: "If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them... I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people." In Isaiah 64:5 it says: "Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways." Jeremiah 6:16 says: "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old

paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." We can find rest only where we find our Lord. (See Matthew 11:28-30). But our Lord is to be found in "the old paths." He cannot be found in the doctrines and "commandments of men." Jesus while here said: "I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things." (See John 8:28). Jesus, while living in a fleshly body as you and I are now living, spoke only where his Father spoke, and stayed silent where his Father was silent. When we so live by turning our backs on our own ways and walk only as God directs, we are walking with Jesus. Read again Matt. 1:9 where Christ says: "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men." In verses 13 and 14 of that same chapter he says that those who were teaching the "doctrines of men" were blind guides and that every plant they planted shall be rooted up. Those teachers had a zeal for God, but it availed them nothing. Romans 10; Romans 1-3 says: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

Let me beg you, then, my good friend, to read your Bible for yourself. Isaiah 34:16 says: "Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read." You will not fail. John tells you to "believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." 16). John 4:1). Paul tells us to "be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." (Ephesians 4:14).

I know of no better words with which to close this study than the following from the lips of our Lord: "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:23-24). To worship in spirit means to worship with the whole heart. To worship him in truth means to let the worship be directed by his word. 5:10, He himself declares: "Thy word is truth." (John 17:17). And Paul says in Romans 1:9 that his service to God was done "with my spirit in the gospel of his Son." This is service in spirit and in truth. This is the good and the right way. It always has been and will ever be God's right to tell man how to work and worship, and then for man to plant his feet in this way and live and die there and go to heaven when he leaves this old earth.

Those who thus walk with God while living need not fear being deserted in the end. With David we can sing:

"Jehovah is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;

He leadeth me beside still waters.

He restoreth my soul:

He guideth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me."

(Psalms 23:1-4).

SECRETS DISCOVERED IN SACRIFICING FOR OTHERS

Strange and gracious discoveries are made in the fraternal and sacrificial life. We go about distributing comforts, and we find comfort. We take heart-ease to our neighbors, and we return to find the gift of peace. We go down the roads of life, lighting lamps of happiness for our neighbors, and lo! on our return blessedness is shining in our own dwelling. We scatter flowers of good will and beneficence, and lo! Eden blooms in our own garden. We come to our life through the welfare of our fellows; by lighting their streets we find our way home.

— Selected.

13 8 Foot Washing or The Spirit That Must Govern in the Church Of Christ

8 Foot Washing or The Spirit That Must Govern in the Church Of Christ

8. Foot Washing or The Spirit That Must Govern in the Church Of Christ THE HISTORY OF FOOT WASHING For some reason Abraham and his descendants had the custom, on receiving others into their homes or society, of preparing for the guests' feet to be washed. At first you cannot tell whether the guests washed their own feet or the host or some of his servants did the foot washing. Note the following instances: (1) In Genesis 18:1-4 you find Abraham, on receiving three angels into his tent or home, thinking they were men, provided for their feet to be washed. (2) Reading Genesis 19:1-2 you find Lot doing the same thing when his home was visited by two angels whom he thought to be men. (3) In Genesis 24:32 you find the servants of Abraham, whom he sent to the home of Bethuel to find a wife for his son Isaac, that Laban, the brother of Rebekah, provided for these servants' feet to be washed. Read the verses above this reference for the connection. (4) When Joseph decided to make himself known to his brethren on their second trip to Egypt to buy corn and he instructed his servants to make ready for him to eat with these men at the noon hour, water was provided for their feet. See Genesis 43:24-25. So there you have the custom. God knew we would need to know that this was their custom and so we have it.

FOOT WASHING CAME TO BE REGARDED AS AN ACT THE LESSER COULD DO FOR THE GREATER, BUT IT WAS THOUGHT ALTOGETHER WRONG FOR THE GREATER TO WASH THE LESSER'S FEET

We now ask you to read 1 Samuel 25:34-41. After Nabal's death, David desired to have Abigail, his widow, for a wife. But note the following words of Abigail, when David's servants told her he had sent for her to become his wife: "And she arose, and bowed herself on her face to the earth, and said, Behold, let shine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord." You could hardly find words that express how little a soul could feel in comparison with another than indicated in these words. She did not feel that she could even wash David's feet, but rather wash the servants' feet who washed the feet of her lord.

The words of John the Baptist mean the same thing. Hear him: "And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey; and preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose." Here John doubtless refers to servants stooping down and unlatching the shoes from others feet and washing them. John felt, as did Abigail, that Jesus was so much greater than he that he could not even do this.

Now when you come to the act of foot washing as engaged in by Jesus you find Peter saying: "Thou shalt never wash my feet!" (John 13:8). And why did Peter object? It was unthinkable when our Lord was here on earth for the greater to wash the feet of the lesser. Peter knew Jesus was greater than he, hence it would not do for Jesus to wash Peter's feet. Do you see? This was foot

washing's position in the mind). of the people at that time.

THE APOSTLES' MISCONCEPTION OF THE KIND OF KINGDOM CHRIST WAS TO ESTABLISH
No sooner had Jesus told his disciples plainly and positively that he would build his church, establish that everlasting kingdom (see Matthew 16:18-19), than these men, selected to be apostles, began to ask the question: Which one is to be greatest in this kingdom?? Now we follow our Lord, in his three and a half years' association with these men, trying to teach them all about the kingdom.

In Matthew 18:1-3 you have these disciples coming to Jesus and asking him who is to be greatest in the kingdom? Jesus tells them, the disciples, that unless they are converted and become as little children they will never get in. This conversion is not that of aliens, but rather the conversion of these apostles from an erroneous idea about the kingdom. They thought it would be an earthly kingdom, that there would be high places in it to fill, and they wanted one of the high places. This is evident.

In Matthew 20:20-28 you have the story of James and John, with their mother, coming to Jesus and trying to get from him the promise that, when the kingdom is established, one of these sons might sit on the right and the other on the left; that is, have the two highest positions in the kingdom. Read verse 24 and you see the other disciples had indignation against these two, and Jesus had to explain again that they had the nature of his kingdom all wrong.

But they still do not see, for one day when they were on their way to Capernaum, they contended about which one should be the greatest. Read Mark 9:33-35.

Does it not seem that these men should have seen this beyond a doubt, but they did not. God had foreordained that they had to be proven to be "holy and without blame" before they could be put into the apostolic office on the day of Pentecost. Ephesians 1:4 has reference to the apostles. These men could not be placed into the apostolic office until they were converted to the spirit of service that was to prevail in the church, that was to adorn the doctrine of the church of our Lord. These disciples thought it was to be an earthly kingdom with Christ as the head of it, but that he would have a cabinet or subordinate offices to fill, and they wanted one of these big places. We should be patient with people. These were good men, but they had an erroneous idea in their head, and it took Jesus three and a half years to correct it. In fact, he did not knock this erroneous idea out until he washed their feet.

THE NIGHT OF OUR LORDS BETRAYAL

You turn to Luke now and read chapter 22, verses 7 to 27. Note that the two disciples who went, according to Jesus' instruction, and prepared for the Passover, had water, a basin, and a towel provided. In eating the passover, the law was that their bodies had to be clean. They took their bath before leaving home for the Passover, but for fear that some particle of dust, the decomposed part of even a dead insect, should have touched their feet, foot washing was provided for, and it should have been attended to before the supper began. Read verse 24 here in Luke 22 and the lecture he gave them when he recognized that there was still contention among them as to which was to be greatest.

Now we go to John 13:1-17 where you have the foot washing scene. You should read this from your Revised Version. You will note in verse 2 the Revised Version says, "And during supper, " Jesus arose and moved about to wash the disciples' feet. The King James Version says, "And supper being ended," but the idea is that it was ended until this first act was attended to. The rule was to wash their feet then begin the supper. It had to end with Jesus until this was done.

But think for a moment. Jesus had been trying to teach these men for three and a half years that there is no position in the kingdom he was to establish that exalts the holder above his fellows, but he had failed to get them to see it. He does what we call in logic as taking an admitted premise and arguing from it. All those men knew him to be greater than they—"the servant is not greater than his lord"—all of this they knew and admitted. Too, they knew he was Lord and greater than they, but they could not settle the question as to which one of them was to be greatest. Foot washing was an act the lesser could do for the greater, but never for the greater to do for the lesser. Jesus, knowing they knew him to be the greatest, arose from supper since they had neglected foot washing and began to do it himself. Peter objected, but Jesus told him that if he did not wash his feet he would have no part nor lot with him; that is, unless he could convert him from that foolish idea that there are positions in the church that makes the holder too good to serve, he would never go in as an apostle. Peter was quick to change when he knew he was wrong. After washing their feet, he resumed his place at the table and explained it. In reading this explanation in John 13, please read in its connection Luke 22:24-27. When Jesus said, "I am among you as he that serveth, " he referred to the foot washing act in which he had just engaged. Note this in verse 27. This forever settled the question with those men. Foot washing was a part of the Feast of the Passover. You had as well. try to bring the Passover over and make it a part of the new covenant as to bring this foot washing. But the lesson is that, in the church of Christ, we must "by love serve one another." See it in Galatians 5:13. Do you find these men, after this, showing any desire to be one greater than another. See how well Peter got the lesson by reading Acts 10; Acts 25, 26. There is no place in the church of out. Lord that exalts the holder above his brethren and makes the brethren look up to him as their superior. This is why we know the Catholic Church is wrong. What about the pope? and presiding elders and bishops it other human organizations? This is the lesson of our Lord in foot washing. It is not an ordinance to be observed in the church like the Lord's Supper. Absolutely not. The disciples of our Lord were never taught by the apostles after the church was established to have any such thing as foot washing in the church as an ordinance.

3. Foot washing's place"Now, It is a home duty, and not a church ordinance. The following Scripture makes this as plain as day: "Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man. Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work." (See 1 Timothy 5:9-10). From this you can see foot washing is a home duty, placed side by side with bringing up children and lodging strangers. Who would say that lodging strangers is a church ordinance? If it were, then when someone wants to spend the night with us, we would have to call the elders of the church together before we could take them in. Who ever thought of bringing up children as a church ordinance? It is a home duty. But you ask: When should we, in our homes, wash the saints' feet? Whenever their feet need it, and we can do it better than they can. It is classed with "good works." But these good works are for necessary uses. "And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary

uses, that they be not unfruitful." (See Titus 3:14). But it means more than the feet; it means to feed them, clothe them, and bathe their whole bodies, if it is a service they need and that we can do better than they can do for themselves. Read it in Matthew 25:31-40. The Lord bless the lesson to the good of those who read it, is my prayer.

WHERE TO KEEP YOURSELF A young man at college had, among pennants and mottoes, these words on a card hanging on the wall: "I am Willing to Be Third." His roommate wondered for a long time what it could mean. Toward the close of the school year he took courage to ask what the motto meant. The answer was: "I received this motto from my mother. She said to me: 'If you ever expect to accomplish anything worth while you must make God, first, OTHERS second, and self third.'" This was a consecrated man; in made God first. —From Christian Leader, July 28, 1925.

14 9 The First Look at the Model Church

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INTRODUCTION

In Christ we have the model character for every individual disciple on earth to imitate and strive to mold our own lives more and more into his likeness. That this model should be perfect stands to reason. I think we all agree that we have only one such character after which we should pattern ours.

That our Lord would also give us the model church stands to reason. That this congregation should be the Jerusalem church, the first congregation that ever existed on this earth, also stands to reason.

The circumstances under which it was established justify the above expectations. No congregation has ever had such leadership in its very beginning. Three years at least before this congregation came into existence, our Lord had selected men to be apostles. That he selected from among the Jews the very best men that could be found goes without saying with the exception of Judas Iscariot. A study of Matthew 10:1-4; John 6:10; John 6:71; John 13:2; John 17:12 clearly indicates that our Lord knew, at the time he selected Judas, potentially just what was in him. It would be amazingly strange if one who had the Spirit without measure (John 3:34), knew perfectly what was in man (John 2:24-25), did not know Judas when he selected him as well as each of the other men. He tried just as hard to develop Judas into the kind of character one had to be before being placed in the church as an apostle as he did to develop the others into such characters. But our Lord knew that Judas' love for money, in the course of time, would allow Satan to enter and tempt him into disobedience. Remember Judas "by transgression fell." (Acts 1:25). Remember Satan "put into the heart of Judas... to betray" our Lord. His love for money made him potentially a child of Satan from the beginning. But forget Judas and think of the men who did go into the very foundation of the church with our Lord. That they were the best that could be found stands to reason. That they were tutored and trained by Jesus for more than three years we know. Ephesians 4:8; Ephesians 4:11 teaches that the apostles were not placed in the church until our Lord's ascension to heaven. Ephesians 2:20 : declares that they are in the foundation with our Lord as the "chief corner stone." Ephesians 1:4 teaches that they had to be proven to be holy and without blame before him in love before they were placed in. The very time in which God foreordained that our Lord should come to save, then he also ordained that he should have a church through which to function and that this church should have, with him in its foundation, apostles, men first proven to be holy and without blame before they were placed in the church. Study Ephesians 3:10-11. And then, on the day of Pentecost, these men were baptized in the Holy Spirit and made infallible as teachers. Can you think of how it could be possible for a church to be organized under better circumstances and with a better leadership?

This first congregation was organized, taught, disciplined, and developed by Christ in every detail. Think of the following invulnerable facts: (1) The apostles were not to begin preaching until the Spirit came to guide them. (Luke 24:45-53). (2) This Holy Spirit, when he came to guide them, would not "speak of himself," but speak only what he heard from that One who was clothed with all the authority God had in heaven and on earth. (Matthew 28:16-20; John 16:12-14). The Holy Spirit "glorified" Christ by taking only his words and giving them to the apostles, and these apostles delivered only this to the people, and the church was organized and put to work by our Lord directing every step. Here is the model church. All things were made according to the pattern God had given his Son, just as Moses built the type exactly according to the pattern that was given him in the mount. (Hebrews 8:5).

"Back to Jerusalem" has been our battle cry. Let it continue to be, not by word of mouth, but in actuality, by always building according to this model. The departures that came about in the first century came as a result of congregations being established with the pattern not before them. They began to "measure themselves by themselves" and "compare themselves among themselves," a very unwise thing to do, hence drifted from the model. Study 2 Corinthians 10:12-14. Paul had a measure that reached even unto the church at Corinth, for he went to them only with the gospel of Christ.

It is significant that when the church was scattered, all went forth from Jerusalem preaching the word except the apostles. (Acts 8:1; Acts 8:4). Our Lord and these apostles, by means of the Holy Spirit, established, organized, and put to work the church just as our Lord wants it to be. Other congregations are established. Or should be, with this church as a pattern. It is difficult, if not almost impossible, to make one exactly like it just as it is difficult, if not almost impossible, to reproduce in ourselves a character as perfect as our Lord. That we must ever strive to grow into the likeness of Christ, becoming more and more like him is clearly taught in the Holy Scripture. Just so it is with this model church. The first two liars that appeared in it were stricken dead and eliminated. We can hardly keep liars out to this degree today; but this certainly teaches we must not knowingly allow them to operate in the church. But enough, so far as these introductory words are concerned. Let us now take:

THE FIRST LOOK AT THE MODEL By "the first look at the model" is simply meant a look at it before the church was scattered by persecution. What do we find?

The largest local congregation that has ever existed on earth, so far as we have any record. Three thousand were added to the number the day it was established. This number, in a few days, grew to be five thousand, not counting the women. (Acts 4:4). It is estimated by some that at the time this church was dispersed their number was around seventy-five or one hundred thousand. It is well that you observe such expressions as "the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly." I hardly think that multiplying the five thousand mentioned in Acts 4:4 by two would be considered multiplying "exceedingly." Then consider such expressions as, "And believers were the more added to the Lord multitudes both OF men and women." (Acts 6 : 14). The exact number at the time of the dispersion we do not know, but that this was one of the largest, if not the largest local church we have ever had goes without controversy.

It was a very popular church. We use the word "popular" in its good sense. By "popular" we simply mean that all unprejudiced and thoughtful people in Jerusalem spoke well of that church. You will

find, in Acts 2:47, this congregation, in its very beginning, "having favor with all the people." It seems that the idea of some is to get off on a back alley, in a shack about ready to tumble down, and be as cranky as possible in order to be loyal and to present to the world the model. And such is a model for stupidity, foolishness, and quite often meanness. To present the church, exactly as our Lord made it, to the world provokes admiration from the thoughtful and unprejudiced. God's manifold wisdom is seen in it. (Ephesians 3:10 :

Its unity. "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul." (Acts 4:32). Can you think of a stronger expression for unity? The prayer of our Lord was in them answered. (See John 17:20-21). It should be the desire of every local church to let our Lord's prayer in them be answered in behalf of unity. The command comes: "Giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Ephesians 4:3). The reason for striving to keep this unity is given in verses 4 to 6 that follow—viz., there is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and only one God.

Each convert considered himself sold out to our Lord. Listen to this: "Not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own." (Acts 4:32). They were made to feel keenly that they had been "bought with a price," and that their bodies and all they possessed belonged to the Lord. (1 Corinthians 6:20 : how do our converts feel today? Well had we better study this question through. This will be studied more fully in another chapter.

They fed their hungry and clothed their naked. There is no better way to learn than to read it: "For neither was there among them any that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need." They were taught that they were not their own, but members one of another. (Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 6:19).

They had system in their work. Study Acts 6:1-6. The apostles said: "It is not fit [pleasing] that we should forsake the word of God, and serve [minister to] tables." They needed more men to see after the poor, and more men were called for. It is not right for those who are capable of teaching the word to the people to leave such teaching and serve tables; that is, see what the poor need and have their needs supplied. This men can do who are not capable of teaching. How often a preacher will locate with some local congregation and spend the most of his time making social calls among the members and seeing after the needs of the poor! This the modern "pastors" among the denominations do. Preachers of the church of Christ should know better than this. Have men and women appointed to see after the needs of the poor who cannot so well teach. And we should remember that quite often a great teacher will be developed from among even this number as in the cases of Stephen and Philip who were among the first deacons selected in the Jerusalem Church. There are three kinds of sense—viz., revealed sense, common sense, and nonsense. The first two are from our Lord. The revealed sense consists of those things we could not have learned if God had not revealed them unto us. Common sense is that sense we have by nature if our brain is right. When God tells us to do a thing and does not tell us how to do it, he means for us to use common sense. He has told us to go and preach the gospel to every creature, but he did not tell us how to go. This is left for common sense to determine. But how often do we substitute nonsense here where common sense is supposed to have a chance. When we do this,

we are in rebellion to God. "Look these men out" is the command, but how look them out? We are not told, hence common sense must lead us here. Certainly it is not by getting brethren to announce for the place and let them run for it, and hold an election and give it to the ones who get the majority vote. But how, you say, should we go about it? Well, suppose you were commanded to look out so many black-headed men in the church. How would you go about this? I presume you would pick out black-headed men and leave the redheaded out, would you not? God gives the qualifications, names the kind of men to look out. We certainly should look for this kind and not some other kind.

The membership consisted only of baptized believers."They then that received his word [viz., "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins"] were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls." (See Acts 2:38; Acts 2:41). Verse 47 tells us that the Lord did the adding, that he added them to his church, and that they were added because they became "such as should be saved" or "those that were being saved." Christ tells us in Mark 16:15-16 how to become "such as should be saved" just as Peter does in Acts 2:38. This model church had only baptized believers in it. Where is there room here for the "pious and unimmersed" or for infants?

They continued steadfastly in the right thing. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers." (See Acts 2:42). Let us remember that the devil is a very busy being and he is ever striving to lead us astray. But if we remain "steadfast in the faith," he can do nothing with us. Study 1 Peter 5:8-9. It is good to be baptized into Christ and thus start 10 heaven; but if we ever get there we must "continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel." (Colossians 1:21-23). "Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith" is the way it is expressed in Colossians 2:7. Study Galatians 1:6-9; 1 Timothy 1:3; 2 John 1:9-11; Ephesians 4:14. Yes, if we are to be like the model church, we must abide in the teaching of our Lord, and believe not and receive not every teacher that comes claiming to be his prophet without first trying him. (See 1 John 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:21).

Our Lord exercised in that first church strict discipline. A study of Acts 5:1-11 reveals that the first two liars, as has already been stated in the early part of this lesson, were stricken dead by our Lord. There was no command for anyone to sell all he had and bring the whole price and lay it at the apostles' feet. Many were doing this, however. (See Acts 4:34-37). Ananias and Sapphira did not want anyone to think someone else was doing more than they were willing to do and were doing. So they sold a possession and brought only a part of the price and placed it at the apostles' feet, but they tried to make the impression on their fellow members that they had brought the full price. This was the lie. And, of course, anyone can practice this and get away with it today. So would Ananias and Sapphira. They certainly had been taught that you can hide nothing from our God and his Holy Spirit and, knowing this, they tried to put over this deception. Our Lord slew them to impress the great fact that he wants not in his church the local leaders to be liars or to tolerate liars in it; but liars we have in the church today and cannot help it, for we cannot see the heart as our Lord did. I am perfectly sure that our Lord saw that these two would have continued until they died a natural death to be deceitful, allowing themselves to intentionally make others believe that they were what they really were not. Hence, they would have been damned forever in the end, so he killed them then and there to warn others. It says: "Great fear came upon all the church, and

upon as many as heard these things." Doubtless others were afraid that they had sinned and did not know it. God metes out such punishment only to those who knowingly sin. Discipline in the church today is almost forgotten. The church would grow and prosper if our elders in our local churches were such men as they should be and practiced what they are plainly commanded to do in the following Scriptures: 1 Corinthians 5:1-11; 1 Timothy 5:19-20 : Titus 3:10-11; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; Romans 16:17-18; Matthew 18:15-17. After these two liars had been put out by our Lord, it says not only that great fear came upon all that heard of it, but it says: 'And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.' (Acts 5:14).

10: They had converts every day. It says: "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." (Acts 2:47). I can hardly see how the Lord could have done this daily if some were not converted daily. This makes me think of the old country church where I was baptized and that I attended for years each Lord's day when in my "teens." No thought was ever entertained of anyone's obeying the gospel except during our annual revival. I remember one Lord's day a young man expressed his desire to some of the leaders that he might be baptized. They were much embarrassed and seemed to know not how to go about it. Finally it was decided that one of them would read a chapter, make a little talk, and extend the invitation. This was done, the young man made the confession, and this was the only time I ever knew the invitation being extended except in a revival at that place. You can find hundreds of such congregations in existence today. They have never seen the model church. Furthermore, it is all wrong to think that formal invitation has to be extended. When anyone expresses a desire to be baptized, as did this young man, there is nothing to do except take his confession and baptize him. This is the way Philip did when the eunuch expressed a desire for baptism. (See Acts 8:35-39). This the members of that early church were doing daily, as we will learn in our next lesson.

15 10 The Second Look at the Model Church

10 The Second Look at the Model Church

10. The Second Look at the Model Church

INTRODUCTION By "second look at the model," we mean the study of the conduct of the Jerusalem (church while in the dispersion. There are some revealing facts in their conduct that clearly indicate just how the apostles taught and trained that first church before the dispersion. Here is our text for this chapter: "And at that time," the Revised Version says, "on that day," the day Stephen, the first martyr, was stoned to death, "there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.... Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word." (Acts 8:1; Acts 8:4).

Let us study together the following facts: their readiness -for the dispersion, the universality of their conduct, its naturalness, and supremacy.

1. They Were Ready for the Dispersion. By this we simply mean that Jerusalem had been evangelized; every home had been entered that could be entered with the gospel message and every individual approached that was approachable with this message, hence there was nothing for the church there to do. How does this sound? "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." That Jerusalem had been thoroughly evangelized, there can be no doubt. Thousands, as we learned in the preceding lesson, had been turned of Christ. There were others, doubtless, that looked on the church with wonder and admiration who did not accept Christ; but there was that same persecuting group who were responsible for our Lord's death, and who doubtless had committed the unpardonable sin during our Lord's personal ministry, whose hatred became more and more intense as this church grew in numbers and in favor with the people. A study of Matthew 12:22-30 and Mark 3:22-30 contain our Lord's warning about the sin against the Holy Spirit. That many of them committed it, it is reasonable to believe. Such people will stubbornly go on in their pernicious way against the most unanswerable facts. Study here Acts 4:13-18. There is such a thing as becoming God-abandoned. This comes only when people sin against light and facts they themselves cannot answer. The thing that hurt this persecuting gang most was the way the Jerusalem Church grew in numbers and the way it was admired and talked about by the unprejudiced. Don't forget, as you learned in Acts 2:47, that this church praised God and had favor with all the people. Let us remember that the most powerful way of preaching the gospel is living it before the eyes of those with whom we have to do. You would do well to commit to memory the following poem:

"SERMONS SEEN AND SERMONS HEARD"

I'd rather see a sermon than, hear one any day, I'd rather one would walk with me than merely tell the way. For the eye is a better pupil, and more willing than the ear;

Fine counsel is confusing, but example is always clear. And the best of all the preachers are men who live their creeds, For to see good put into action is what everybody needs, I can soon learn how to do it if you let me see it done.

I can watch your hands in action, but your tongue too fast may run. And the lectures you deliver may be very wise and true But I'd rather get my lesson by observing what you do; For I may misunderstand you and the fine advice you give, But there is no misunderstanding how you act and how you live. When I see a deed of kindness then I am eager to be kind; When a weaker brother stumbles and a stronger stays behind Just to see if he can help him, then the wish grows strong in me To become as big and as thoughtful as I know that friend to be. And all travelers will witness that the best of guides today Are not the ones that tell them, but the one that shows the way.

One good man teaches many; men believe what they behold;

One act of kindness noticed is worth forty that are told; Who stands with men of honor learns to hold his honor dear, For right living speaks a language that to everyone is clear.

Though an able speaker charms me with his eloquence, I say:

I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day.

How true the above words are. And who will say that God, when he ordained that his "manifold wisdom" is to be made known to "principalities and powers in heavenly places" by the church, had in mind this being done mostly by the way the church lives before the people? Is it not possible for us to have been good talkers and not so good lovers before the people? If you want to hurt your enemies, live the life God would have you live before them. Have you read it? "Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you." (Titus 2:8). This kind of living comprehends two things: (1) that no one can point out ungodliness in our lives; (2) that no one can point out unsoundness in our teaching. Now read verse 7 for the proof of this: "In all things strewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine strewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity." Live by this direction and you will be a model Christian, and a number of such will make a model local congregation.

2. The Universality of Their Conduct. By this we simply mean what the record clearly states—viz., "They that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word." While there is nothing said about it in those chapters that cover the ground of "The First Look at the Model," chapters 3 through 7, their conduct when dispersed declares undoubtedly how they had been taught by the apostles to live as individual disciples. They all preached.

No exceptions for lack of official authority. Each convert was taught, from the day he was born of water and the Spirit (John 3:5) into the kingdom, that the only way he could keep Jesus, after having received him, was to be continually trying to get others to have him as their personal Savior. Get it: The very day we are baptized into Christ, from that day on, the only way we can keep the salvation we have obtained is to be continually trying to give it away. How true this is! And another remarkable thing about it—the more of it we give away, the more we have to give. It grows more abundantly into us as we get others to take it. The idea of our having to obtain from men some special ordination or authority to teach others the gospel before we begin is absolutely

of men and not of God. By the commandments of men we cannot walk if we are to follow Christ. (Matthew 15:9).

No exceptions on account of a lack of educational qualifications. The writer is a friend of education and he believes that those men among us who give their time wholly to the ministry of the word should obtain that education that such a work requires. The first absolute and indispensable qualification of a preacher is to be found in a heart given wholly to our Lord. If you do not find in your heart a burning desire for the salvation OF others, it is positive proof that you yourself are not saved. God has so made us that we can talk glibly and understandingly about anything in which we are desperately interested, whether we are educated or uneducated. Take that insurance agent. He claims to be a member of the church and can talk convincingly about the policies he is selling and sells them. When you ask him about winning souls to Christ, he will say he is not gifted in speech, that he does not know how to approach others on the subject of religion. Why is he not able to talk his religion? The answer is easy: It is because he hasn't any to talk about. He is a Christian only in name and not in reality. Just so it is with women when they get together. They are good talkers about their babies, their dresses, the latest fashions, and quite often they talk fluently about things they should not. Why can they not talk about our Lord and his salvation? Why can they not talk about going to heaven, the thing of first importance to every human soul? Yes, people who have religion and are making the salvation of their souls the thing of first importance talk about it whether they are educated or uneducated. Think on these things.

(3) No exception on account of sex. That early church had women teachers, women helpers. Study Romans 16:1-2; Php 4:3; Titus 2:3-5. There is a certain line of teaching that women can give to women better than any man. Women's work in the church has restrictions thrown around it, but the last one of them should be developed into teachers. When any convert is not developed into a teacher, God's will has not been accomplished in that person. Study Hebrews 5:11-12. Our Lord wants all to become teachers of the word. Just here I recall a little agitation that came up over our selecting as a teacher for a class of women a most capable and consecrated sister. This selecting was done by the elders after prayerful search for a good woman teacher. One of the sisters in that class ceased to meet with them, stayed at home, began to talk around about it, and finally sent for the preacher. When he entered her home, she was in tears. She was distressed to death. She was asked what the trouble was. Her answer was: "oh, you have a woman teaching a class!" The answer to this was: "Well, what of it?" "oh," she said, "Paul said for the women to keep silent in the church, that it is not permitted unto them to speak." Of course, she had in mind 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and it is suggested that you read to the end of this chapter. "Very well," it was stated, "all of our sisters are keeping silent in this congregation except you, and if we get you to do so and cease to violate this Scripture, we will have peace instead of the confusion you are trying to create." Well, she looked astonished and horrified at the thought of violating the Scriptures. And here let it be said that she was a good woman, and deep down in her soul wanted to live as her Lord wanted her to live. There was no scolding or harsh words for her. She was kindly reminded that this sister was doing what the elders had asked her to do, that she was not usurping authority over men, but rather carrying out their instruction; that the silence Paul was talking about was silence as leaders, rulers, dictators in the affairs of the local church. She was then asked if we rescinded our action, asked this sister to cease to meet this class, if she herself, a woman, would not then become the ruler of that local congregation and the elders carrying out her orders instead

of letting Jesus be the head of that church? She saw the point and that ended the trouble with her. The teaching that is condemned in revealed Cor. 14:34, 35 is teaching as rulers in the local congregation. This sister was asked if she had the right to sing. She said she did. "Very well," she was told, "when you sing you are teaching, else the Holy Spirit has written the Bible wrong." (See Ephesians 5:18-19 and Colossians 3:16). In our singing we are "speaking one to another," we are "teaching and admonishing one another." Shall the women cease all of this? Certainly not. The teaching condemned is that of teaching as a ruler or director. Women are forbidden to do this. She was also asked if she, when she started to church, understood this Scripture to teach that she must stop her ears with cotton or something else and see to it that she did not learn one thing while in the assembly. She, of course, said the thought was ridiculous. She was asked to read again this Scripture, for it says: "And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home." What is this the women are forbidden to learn while in the assembly? It most certainly is the business affairs of the church, the things that are left entirely with the elders to regulate. Women have no right to be meddling with such affairs in the local church. This is left with the elders or the men who are doing the leading. Many local church fusses have been started by some self-willed, officious woman as everyone who has had much experience with local congregations knows. There is a lot of teaching they should daily do as they mix and mingle with unsaved souls, whether they are men or women, boys or girls. The local church is put under elders as overseers, and no woman was ever appointed to such a position. The elders of the local church, if they know their duty, will be seeking to develop the women into effective teachers and assign them work to do.

(4) No exception on account of age. Our boys and girls, the very day they are baptized into Christ, should be taught that it is their duty to go out and evangelize "their little world," so to speak. By their little world, I have in mind their schoolmates and the ones with whom they daily play. Tell me not that this is not what should be taught our young people. The crying sin among our leaders today is the fact they baptize our children and then turn them loose as though there is nothing for them to do.

Just here an experience once had by James A. Harding. In one of his revivals, a boy, some nine or ten years old, wanted to be baptized. Brother Harding took his confession, but his baptism was held up due to the objections of some of the local leaders who said he was too young. Brother Harding talked to the boy all about his obedience, and was fully convinced the child was moved by the right motive. After some days' delay, he was finally baptized. A few nights thereafter, as Brother Harding was sitting up at the front looking over his sermon notes while the audience was being assembled, this same little man came in and sat down gently by him and said: "Brother Harding, John Smith is to make the confession tonight, and I do not want you to worry about baptizing him, for he knows what he is doing. I haste been teaching him." This is exactly the spirit we are trying to get over to you. That first church, the Jerusalem church, had been started right by these apostles by teaching every convert that he must go out and win others to Christ. Now, do you believe it? "They all went everywhere preaching the word—men and women, boys and girls."

3. The Naturalness of Their Conduct. And what is meant by naturalness of their conduct? I simply mean this: when a human being really finds Christ to the saving of his own soul, he at once begins to get his friends and loved ones interested in this same Savior. Here study John 1:40-48. When Andrew found Christ, he at once went for his own brother Simon. When Philip found our Lord, he

at once went for his brother Nathanael. Just so it is with every true convert today. If we are really saved, we will be seeking to lead others to Christ.

Just here the story of the conversion of a grand old man who has gone on to his reward. He was a good businessman, owned several homes, had a prosperous business, but he had no education. His friend at the bank filled out all of his checks, signed his name, and touched his hand while he made his mark. A few weeks after being baptized he called me on Friday and said he wanted me to go with him to Golden Hill Sunday afternoon. My reply was that I was due to begin a revival at the Nashville Bible School that Sunday, but perhaps I could get someone else to go with him, and asked for what purpose he wanted me to go. He said: "Brother Hall, ever since you baptized me, I have been going to Golden Hill and talking to my mother and father about Jesus. The neighbors have become interested and the little room is full now when I go out there, and I want you to go and open the doors of the church. I believe we will get some joiners." I kindly laughed at him and said: "Now, Brother Childers, you know the door is open, hence I could not do that; and as to joiners, you know we do not join the church, we get people to do what Christ says and he adds them to the church." "oh, Brother Hall," said he, "I beg your pardon, I know that too, for I have heard you say that so often, but I mean if someone will go and extend the invitation, that someone will obey the gospel." He had not been out of Babylon long enough to free himself of all their terminology or way of saying things, and don't think for a moment that he got any scolding from me. How we do need to learn patience with babes in Christ! He was assured that we would have a man to go with him. The man was selected who had made a few prayer-meeting talks. He sent me a night letter that Sunday night and the contents ran about this way: "I went to Golden Hill. The little house was packed full.

I talked as best I could and when the invitation was extended, I thought everybody was coming forward. Brother Childers' mother, father, a brother, and a sister, with eight of the neighbors, confessed their faith in Christ." Do you see the point? This is the way the model church, the Jerusalem Church, was taught and developed.

4. The Supremacy of Their Conduct. By this we simply mean that the supreme desire in the hearts of these scattered disciples was to get others to learn of their Lord and his salvation. As we have already stated, in studying the naturalness of their conduct, that we all are good talkers about the things in which we are profoundly interested. The supreme things are the things we make first. And has not our Lord taught us to make the kingdom of God and his righteousness first? And does not Jesus say: "out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh." (Matthew 12:34). Here a study of Matthew 6:19-34 is in order. Making a living for the body should not be first. Following some business with the idea of increasing our earthly holdings should not be first.

Now let us think for a few moments. It says: "They that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word." Don't you think the Holy Spirit is telling the truth about these people? Now they did not go everywhere preaching the word as preachers today, as a rule, do. We are either called or sent. By this I mean we are called to do local work for a congregation; or, as an evangelist, we allow ourselves to be called here and there to hold meetings, and sometimes we allow ourselves to be sent to some mission point. But not such preachers and teachers were the scattered disciples of this model church. What congregation called them here and there? There was but one congregation and they, scattered here and there, constituted it. There was no

congregation to send them. Now the fact of the business is that these scattered disciples went here and there and settled down at their calling, whatever that may have been, for a livelihood—some as blacksmiths, others as farmers, shepherds, merchants, or what not. But the supreme thing with them was to get others to know about Jesus, the one who had died for them and had arisen from the dead and gone back to the Father to prepare a place for them to live after death. The divine historian merely relates that which came first with them. Or to get the matter before us just as it was, I relate this story. It is said that a shoe cobbler had a space between two buildings covered over and thus made for himself a small space for his shop. An old boot was hung out to indicate to passers-by his trade. A man stepped into his shop one day, slipped his shoe from his foot and showed him a hole that had been worn through the sole and said: "Can you fix this for me? I presume this is your business. " The old cobbler said: "No, my friend, you are mistaken." Picking up a Testament that was on his table, and flipping its pages to show its much use, he said: "My business, my dear sir, is to study this book and go to hearten and get as many others as possible to go with me. I have opened this shop here and am running it to get expense money along the way."

Now this is what is meant by supremacy of conduct. The supreme thing with them was to please God and be prepared to meet him in that day. Does not our Lord teach us to make this the first thing in life, the supreme thing in life? And do you not know that the apostles had taught the converts in Jerusalem this great lesson? But enough just here. When you come to study "The Money Question," more will be said about this.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO YOU You are writing a gospel, A chapter each day; By deeds that you do, By words that you say.

Men read what you write, Whether faithless or true.

Say! What is the gospel According to you?

—Selected.

16 11 The Money Question: the Tests of Faith and Love

11 The Money Question: the Tests of Faith and Love

11. The Money Question: the Tests of Faith and Love

We correctly stress the idea that our Lord's law of pardon to aliens has in it a test of faith, and that this test is baptism. About this there can be no doubt. When Paul declares, "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus," then at once declares how he knows—namely, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ," this forever settles baptism as the test to aliens. (Galatians 3:26-27). Our Lord says in Mark 16:16 that the believers who are baptized are the ones he will save. In Acts 2:41 we are told that the ones who gladly received the word were the ones baptized. No other kind of people have the promise of salvation. In Romans 6, after Paul tells us in verses 1 to 5 that we are buried with Christ in baptism and raised with him, and go into his death by this act, in verses 16, 17 he returns to the baptismal act and declares that when we obey this form of doctrine we are then made free from sin.

Now, what elder or deacon, or any other member of the church of Christ, would stand for our coming along and declaring that we can take baptism out and still assure the believer that he is saved, or can be saved? No, we stand like a stone wall for every condition of pardon to aliens, and rightly so. But are we to believe that in God's law to his children there is no test? Well, we should not. But the question arises: What is the test to Christians? My answer is that it is giving. Our willingness to turn loose fully and freely the things God has placed in our hands for the furtherance of the cause of Christ is the test. Here let us not guess, but give the proof. 2 Corinthians 8, 9 give the law of our Lord on giving. Read both chapters prayerfully. But in 8:8, Paul says that he is writing about the money question "to test the genuineness of your affection." This is the Twentieth Century New Testament translation. Moffatt's translation says, "to prove how sterling your own love is." The American Revised Version says, "proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity also of your love." The Standard Version says, "to prove the sincerity of your love."

There can be no doubt that giving tells exactly what we are. Of course I know that the Lord's Supper is often named as the test of faith to the child of God; and that it is a test goes without question. But how any human soul who claims to be a child of God can go to the Lord's table and really commune with the body and why blood of our Lord and fail on the money question goes beyond me. There is such a thing, I am sure, as a child of God really meeting our Lord in the Supper who fails to give because he has not been taught; hence, his neglect is one of pure ignorance. But that member who knows the teaching of our Lord on this question cannot commune with the body and blood of Jesus and fail to meet the test of love in giving. Imagine a soul coming to the Lord's Supper with his heart all aglow with love, tears trickling down the cheek in love and appreciation for our Lord's great sacrifice to make it possible for us to be saved, then in just three or four minutes after such a lovely scene you behold the same heart dry-eyed and in cold storage when the opportunity to give comes around! If congregations have been properly taught, I feel safe in saying that only those who give as they should meet our Lord in the Supper. Does not Paul,

right there in his appeal to give, present Jesus in his supreme sacrifice as an incentive to give? "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich." Read 2 Corinthians 8:8-9 together. That we have failed to teach as we should on the money question is one reason for our not having gone further in evangelizing the world for Christ. Some refuse to teach baptism as it should be taught because they do not want to offend the sects about us, and others have failed to press the money question for fear we will offend some close-fisted, stingy church member. I had as soon be guilty of one of these fears as the other. Paul could read his title clear when he said good-by to the elders of the church of Ephesus, because he could say: "I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable.... For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God." (Acts 20:27).

We have failed in doing our duty as preachers and teachers when we baptize souls and fail to teach them their whole duty as to how to live the Christian life. The church in Jerusalem was made to know by the apostles that their conversion meant that not only they themselves, but all they possessed, belonged to the Lord. "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own." (Acts 4:32). Paul, in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, says: "Ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price."

ONLY HEART OFFERINGS ACCEPTED

Much is said about heartfelt religion. The church of Christ can have no other kind and be true to her name. Going back to the time when calls were made for the money and material out of which to build the tabernacle of Moses, which was a type of the church and heaven itself, let us see the kind of offerings that could be accepted. In Exodus 25 : a we have these words: "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they take for me an offering: of every man whose heart maketh him willing ye shall take my offering." These words just as certainly tell Moses not to take any other kind of offering as they tell him the kind to take. When God names the kind of offering he will accept, this excludes every other kind—just as God when he told Noah to use gopher wood in building the ark, makes God say use no other kind of wood. God's commands are just as exclusive as they are inclusive—including only what is specified and excluding everything else. To remember this will help us much in staying in the strait and narrow way. And we should remember that more than enough was brought for the building of the tabernacle, and they had to restrain the people from giving. (See Exodus 36:5-6). But let us get back to the kind of offerings our Lord will accept. We come now to 2 Corinthians 8:12 : "For if the readiness is there [or, "if there be first a willing mind"—Standard Version], it is acceptable according as a man hash, not according as he hath not." Then, again, in 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 we have these words: "But this I say, He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Let each man do according as he hath purposed in his heart: not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."

Study it as long as you please, and you will find our Father wants only heart offerings—it must come from the heart, else he will not accept it, no more than he would accept baptism, the test to the alien, if it did not come from the heart. (Romans 6:17). And our offerings must not be "chips and whetstones," so to speak—things that we can give and not miss; it must be a sacrifice. David is an example here. When he would stay the pestilence sent upon the people, and when Araunah

offered him everything necessary to make an offering unto God free that the plague might be stayed, David exclaimed: "Nay; but I will verily buy it of thee at a price; neither will I offer burnt-offerings unto Jehovah my God which cost me nothing." (2 Samuel 24:22-24). That is the idea.

EXAMPLES OF ONE HUNDRED PER CENT GIVING

We have an example of one hundred per cent giving in the conduct of the children of Israel when offerings were called for the building of the tabernacle of Moses. In Exodus 25:2 the call was for offerings from those whose hearts maketh them willing. But in Exodus 36:5-6 we learn that this call brought more than enough and the people "were restrained from bringing" their gifts. Think of it: They had to be restrained from giving! And may I ask: If really Jesus lives in our hearts as he should, would we too not have to be restrained from giving rather than begged to give?

Another example of one hundred per cent giving is seen in the brethren at Antioch. When they learned of a certain need, "the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren that dwelt in Judea: which also they did." (See Acts 11:29-30, "Every man" leaves no one out as a slacker. "According to his ability" gives the extent of their giving. "Determined" expresses the wholeheartedness of their interest in the Lord's work. How could any local church fall short in any good work with a membership like this?

And one more example of one hundred per cent giving. Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-5. Here we have the brethren of Macedonia held up to the church at Corinth as an example. Reading from the Standard Version of verses 3 and 4, it says: "For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift," that they might have a part in the great work of fellowship and ministering to the saints. Here we have them begging the apostles to take their gifts and let them have a part in the work. And in verse 2 we see they were poor people: "The abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality." And in verse 5 the secret of it all is found in the words: "First gave their own selves to the Lord."

The church at Jerusalem is another example. "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own." They were taught by the apostles that they and all they possessed belonged to the Lord.

MAKING CHRIST KINGDOM FIRST

It would be difficult to name a command that means more to the human soul than this one: "Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33).

"All these things shall be added unto you" has reference to the blessings of a temporal nature, that have to do with the comfort of our minds and bodies while living here on the earth. David says in Psalms 37:25 : "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." The whole sixth chapter of Matthew, from verse 19 to the close, condemns anxiety about the material things of life, and we are taught that he who thinks more about the things he eats and wears than he does of being in our Lord's kingdom and making its interest of first importance is serving "mammon," hence is not a servant of God; for it is never

possible to serve both at the same time. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Verse 24). How important, then, to know that we are making "his kingdom" first.

HIS KINGDOM MUST BE FIRST IN OUR PLANS TO MAKE MONEY

Two things must be done if Christ and his kingdom are first with us. The first is to make Christ and his kingdom first in our desire and plans to make money. Let me ask: Why should a Christian desire to make money? Why should he plan to make money? Just to have money to buy food and raiment? I deny this. I grant that this is a motive, but it should not be the controlling motive. We should want to prosper because of what it enables us to be to Christ and his kingdom. Having the things of this life simply for self's sake must not be the leading motive for business enterprises owned and run by Christians. The Bible must be true, and any position to the contrary should be severely let alone. "Let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need." Here is the motive. (Ephesians 4:28). This makes the ability to give the controlling motive for working in order to possess what the Bible calls "mammon," or earthly goods. May God help us to get away from this soul-destroying desire to have, primarily to consume upon our own lusts. "Mammon" then becomes your God and you cease to be a servant of Jehovah. Let us listen to James: "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your pleasures." (James 4:3). How sad to think that the most of the money that is made, even by Christians, is made with our own pleasures being of first consideration! This can never be right. It is going about it in the wrong way. And mark what I tell you: Sorrow of heart and anguish of spirit sooner or later will come as a result. It comes to most of the people even in this life. A few miss it here, but they are certain to catch it on the other side of the river of death. "Come now, ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver are rusted; and their rust shall be for a testimony against you, and shall eat your flesh as fire. Ye have laid up your treasure in the last days. Behold, the hire of the laborers who mowed your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth out: and the cries of them that reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Ye have lived delicately on the earth, and taken your pleasure; ye have nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter." (James 5:1-5).

Why are you following that occupation? Why strive so hard to make it a great success? Is it your interest in Christ and his kingdom for which you labor? If it is not, you are not making "his kingdom" first. oh, how foolish it is to live otherwise! You know not what tomorrow will bring. This day may be your last day. But what has that man to fear that has a business and is doing his best to make it a glorious success, first and above all things else, because of what it will enable him to give? The Bible has it wrong, if we are to interpret it by the way we too often do. It would read: "Let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to keep"—not to give. The Bible motive for desiring to possess is that we may be able to give. I ask: Is not the desire to keep or spend for our pleasures too often the motive?

"Godliness with contentment is great gain." "Godliness" means "godlikeness," to be like God. God so loved that he gave. (John 3:16).. And what a gift he made for us when he gave his Son to die that we might live, besides giving us every other good and perfect gift! But listen to Paul further in 1 Timothy 6:9-19 : "But they that are minded to be rich [determined to be rich, hence hoard it up instead of spending it for the cause of Christ] fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish

and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love OF money is a root of all kinds of evil: which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things.... Charge them that are rich in this present world, that they be not high-minded, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, that they be ready to distribute [give], willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the life which is life indeed."

How do brethren, as a rule, do when they begin to prosper? Do they give more? Well, this they may do to a degree; but is it not a fact that they build more, wear more, indulge the flesh more? And the first thing one knows he is trusting in these uncertain riches hoarded up. How much better to be godlike— viz., give for the good of others! "Godliness with contentment is great gain: for we brought nothing into the world, for neither can we carry anything out." Just overnight, or at the -tick of the clock, and it is all gone! How wisdom cries out to us to let Christ and his kingdom be first in our desire and effort to make money!

HIS KINGDOM MUST BE FIRST IN THE DISPOSITION WE MAKE OF OUR MONEY Not only must Christ and his kingdom be first in the desire to make money, but this must come first in the disposition we make of the increase that comes from our labor. By this I simply mean that if I am a wage earner and draw a salary of fifty, seventy-five, or one hundred dollars weekly, as soon as my check is received, the first thing I must do is to take out that part that should be used for the interest of that kingdom, or church, that Christ died to establish. How can I make his kingdom first and do otherwise?

I gave this lesson, not many years ago, right here in Tennessee; and when I had concluded, a most excellent-looking young man, a deacon in the church, came to me and said: "Brother Hall, I thank you for the lesson, and want to confess that I have not been living that way. As soon as I get my check on Saturday afternoon, the first thing I do is to spend it for this, that, and the other things that I want, that my wife wants, and that I want my children to have, and then from the little residue on Sunday morning give about the first piece I get my fingers on in the loose change that is left in my pocket"—or words to that effect. He was not making the kingdom first. Think of the thousands of others in the church who should make the same confession?

THE DANGER OF COVETOUSNESS

Here let us read a Scripture that is not taught as it should be: "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as becometh saints.... For this ye know of a surety, that no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God." (Ephesians 5:3-5). "Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry; for which things' sake cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience." (Colossians 3:5-6). Will you look that Scripture squarely in the face? What causes a man to be covetous? The very thing that causes fornication or any other sin of the flesh. But what is covetousness? It is wanting what belongs to another to that degree that you will appropriate it to your own use without his consent.

Well, just here the question is asked: Does not the Bible declare that a part of our income belongs to God? Here it is: "Honor Jehovah with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all shine increase." (Proverbs 3:9). I know some seem to be afraid to press the teaching on giving for fear some will give unwillingly. But what of the child of God who gives not at all? You may have to fight the flesh at first when it comes to giving as you should. But crucify the flesh. This you must do whenever it gets in the way of our doing what God says do. "They that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof." (Galatians 5:24).

Numbers of times Brother David Lipscomb told his class how he overcame the flesh on giving. He said when he first began the Christian life he had trouble about giving, that when he purposed to give a dollar the devil would suggest to him that there is Brother Smith worth more than I am and gives only fifty cents, or when he purposed to give five dollars the same suggestion of someone else with more of this world's goods than he would give less, hence he was giving too much. He said he tired of being forever tempted at this point and made up his mind that, every time the devil suggested his making his gift smaller after having purposed to give, he would double it. Hence, when he purposed to give five dollars and the suggestion to reduce came to his mind he made it ten. He said it was not long until the devil ceased to tempt him at this point. I presume this is what James meant when he said: "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (James 4:7).

Some say Proverbs 3:9 is in the old Testament. Exactly so; but 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 is in the New Testament, and there you are commanded to lay by in store every first day of the week as you have been prospered. Are you doing this? 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 says that God loves a cheerful giver and one that gives not sparingly or grudgingly. Are you such a giver?

There is absolutely no escape—the child of God who is not giving is sinning. He is holding back and using for his own selfish purposes that which belongs to God. This is covetousness, and the Bible declares it to be also robbery. (Malachi 3:7-10). The question is asked: "Will a man rob God?" And then Israel is told that they had robbed God in withholding from God's treasury the "tithes and offerings." To go to a bank and break in and take money that does not belong to you and use it for your own selfish purposes, we consider a terrible sin. But, think ye, which is the greater sin, to do this or take what belongs to God and use it upon your own lusts? We boast about our going by all the teaching of our Lord. Have we been faithful in teaching all the word of the Lord on giving? There are thousands who are not living up to this teaching just because they have not been taught. How can we as teachers read our titles clear, with Paul, when we fail here? (Acts 20:25-27).

While living in Atlanta, at the beginning of my third year's work there, we sorely needed some money to buy a tent. We thought we saw our way to meet all other financial demands, but lacked funds for a tent. A day or two afterward a letter came from a good sister who had married a man of wealth where there was no church. He gave her a monthly allowance, as many husbands do. Not being able to meet with the saints and give, she had kept books with her Lord, and each time she received her check she first took out what she believed was the Lord's and put it in a savings account. Seeing reports of our work in Atlanta, she wrote me and stated that she had several hundred dollars of the Lord's money there in the bank in a savings account, and wanted me to use it in the Atlanta work. It was just enough to buy the needed tent, and hundreds of souls were led to Christ with its use. How easily seen is the fact that this sister did as every other child of God

should do—that is, keep books with the Lord, and each week take out of their income what belongs to God and put it to use in spreading the kingdom! And what if all would do this? The money question would be solved.

AN EXAMPLE

Here is a report of a congregation, during the worst of the depression, with only about two hundred fifty members, none of them rich, all working people, and for six months their monthly average in regular collections was \$772.87, an average of \$175 each Lord's day. The highest monthly contribution during the six months' period was \$804.40 and the lowest \$708.70.

There is nothing strange about this. Each member was giving in a regular, systematic way. Each member balanced books at the end of each week and put the "first-fruits" of all his increase for the week into God's treasury. Tell me not that we all should not do this! How I love the church of my Lord for which he gave his life! How it grieves me to see the reproach that hovers over it just because this part of his teaching is so neglected! Widows and orphans would be fed and clothed, old preachers taken care of, and our missionary force increased manyfold if only we would come to the front and be as sound and as unyielding on our Lord's teaching on giving as we are on baptism and other subjects.

A PAYING BUSINESS

We should never, for one moment, think that getting all of God's children to live his teaching on giving will break anyone. No, it is a sure guarantee of financial success. God is a living God, and he is looking on; and when he sees us faithful, he is faithful to his every promise. What is it?

Going to Proverbs 3:9-10 : you will find him declaring that if you will honor him with the "first-fruits" of all your increase, "so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy vats shall overflow with new wine." Turning to Mall 3:8-10, you will find God declaring that if Israel would cease to rob him, by withholding their tithes and offerings he would "open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." And now come to 2 Corinthians 9:6-8, where we are told exactly how we as Christians and congregations should give, and what do we find? Our Lord declares that if we will give as he says, "God is able to make all grace abound unto you; that ye, having always all sufficiency in everything, may abound unto every good work." Be assured that we can do anything God wants done, if we will only surrender to him and let him have his way with us. Yes, he is able to make all grace abound! There is a joy that is unspeakable; there is a peace that goes beyond all understanding. (Php 4:7; I Pet 1:8). Here is the secret of it. 2 Corinthians 9:15, right along with our Lord's teaching on giving, speaks of "his unspeakable gift." That soul that has been touched by this gift gives first himself to Christ and all he has to his holy service. (See 2 Corinthians 8:1-5). This leads to the unspeakable joy and peace.

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TODAY?

We shall do so much in the years to come, But what have we done today?

We shall give our gold in a princely sum, But what did we give today?

We shall lift the heart and dry the tear, We shall plant a hope in place of fear, We shall speak the words of love and cheer; But what did we speak today?

We shall be so kind in the afterwhile, But what have we been today?

We shall bring each lonely life a smile, But what have we brought today?

We shall give to truth a grander birth, And to steadfast faith a deeper worth, We shall feed the
hungering souls of earth; But whom have we fed today?

We shall reap such joys in the by-and-by, But what have we sown today?

We shall build us mansions in the sky, But what have we built today?

'Tis sweet in idle dreams to bask, But here and now do we our task?

Yes, this is the thing our souls must ask, "What have we done today?"

—Selected.

17 12 The Sabbath or the Lord's Day—Which?

12 The Sabbath or the Lord's Day—Which?

12. The Sabbath or the Lord's Day—Which?

We wish to state, in the first place, that the position of the church of Christ is that there is no such thing as Sabbath observance taught in the New Testament; we have the first day of the week or Lord's day, on which the disciples meet to eat the Lord's Supper in memory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, but this is nowhere called the Sabbath day or a Sabbath day. In the New Testament we are commanded: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or OF the sabbath days. " (Colossians 2:16). But we are commanded to not forsake the assembling of ourselves together— which assembling took place on the first day OF the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2)—but to exhort one another, and so much the more as we see the day approaching (Hebrews 10:25). But now for the proof of the above position:

1. David, in prophesying of the Christ, says: "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." (Psalms 118:22-24).

Now look this Scripture squarely in the face. When David says, "This is the Lord's doing," to what does "this" refer? Absolutely to the stone's becoming "the head stone of the corner." It cannot refer to anything else. Very good. May I ask then to what the next "this" in verse 24 refers? It cannot refer to a thing beneath God's skies except to what the first "this" refers—viz., to that rejected stone becoming "the headstone of the corner. " These two statements of David look forward to what is to be done at some time after David's day. Nothing could be more unscriptural and absurd than to try to make the statement, "This is the day which the Lord hath made," look back to the Sabbath day God made for the children of Israel when he brought them out of Egyptian bondage, and the other statement, "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner, " look forward from David's day to the Christ. And we know the statement concerning the stone has direct reference to Christ. Peter, in preaching to those who put Christ to death, says: "By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. " (Acts 4:10-11). David was prophesying of the Christ and, therefore, of the day Christ was to make. This stone belongs to the New Testament of which Christ is Mediator, hence the day spoken of must belong to the same testament.

2. But it would be well for us now to learn when Christ became the headstone of the corner, that we may learn when he received the power or authority to make this day. He certainly is Mediator of the New Testament (Hebrews 9:15), and we ought not to be surprised if we find that he made a new day for that New Testament.

Christ, before he could receive authority from his Father to establish the New Testament and, therefore, a new day, to come and live and die under the old law that it might be taken out of the

way. Proof: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Galatians 4:4-5). Hence, Christ was circumcised when he was eight days old (Luke 2:21) and his mother offered for her purification the turtle doves or pigeons, when the child was thirty-three days old (Luke 2:22-24). He observed the Passover (Matthew 26:17-18), the Sabbath days, and taught that none of it should pass away till all was fulfilled (Matthew 5:18)

After being thus born under the old Testament and living in obedience to it, he finished it (John 19:30, when he died on the cross and took it out of the way (Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 10; Hebrews 9). Christ, the night of his betrayal, said to his disciples, "Hitherto [until now] have ye asked nothing in my name," showing that during his personal ministry they did not pray in his name, for his testament was not yet established.

And after he rose from the dead, he declared that he had all authority and power: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," said he. (Matthew 28:18). Read Matthew 28:16-20; for the great commission as given by Matthew after our Lord arose from the dead and just before his ascension. If the Sabbath is now binding on us, Jesus must bind it as he has all the authority God has in heaven and on earth. But this he did not receive until after his resurrection. Now read Luke 24:44-53 and you find Jesus telling his apostles that he had to die and rise from the dead before "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (See verses 46 and 47). And Paul in Ephesians 1:19-21 declares that our Lord's exaltation to God's right hand where he now rules with all the authority God has in heaven and earth took place after he rose from the dead. "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the 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.

Christ could not become the cornerstone till he was perfected."The third day, " which must refer to his resurrection, he himself declares as the day on which he was to be perfected. (Read Luke 13:32). "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." (Hebrews 5:9).

That this day, the day of his being perfected as a Savior, was the first day of the week, goes without controversy: "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day, of the week. " (Mark 16:9). (See also Luke 24:16).

Jesus had declared not merely to his friends, but also to his enemies, that he would let them kill him, but the third day he would rise again. This bold statement of Jesus haunted the enemy. So after he was dead and buried, a conference is called and here is what is said:

"Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulcher be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulcher sure,

sealing the stone, and setting a watch." (Matthew 27:62-66). In spite of all their efforts to keep the body in the sepulcher, the third day, the first day of the week, Jesus stepped forth the conqueror of death and to the consternation of all his enemies. Some have had the audacity to claim that Jesus arose on the Sabbath day—just before it ended. Carefully reading Luke 24:1; Luke 24:6-7; Luke 24:13; Luke 24:21, you find it forever settled that the third day was the first day of the week. "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. " And so did this joy begin in the evening of that day when Jesus first met his disheartened disciples. (See John 20:1; John 20:19-20 :'

on this day Christ was declared to be God's Son with power: "And declared to be the Son of God with power,... by the resurrection from the dead." (Romans 1:4). on this day he came from the tomb with the keys of hell and of death in his hands: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." (Revelation 1:18). on this day he "brought life and immortality to light." (2 Timothy 1:10; And it was on this day that the living hope was given. (See 1 Peter 1:3). No wonder David declared, "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. " May God pity the man that neglects this day for the old Jewish Sabbath that has been abolished. Such conduct is like the children of Israel worshiping the brazen serpent as an idol after it had served the purpose for which God had it made. (2 Kings 18:4).

The headstone or keystone. Just a thought about what such means. This stone was the stone that made all the others useless if it was left out. What would destroy every ray of hope if the enemy could take it from us? Is it not the resurrection of Jesus? Take his resurrection from us and all is gone. But give us his resurrection and all his claims are proven true. Our hope of seeing loved ones gone before is based on his resurrection. (See 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14). The absolute certainty of a judgment to come is based on his resurrection, (See Acts 17:30-31). But Jesus became this headstone or chief cornerstone when he rose from the dead.

This is the day the Lord hath made, and what took place on that day is the grounds or reason for the Lord making it the day for meeting and commemorating our Lord's death and resurrection.

This day was fixed by Jehovah in type as the day of Christ's triumph. The "sheaf of the first fruits" of the harvest was a type of Christ's resurrection. This was brought on the first day of the week, or the morrow after the Sabbath, which is the first day of the week. (See Leviticus 23:10; Leviticus 11; 1 Corinthians 15:20 :

This was also the day set for the Holy Spirit to descend upon the apostles and the law of Christ to go forth from Jerusalem. By reading Leviticus 23:16; Leviticus 23:16 you will learn that Pentecost came on "the morrow" after the seventh Sabbath from the bringing of "the sheaf of the wave offering." The morrow after the seventh Sabbath, of course, is the first day of the week and the fiftieth day, which Pentecost means, making Pentecost come on the first day of the week. Notice that on this day, the first day of the week, the new meat offering was offered, which was a type of the new covenant. Let us now read Acts 2:1-4 : "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Thus we

see Christ was not only declared to be God's Son with power on this day, but the Holy Spirit came to guide the apostles into all truth on this day, and it is declared to be the beginning. (See Acts 11:15). No wonder then that David should say: "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. "

Christ said that the Holy Spirit would bring to their memory what he had taught them (John 14:26) and guide them into all truth (John 16:13). One thing it brought to their memory or guided them into was teaching the members of the new covenant to assemble on the first day of the week to break bread in memory of Jesus: "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them." (Acts 20:7). Too, the Holy Spirit commanded them not to forsake this assembling, but to exhort one another, and so much the more as they saw the day approaching. (Hebrews 10:25).

This day is called the Lord's day. (See Revelation 1:10). Adventists say that the Lord's day in Revelation 1:10; is the Sabbath day. The word "Lord" here refers to Christ and not to Jehovah, as it often does in the old Testament Since Christ has come and suffered, perfected himself as a Savior, God has declared that we must confess Christ is Lord. (Php 2:5-11). All days are the Lord's. But there is a day pre-eminently his, because it must be devoted to him. Then we have a supper pre-eminently called the Lord's Supper. (1 Corinthians 11:30, All meals we eat in our homes are the Lord's because they are gifts from him. But there is a supper we eat that is his in a greater sense. It is the Lord's Supper because it must be eaten in his memory and to show forth his death till he comes again. (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). Certain it is that this supper is a new supper instituted by Christ, made a part of the New Testament, and not the Passover supper of the old Testament. Just that certain, too, is it that the Lord's day in Revelation 1:10; is the day Christ made for the New Testament and not the Jewish Sabbath. The Corinthians came together to eat this supper. as 1 Corinthians 11:30; 1 Corinthians 11:33 clearly show. 'Tis true they had erred in adding a meal that God had given them to be eaten with thanksgiving in their dining rooms, but Paul rebuked them for this addition and encouraged them to continue to meet for the Lord's Supper.

But we are reminded of the fact that Christ said he was Lord of the Sabbath. (Mark 2:28). Indeed, he was. To be Lord of a thing is to stand above it and hold the power to abolish it, if necessary. This Christ did for the Sabbath observance. Any unprejudiced reader can turn to Mark 2:23-28 and read it thought fully and see that Jesus there teaches that man himself is of more importance than the Sabbath, that the day was made for man's good and can be set aside if the needs of man require it. We are sometimes asked: "If we are not to observe the Sabbath now, what must we observe?" This is an easy question: observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded. (Matthew 28:20 : Where has he commanded us to observe the Sabbath? It is sometimes argued that he observed it during his personal ministry. Indeed, he did. But he was also circumcised when he was eight days old, turtle doves were offered when he was thirty-three days old, and he observed the Passover—all these things done in his personal ministry. And well that they were, for that law he did not end till he died on the cross. Come this side of the cross, if you please, and find the Sabbath command, and we will observe it.

But our Adventist friends, still hoping to hold their Sabbath, contend that the Sabbath day is the only day spoken of as a day that God has made. But here they fly in the face of the fact that in

Psalms 118:22-24 it declares another "day which the Lord hath made" —viz., the day Jesus arose from the dead and became the headstone of the corner.

The first day of the week was sanctified and set apart as the day to lay by in store as God has prospered us. Of course, it is true our Adventist friends try to make this a thing we do in our homes, and not while assembled together in one place. This laying by in store was to be done that no collections or gatherings be done when Paul got there. If it means they took it out of their purses and put the offerings for the Lord in another place in their homes, there would have still remained the need of gathering these gifts into one common fund after Paul got there. I call your attention to this to show the utter unreasonableness of their contention.

Let this mean what they claim—viz., that they just laid it by in their homes by putting it into a different place. Then I ask: Why did he command them to do this on the first day of the week? Why did he not say the second day or even the seventh day? That the first day of the week or Lord's day was the day the early Christians met for worship and to commemorate our Lord's death and resurrection goes without a doubt to those who believe the Bible.

"The stone [Christ] which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the clay [theday this stone became the headstone]which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. " So let the saints do, is my humble prayer.

THE EXACT TIME OF THE SABBATHS ENDING SET

Some of the Jews entertained the false idea that when the Sabbath was gone they would be left without law, left free to be dishonest in their dealings with their fellow man. Hence, they asked the question: "When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit?" (Amos 8:5). And here let me say that those people had the same erroneous idea that the Adventists now have. Meet an Adventist and tell him the covenant on tables of stone has been done away, and he will at once declare that people may lie, steal, and do almost anything mean. Talk with one now and see. But the prophet told them plainly when the Sabbath would be gone. Read the ninth verse of this chapter and see: "And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day. " Now when did this take place? Read Luke 23:44-45 : "And it was about the sixth hour [noon], and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened." How could God make things plainer? This is the only time the sun ever ceased to shine at noon. This was when the old Testament was nailed to the cross. This was when Christ declared, "It is finished." And to put it beyond the possibility of controversy turn to Colossians 2:14-17 and read: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross: and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." Will you not heed this command, and let no man judge and condemn you for not observing a Sabbath that has been removed? And will you not heed the admonition not to forsake your assembling on the first day of the week to commemorate our Lord's death and the sepulcher made empty by our Lord's resurrection? (Hebrews 10:25).

18 13 Meditations on the Kingdom

13 Meditations on the Kingdom

13. Meditations on the Kingdom Our Lord, in speaking to us to not be anxious about what we shall eat and what we shall drink or wherewithal shall we be clothed, says: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33).

Now Christ said this, and most certainly it is true. It would be well for us to read Matthew 6:19-34. "First things first" is a principle that we should get well fixed in our hearts. There are things that come just, and whenever we allow something else to come first in our hearts and lives, it simply means disaster, if we do not discover our mistake in time to correct it. Let us, therefore, meditate on this great command of our Lord.

WHERE IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

Some say it is in heaven, but this is a mistake. That its headquarters are there is a certainty. Others would say the kingdom of God is in the Bible; but here they are also mistaken. The Bible is the guidebook for those who are citizens of the kingdom. Going to Luke 17:20-21, we have these words: "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you."

Now let us think the above statement through. Just what could our Lord have meant when he said, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation"? In Mark 9:1 he talked like it would come with observation; for did he not say to his disciples, "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"? This certainly sounds like it would come with observation. And most certainly it did come with observation on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit, which was the power referred to, came upon the apostles as a mighty rushing wind.

Why then, if the kingdom did come with power and observation, did our Lord, in answering the Pharisees, say, it "cometh not with observation"? There is a great lesson here. The point is this: The essential thing to us, so far as the kingdom is concerned, is not so much when it came, as in having the kingdom within us. Do you not think a soul could have the kingdom within him when knowing but little about the time of its establishment? Are there not thousands today who have the kingdom in them who could not do much toward showing when the kingdom was established. The Bible certainly teaches when it was established, hence we should teach it, too; but we should evaluate things as did our Lord, and teach that the principles of the kingdom coming into us and mastering us is the thing that sanctifies and saves us. Don't you know this is true? The Pharisees were much concerned about just when the kingdom would come, and very little concerned about its principles and spirit possessing them and mastering them. And may this not be true today?

Yes, let us remember that the kingdom of God is within us, if we are indeed disciples of our Lord. That we could be able to route every sectarian on earth as to the time when the kingdom was established, and still not have the kingdom in us, is true. Such would make us a curse to the kingdom today.

WHAT IS THE KINGDOM? And we are not left to guess, for Paul, in his plain-as-day way of speaking, declares: "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Romans 14:17). Do you wonder if this is really true? Do you believe that God's kingdom is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost? Well, this is what it says, and we are commanded by this same writer to let God be true and every man a liar who speaks to the contrary.

THE COMMAND

"Seek" is in the imperative mood, hence is a command. We are commanded to seek the kingdom of God. But the thing that we must seek is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Did not our Lord say, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled"? Did he not also say in the same chapter, verse 9, of Matthew 5, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God"? In 1 Peter 3:10-12, it says that the man who would love life and see good days must "Seek peace, and pursue it." In Hebrews 12:14 are we not commanded to "Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord"? And are we not commanded in Romans 12:18, "If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men"? Then are we not taught, in the plainest words, that we are the house of our Lord, the church and kingdom, "the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end"? (Hebrews 3:6). We are the true church if we are a happy, joyful people. Are we not commanded to "rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice"? Are we not taught to be anxious in nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, to let our requests be made known unto the Lord, and a peace that goes beyond all understanding will keep our minds and hearts in Christ Jesus? And "rejoice evermore" you find also in 1 Thessalonians 5:16. And in 1 Peter 1:8, to those who had the kingdom within them because they had Jesus on the throne of their hearts, does not the spirit say, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory"? Do you have this real joy and peace in your soul? If so, the kingdom of God is within you. And remember it comes not with observation; that is, by some miraculous outpouring of the Holy Spirit as when it was established on Pentecost, but comes in that quiet, unobserved way by God's word coming into your heart and enabling you to cast Satan out and let Jesus come in and reign. Remember our Lord says: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." (Revelation 3:20 :

THE KINGDOM MUST BE FIRST The kingdom must be sought first or not at all. There is no need here to give the many statements in the Bible that teach, overwhelmingly, that Christ must be first or he will be nothing; that in seeking the kingdom, it must be first or we can never find it; that the seeking must be done with the whole heart if we are to find. The following Scriptures declare this very fact: In Luke 14:24-33, Christ says that if any man comes to him and hates not his own father, mother, brother, sister, and his own life also, he cannot be his disciple. Jeremiah 29:13 says: "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." And we are not left

to guess what wholehearted seeking is. David says in Psalms 119:2-3 : "Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity; they walk in his ways." This is wholehearted seeking; it is ceasing to do evil and doing whatever our Lord says. And again in Isaiah 55:6-7 it says: "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord; and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Then we go to Deuteronomy 4:29-30, and it says: "But if from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul." But what is it to so seek him? Here is the answer: "If thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice." Well did our Lord command: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Yes, the command is to seek God's kingdom, but the command says seek it first. Are you making the kingdom first? Answer that question now, and know for a certainty that you know your own heart when you answer it. Our Lord says if any man come to me and hate not his father and mother, brother and sister, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. If you think you are a disciple when not making our Lord first, you are just thinking you are something that our Lord says you cannot be. You cannot be a disciple, indeed, unless you make him first, and his kingdom first.

Honestly, friends, let us quit playing at religion. Let us cease to be halfhearted disciples and be rather disciples indeed. Our Lord says: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." To all such Jesus says: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:31-32). David says: "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant." (Psalms 25:14).

THE PROMISE

"And all these things shall be added unto you." This has reference to food and raiment, the things that we need for our bodily comfort. Study the First Psalm, where David says that the man who walketh not in the counsel of wicked, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful, but whose delight is in God's law, and on that law meditates day and night, that whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. This is the assurance of the eternal God. Here we have our Lord teaching that if he will seek the kingdom of God first, and his righteousness, that all things needful to our bodies will be added unto us. Do we believe this? If so, will we not make the kingdom first? In keeping with this promise, the words of David again should be called in for consideration. He says: "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." (Psalms 37:26). And let us sing together with David in the following words: "I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my youth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him." (Psalms 34:1-8). And again: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though

the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." (Psalms 46:1-3). And again: "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass." (Psalms 37:5). Think of his "exceeding great and precious promises." God's book declares that by these promises we are made partakers of the divine nature. (2 Peter 1:4). But most certainly we are not made partakers of the divine nature if we do not, with our whole heart, believe in him and that he is able to take care of his promises. (Hebrews 11:6).

Think of the words in Romans 8:31 : "If God be for us, who can be against us?" This certainly does not mean that no one can be against us; but most certainly it means that the combined powers of the underworld cannot effectively be against us if God is for us. David says: "For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." (Psalms 84:11). This is what it means by the kingdom of God being within us. It means that he who died that we might live has a throne in our hearts that no other one can get. It means that our daily song and prayer is: "Father, your will in me be done while I live here on earth, as it is done in heaven." This is righteousness, for it leads us to respect all of his commandments, and the book declares that "all thy commandments are righteousness." (Psalms 119:172). That soul who thus respects every word that he knows has come from our Lord's heart, has peace, and he is a peacemaker; he has joy—yes, a joy that he cannot express in words. All such constitute the salt of the earth and the light of the world. May God give us more and more such disciples in the church of our Lord today.

Remember these words were spoken to the disciples of our Lord. As stated in the beginning, you should study prayerfully all of Matthew 6:19-34. The idea is we must make God's kingdom first from the day we are baptized into Christ until death. It is not a seeking that we begin and soon get through with; it is a life's work; it is a gradual growing more and more into the likeness of our Lord. It is a gradual becoming more and more a partaker of the divine nature. This coming of the kingdom within us is not a matter of observation, no more than the growth of the child from infancy to manhood. The growth from day to day we see not, but that it is going on we know for a certainty. May God bless every child of his now hungering more and more for his righteousness and that the kingdom in its fullness may come into them.

19 14 The Most Needed Thing in the Church

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It is interesting to study the story of the visit of our Lord to the home of Martha and Mary, as recorded in Luke 10:38-42. What did he mean when he said to Martha, "But one thing is needful: for Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her"? Martha was cumbered about much serving; "anxious," "troubled," or "distracted" are some of the other words that describe her mental attitude. She seemed astonished that Jesus would allow Mary to sit at his feet and hear the words that fell from his lips and not command Mary to help her with her much serving. Do you not think this is a picture—or, better said, a mirror—into which we can look and see ourselves as we are? Are we not today cumbered, anxious, troubled, and even distracted about almost everything except the one needful thing—viz., to sit at our Lord's feet and learn his will to us? We are too busy with our housekeeping, our social functions, our keeping up with this friend of mine or that one, and no time to study the Bible; or, with the men, I am too busy with my real estate, my banking business, my insurance, my bookkeeping, the store, and other things to find time to study the Bible. Oh, how we need to learn to choose the good part that Mary chose that shall not be taken from us! Our housekeeping soon will go, so will all of our social affairs. Our real estate, banks, books, stores, farms, and everything else of like nature, will go. John says: "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the lust of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." (1 John 2:16-17). obedience to our Father's will is the one thing needful, and this is just another expression for what the Bible calls love.

We are commanded to hear Christ in all things whatsoever he says to us. Mary took time to do this, but Martha really thought she did not have the time to spare.

It is also interesting to study the story of the rich young ruler who came to Christ and asked what he must do to inherit eternal life, as recorded in Mark 10:17-22. Our Lord's answer to him was: Keep the commandments. All of these he declared he had done from his youth up. But Jesus, beholding him, loved him, and said: "one thing thou lackest." What was this one thing lacking? It could not have been the mere act of selling all he had and giving it to the poor, for Paul says: "And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor,... but have not love, it profiteth me nothing."

"One thing thou lackest." What was that one thing lacking? There is "but one thing needful." What is this one needful thing? I am taking the position that it is love.

WE ARE NOTHING WITHOUT LOVE

Paul says: "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am

nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing."

Certainly speaking with the tongues of men and angels is no small attainment, but how utterly lost we are if this is all we can do! Preachers so often are selected for their eloquence, without any thought of whether the love for God rules and reigns in their hearts. Here is where the leaders in our congregations are weighed and found wanting. They select preachers for the power of their speech, without any regard as to whether our Lord has absolute sway in their souls. To have all knowledge and to be able to explain mysteries certainly is great, but it is nothing without love. The dazzling intellect of men is a magnet that draws admirers. Why should this be of first consideration, and but little thought, if any, given to whether love is reigning in that man's heart whom you select'? Giving all of my goods to feed the poor and being so zealous for my little sect or party that I would suffer my body to be burned to accomplish the end and aims of my crowd is some zeal! But how utterly lost we are, even if such sacrifices are made for the church of our Lord, if done in the partisan spirit and love is not in that heart of yours! In this great contrast loose stands out as a great mountain that is immovable and that lifts its head above the clouds into the golden sunlight of our Father in heaven.

WHAT LOVE DOES AND WILL NOT DO As we study love, see our Lord walking majestically up and down in it.

What Love Does. Suffers long, is kind, rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

What Love Will Not Do. It envieth not, it vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil, rejoiceth not in unrighteousness. It never fails. (1 Corinthians 13:1-8).

Well did Professor Drummond exclaim: "It is the greatest thing in the world!" And Peter chimes in here, saying: "Above all things being fervent in your love among yourselves; for love covereth a multitude of sins." (1 Peter 4:8). And John comes in with the statement: "God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him." He also says: "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God." (1 John 4:7; 1 John 4:16). THE SECRET OF KNOWING In Revelation 3:18 we are counseled by our Lord to buy of him eye salve to anoint our eyes that we may see. This eyesalve is love. The Spirit declares: "He that saith he is in the light and hateth his brother, is in the darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in the darkness, and walketh in the darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because the darkness [brotherly hatred] hath blinded his eyes." There can be no doubt that love enables us to see with undimmed vision. Our Lord says: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." (John 13:34).

Love enables us to know that our conversion was genuine. John says: "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren." (1 John 3:14). What if we do not love the brethren, yet claim to have passed from death unto life? It simply means that we are mistaken; that we are self-deceived; that we think we are something when we are nothing. And most

certainly the Bible teaches that we can deceive ourselves. This statement of John's declares that the way we know we have passed out of death into life is the consciousness that love for the brethren reigns in our hearts. This suggests that in the new birth love is begotten in the human heart. And here the apostle Peter agrees in the following words: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently: having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth." (1 Pet. 1:22, 23). Note here that the soul is, in the new birth, purified through our obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren. This is true love, not pretended love. The consciousness of such love reigning in our souls is the how we know we have passed out of death into life, that the old man has been put off and the new life begun. This is what the book says; hence, it is right. But we now go back to 1 John 3:14-15 and note the following words: "He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." Could language be stronger? But more: "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him." (Verses 18, 19). Is there any other way of knowing and assuring our hearts before him?

Christ says: "If a man love me, he will keep my words." (John 14:23). Are you keeping his word? If not, how empty your claim of being a Christian, a true disciple of our Lord! Remember that John says. "Every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God." (1 John 4:7). Christ says: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John 17:3). But those who do not love, certainly do not know God. And if we love him, we will keep his commandments; hence we are in a bad way if we claim to know him and are not keeping his sayings. "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." (1 John 2:3-4). Brethren, here are the facts about this matter. It is so utterly foolish to claim to be Christians when love is not in our hearts. And it is the only way others can know we are God's children. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another;" (John 13:35). others can know we are first-class hypocrites when we claim to be disciples of our Lord and carry around hatred in our hearts for anyone.

LOVE IS ETERNAL

Everything else is transitory and fleeting. Paul declares that tongues shall cease, that knowledge will vanish away, and the prophecies shall be done away, but love continues forever. Even the heavens and the earth will pass away, but love, the greatest thing in the world, goes on forever. It is well to ask right here that if all these miraculous things were transitory and fleeting, then what about your real estate, your banking business, your factories, your insurance companies? All of these will go, and even you will go before they go, perhaps, and be no more, and the place you have occupied forget you. Think again of the changing and the changeless things with which we have to do. That eternal kingdom of which we claim to be citizens, the church purchased with our Lord's blood, in which we are taught we can glorify him throughout all ages, world without end, we should make first in our lives every day we live here on earth. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," is the command of our Lord. (Matthew 6:33). This is the real meaning of love. It is well here that you turn to Luke 14:25-35 and study it wholeheartedly. There we are told by Jesus that no one can be a disciple of his unless he hates father, mother, brother, sister—yea,

and his own life also—that he must forsake all that he has, else he cannot be a disciple of Jesus. But hate is used here in the sense of second choice, and the idea is that we must make Christ first in our hearts and lives; that he must come before father, mother, brother, sister, and even our own lives, else we are not his true disciples. This is loving with the whole heart, and this we must do or be lost. How many of us have such love? Our Lord has just this number of true disciples on earth, and no more.

OUR LORD WANTS US TO TAKE HOLD OF THE ETERNAL THINGS Have we missed the point of 1 John 2:15-17? Here is the way it reads: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. " Think not, for one moment, that the Spirit has in mind here merely the sins of the world or what we sometimes call "worldliness." God is talking to us about the transient things with which we have to do, and with which things we have a perfect right to have to do, provided we make them not things of first importance and allow them not to hinder us in obeying our Father's will. Paul teaches that "the time is short" and soon those who buy and hold the material things of this life will be as those who possess not; hence, we should use the good things of this life "sparingly, " for the world as we see it is passing away. (1 Corinthians 7:29-31). Read this from the Twentieth Century Translation. The Revised Version says: "And those that use the world, as not using it to the full: for the fashion of this world passeth away."

Most certainly, then, we should recognize ourselves as strangers and pilgrims here on earth, and realize that this old earth, with all that we may hold as our own of its possessions, soon will slip from our hands. The thing of all importance, taught from first to last in God's book, is to make God first—to love him with the whole heart. This love is expressed in wholehearted and unstinted obedience to everything we know that he has said to us. Does not our Lord say, "If a man love me, he will keep my word"? Do you think our Lord knows what he is talking about? If he does—and most certainly he does—those of us who love him are keeping his commandments—every command that we know is his. Here let us read Moffatt's translation of 1 Corinthians 7:19 : "Circumcision counts for nothing, uncircumcision counts for nothing; but obedience to God's commands is everything. " And connect with this: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." (1 John 5:3). This love casteth all fear from the human heart. "There is no fear in love: but perfect love casteth out fear." (1 John 4:18). There is a joy that cannot be expressed in words—it is unspeakable. This love gives this joy, and only those who have such love have this joy. (1 Peter 1:6-8). There is a peace that no human soul can understand. Those who have this love have this peace. (Php 4:4-7).

How true it is that "love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfilment of the law"! (Romans 13:10 : And that "the great commandment" is: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.... And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets." (Matthew 22:35-40). So far as I can see, we are taught to hate but two things—viz., sin and the devil. We must love our enemies and hate no one. And how woefully deceived we are if we think we love GOD and hate the brethren! "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not

seen." (1 John 4:20 : How important, then, that we "let love of the brethren continue"! (Hebrews 13:1).

And, in conclusion, let it be remembered that "we love, because he first loved us." (1 John 4:19). Note here it says that we love, and the reason for our loving is because he first loved us. This is loving in the fullest sense—viz., God, the brethren, and even our enemies— that is, we love like God loves every human soul on earth, saved or unsaved, or whether he loves us or hates us. We hate nothing except those things that have a tendency to harm a human soul; hence, we hate Satan and sin and every evil way. God's love was commended to us in that, while we were yet sinners, he gave his Son to die for us. (Romans 5:8). May God help us to keep our hearts set on his love for us until his kind of love is begotten within us, is my prayer.

THE EDUCATED MAN George Matthew Adams well says:

"The most highly educated man is he who has learned the most ways of being useful and kind.

"We accumulate nothing until we begin to give away.

"The more experience -ye get, the more we think and the less we say. We learn that we have to know a great deal in order to express just a little.

"The educated man is a delight. He sees so many things and understands them without having them explained. He reasons his way along. He takes no man's word as final. He gives no final word of his own.

"The educated man is a walking university, Everybody who comes in contact with him leaves with a lesson learned from him. He despises nothing except falsity.

"He who is best educated loves most. That kind of love that is life stuff—broadening and bettering every human it touches. The kind of love which nourishes and which doesn't talk back. Which beareth all things and is still kind, strong, and rich."

20 15 How Faith Grows Exceedingly

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INTRODUCTION

Turning to 2 Thessalonians 1:3-4, we have these words: "We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren, even as it is meet, for that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the love of each one of you all toward one another aboundeth; so that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience [steadfastness] and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions which ye endure."

Is there any difference between a real Christian and that one out there who has no dealings with God? Answer the question now: Does not every bit of the reason about us say there must be a difference? The soul being worth more than all the wealth of the earth, worth so much that God gave his only begotten Son to give his life to save that soul, would God be just and leave us to grope about here in darkness, never knowing whether our soul is saved or unsaved? Is there anything about the religion of our Lord that lifts us out of ourselves and places our feet on a rock that sustains and comforts?

Some remarkable statements we just here consider. (1) Did not Job say, "For I know that my redeemer liveth"? (Job 19:25). (2) Did not Paul declare, "For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day"? (2 Timothy 1:12). Are we to get nothing from Paul's libation—viz., his pouring out his blood upon his life of sacrifice and service to the cause Christ died to establish? Listen to his words: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (2 Timothy 4:6; 2 Timothy 4:8). Was not Paul looking forward to such an end of his glorious life when he said to the Philippians, "Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all"? (Php 2:17). And this brings to mind the words of this great witness of the resurrection of our Lord, when he was besought by Luke and the brethren at Caesarean not to go to Jerusalem because Agabus, the prophet, declared that trial and persecution awaited him there. Here are his words: "Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." (Acts 21:13).

Is there not a "joy unspeakable and full of glory"? (1 Peter 1:8). Is there not "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding"? (Php 4:4-7). Do you have this joy, this peace? If so, will not the world see it, and will not this cause them to come to desire that which you have that they know they have not? Did not the persecutors of the apostles take "knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus"? Was there not something about the boldness of the apostles, their perfect

self-control and calmness under fire, that made even the enemy know that they had contact with something that was above man?

And, finally, in these introductory remarks, may I now ask: Is your faith today any stronger than it was when you were baptized into Christ, ten, fifteen, or thirty years ago? Have you heard men preach thirty years ago whom you have been observing all of these years, and is there anything that indicates they have more faith now than when you first heard them? Think of your own soul from this point of view! Has your faith been growing, and not merely growing, but growing exceedingly? Can those with whom you have been living see that it has grown? Have you any more self-control now than you had when you were baptized? Have you no more patience and forbearance? And note this: Does your love toward the brethren abound? Along with this growing faith comes brotherly love abounding. Please study this lesson for your own soul's sake and for what it will enable you to come to be to others.

GODS DEFINITION OF FAITH

Taking God's own definition of his terms and getting the meaning from the context is the only infallible way of studying the Bible. In Hebrews 11:1 we have faith defined in these words:

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." By reading the different translations you will find faith defined as the substance, ground, or assurance of things hoped for, and the evidence, demonstration, test, or strict proof of things not seen. It is my judgment. that substance, ground, and assurance of things hoped for defines faith to us in the beginning of our life of service to our Lord. Faith as evidence, demonstration, test, or strict proof of things not seen, comes in the course of our life of service. The first part of this definition I think we have given to the church quite fully in our teaching, but we have sadly neglected the second part. The faith that saves is progressive in its nature. When we turn our backs on Satan and sin, and take God's word as a lamp to our feet and a light to our pathway (Psalms 119:105 it leads us into "faith-producing channels or experiences. " If this is not true, what could our Lord have meant when he said to his own disciples, to those who were at the time he was talking to them, believers, "And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe"? (John 14:29). What does he mean by their believing after certain things he had told them came to pass? He simply meant that they would come to believe in a larger way, that faith would become the evidence, the demonstration, the test, the strict proof that the God whom they had never seen undoubtedly is, that our Lord undoubtedly came from God and was returning to him. It would be well for you to read this whole chapter.

EXCEEDING GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISES The gospel of Christ, or the good news of God's provisions for our salvation, consists of facts, commands, and **PROMISES** The facts are the birth, life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and coronation of our Lord. A study of 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 10:6-10; Acts 2:36 will prove this to you. Then faith, repentance, and baptism are commandments aliens must obey in order to be saved. Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:37-38; Acts 2:41, with other Scriptures, just as clearly teach. Then all of his commandments to us as Christians are to be obeyed. They teach us how to live at home, in whatever business we may be following, and how to meet on the first day of the week for worship, and to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. But now to these exceeding great and precious promises. Do you know that these are the things that make us grow exceedingly. It declares that through these promises we

are made partakers of the divine nature. By virtue of these we grow into Christ's likeness and allow his nature to become ours through daily putting to death our own carnal nature.

This is how we accomplish what we are commanded to do in Colossians 3:1-11.

Think of this: Here we are; we have never seen God, but he tells us in his word that if we will live a certain life here on earth that he will do certain things for us. We step out into this life of service, and as we travel along the way. we find the route he has commanded us to take is strewn with exceeding great and precious PROMISES We see these promises fulfilled almost daily, and thus faith is confirmed and strengthened. There can be no such thing as faith growing exceedingly without our hearts being fixed on these promises. Here is where we have neglected, to a very large degree, to preach and teach the gospel of Christ in all of its fullness.

EXEMPLIFICATIONS

Noah. It would be well to study the sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters of Genesis. Noah certainly believed that God existed before the flood. He by faith moved with fear and prepared the ark to the saving of his house. (Hebrews 11:7). Suppose you had gone to him before the flood and asked him if he believed in the existence of God. Most certainly he would have said that he did. But go to him after all that God had said came to pass exactly as God said it would, and he steps forth from the ark into a world rid of the sinful generation from which the ark had borne him; Ask him now if he believes that God is. He most certainly would have used faith in the stronger term and answered with Job: "I know that my Redeemer liveth. " Can't you see that his faith has become the evidence of things unseen, the strict proof, the absolute demonstration that God is.

Joseph. There is no story more interesting to us than that of Joseph, the favorite son of Jacob, who was hated by his brothers because of his dreams, and was sold as a slave to the Ishmaelites, and finally was bought in the slave markets of Egypt by Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard. You can read the whole story in Genesis 37 and also chapters 40 to 47.

With the story before you, think of the faith Joseph had when he was sold as a lad into slavery and the faith he had after all these dreadful and joyful experiences he had passed through! He had been well taught as a child. Hence, if he had been asked if he believed God is, the answer would have been: "Most certainly I do." If asked just how he could prove it, he could have said enough to show that he had that faith which is the substance of things hoped for. But ask him after the happy reunion, when his aged father and other relatives were brought down into Egypt to live. Ask him now if he believes God is. He would have used the stronger term and exclaimed with Job: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, though I have never seen him. " Faith has become the evidence, the demonstration, the absolute proof that God is! Do you see it?

3. The Three Hebrew Children, or, better expressed, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Read the story of their experience in Dan. Before they were cast into the "midst of a burning fiery furnace," suppose we talk to them a little. Ask them if they believe God is. You know well the answer you would get. They have faith as the substance of things hoped for. But after they are cast in and then come forth with not a "hair of their head singed," talk to them and see what they say. They would not have said, "We believe God is," but their answer would have been, "We know that God is, " and they knew it as certainly as I now know I am writing these words, though they had never seen God. And so on we could go giving example after example. This is the way faith

grows.

4. Bring the Lesson Home to Your own Soul. Has our Lord made us any promises? Most certainly— exceeding great and precious promises. Let us study some of them:

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28). Is this true? Has its truthfulness been verified in your life? Do all of your experiences bring a blessing to your soul? If you are, indeed, a Christian they have done this very thing. But are you seeing it as you go along? And how does it happen that such is the case? Or shall we think of it as a "happen so," or see it as it indeed is—viz., that the eternal God, with whom there is nothing impossible, superintends and so overrules all your experiences for your good! This is the way it is. But do you see it?

Let us remember here that this promise is to those who LOVE God, not to those who think they love him when they do not. Christ who knows says: "If a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. " (John 14:23). How could anything hurt or harm you when God and his Son are making their abode with you? But are you keeping his commandments? Is there just one commandment that you knowingly trample underfoot? If so, this promise is not yours.

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end." (Ephesians 3:20-21).

Here it would be well to remind you that the promise in Romans 8:28 is not only to those who love God, but to "the called according to his purpose. " You will note that our Lord blesses only those who are in his church "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask OR think, according to the power that worketh in us." The "called according to his purpose" constitute the church, if you please. Let us read it: "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God. According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord (Ephesians 3:10). Suppose you read prayerfully all of the third chapter of Ephesians.

Now does God bless you exceeding abundantly above all you think or ask? If not, there is something wrong with you, not with the promise. Can you keep up with the great and eternal God in all the ways he blesses you? How sad that some believe no further than they can see. This is not believing at all. Faith really begins where our ability to see ends. But let it be remembered that this assurance here is to those who love God. But let us here note that: "If a man say, I love God. and hateth his brother. he is a liar." (1 John 4:20). So if you do not see all things working together for your good, and God blessing you exceeding abundantly above all you think or ask, give yourself a going over and see what is wrong with you, for there is nothing wrong with the promise.

"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." (Hebrews 13:5-6).

Is it not enough that he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee? Keep your heart steeled on hearing and doing anything and everything you know your Lord wants you to do. This is your

part. Just know that God can and will do the rest. Let us fly to the bosom of Abraham now and listen to what God says of him: "lie staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness." It is the faith of Abraham that saves, that obtains the promises. Let us walk in his steps. (Romans 4:12; Romans 4:16; Romans 4:20-22).'

Watch the promises. See them daily fulfilled in your own life, and know most assuredly that your God lives and your Lord is reigning.

SALT WITHIN

"Have salt in yourselves," admonished Jesus (Mark 9:50). But how often we make the fatal mistake of seeking it elsewhere or of expecting to experience the saving qualities of salt by having it applied merely to the outside!

Salt within is the idea of Jesus. So too must be everything that brings a blessing that is real and permanent. Whatever happiness we have must be from within. Yet we run helter-skelter at breakneck speed, trying to find it somewhere else, constantly chasing the "will-o'-the-wisp" which appears deceitfully before us but is never quite overtaken, phantom fires that glow in the distance leading those who follow into darkness, mirages in the desert that promise cooling waters but give only burning sands. The only fount of genuine joy is within, and happy is he who has discovered it. No one lives on the food eaten by another. No one can think with the intellectual powers of another. No one can understand with the heart of another. No one can perform his task with the strength of another. Whatever usefulness one possesses is due to his own powers and abilities and not those of another. —Selected.

21 16 Can the Lord Depend on You?

16 Can the Lord Depend on You?

16. Can the Lord Depend on You?

INTRODUCTION

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience." (James 1:2-3). Temptation, then, has a place in our growth and development.

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." (James 1:12).

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." (James 1:13).

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (1 Corinthians 10:13).

From the above Scriptures, it is perfectly plain that temptations are experiences God permits or allows to come into our lives to test us and prove us. He does not do the tempting, but only permits or allows it to be done for our good. This is in perfect harmony with these words from 1 Peter 4:12-13 : "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." And Paul, in telling Timothy about his own persecutions and afflictions, declares to him: "Yea, and all that will live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Timothy 3:10-12). This leads me to make the following proposition and undertake to prove it:

SATAN SEEMS TO HAVE THE RIGHT TO CALL INQUESTION OUR FAITHFULNESS OR LOYALTY ATWHAT EVER POINT HE CHOOSES AND, WHEN THECHALLENGE IS MADE, GOD MUST LET US BE TESTEDAT THAT POINT

1. Here Job Is Presented as an Example. Turning to Job 1:6-22, you are asked to read it carefully. Satan's claim was that Job feared God and was a good man because of the way God had hedged him about on every side with the good things of this life. It is easy for some to believe that if you had everything that heart could desire in this life, it would be easy to live the Christian's life. Satan challenges Job's strength and faithfulness at this point. He claims that if God would allow Job to be tested at this point, he would curse God to his face. So the challenge is made, and God permits the testing to be done. You read it for yourself and learn the results. After all his earthly possessions were taken from him, along with all of his children, the record says: "Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, and

said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." And it is a little hard to convince the devil that he is wrong in his accusations against us. After this defeat, he claims that a man will give anything for a good, sound, healthy body; that- Job is blessed with perfect health, a body free from any kind of disease or aches or pain, and that if God will permit him to put forth his hand and touch his bone and flesh, he would curse God to his face. Read this in Job 2:1-10. You will note that God permitted Satan to test him here, but allowed him to go just so far and no farther; he could not take the life of Job. You know this story. Job was smitten with "sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes." And, in the midst of it all, his wife failed him and upbraided him for still holding on to God who would allow such a misfortune to come to him. She advised that he curse God and die. It is too bad, when these challenges come, that Satan has his "fifth column" in our own homes and in the person or persons of those we think are our dearest friends. It would hardly be the thing to do not to give the exact words of Job in answering this wife of his. Here they are: "But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips." And it is well that you turn to Job 42, the last chapter in this book, and read it. God allowed not him to suffer in vain. And Job declares that he had heard of God By the hearing of the ear, "but now mine eye seeth thee." That is, out of that experience, he had come to know God as never before. Be certain to read this chapter. The friends who went to Job to comfort him turned out to be tantalizers instead of comforters. They contended that Job had some secret sin in his life and that all of this came upon him because of such. These three friends compare favorably to many church members today. But the all-important question to you is: Can the Lord depend on you when the challenge is made? Your temptations come because of challenges Satan has made. Did you stand the test? Or was Satan right in his claim against you?

2. The Words of our Lord to Simon. Let us now turn to Luke 22:31-32. Here is the way it reads: "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Our Lord knew all about Peter's misunderstanding of the nature of the kingdom he came to establish, and that because of this misunderstanding, when he allowed himself to be bound and led away as a thief, that Peter would become bewildered, and that Satan would take advantage of this and strive to capture him absolutely. Satan was correct in part in his challenge of Peter's strength and loyalty. But our Lord knew that at heart he was honest in his misunderstanding, hence prayed for Peter. Is it not good to think that when our testing time comes, the same Lord is praying for us? (See Hebrews 7:25). But he not only prayed for him; he gave him a little inside information about just when the cock would crow—viz., after he had three times denied that he knew Jesus. Then when the cock did crow, our Lord, instead of shouting out loud, as many in the church today would do, saying, "I told you so," and thus expose Peter to the mob, he gently "looked upon Peter." How those eyes did beam with love and spoke volumes to that faltering disciple! Peter went out and wept bitterly. He came out of the sifting a better and stronger man, and able to strengthen his brethren. But the point here is that Satan made the challenge and Peter had to be tested, but our Lord provided a way of escape and helped Peter to see it. I suggest that you read Luke 22:31-62.

3. The Final Word About This old Accuser. It is in order here to read Revelation 12:10 : "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. " This certainly should settle the question with all who will let God be true and every man that speaks to the contrary a liar. This is exactly what we are commanded to do in Romans 3:4. Satan is the accuser of the brethren, and he accuses them day and night. Can the Lord depend on you when the accusation is made, is the practical question for us to study.

4. Some Reflections.

(1) We can easily meet the temptations of life and overcome them when we are conscious of the fact that each temptation comes because of Satan's challenge of our strength or loyalty at the point of temptation. As a rule, Satan approaches us through the just of the flesh. "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own just, and enticed." The question of practical importance is: When we see the temptation, will we allow it to turn out that Satan is right in his judgment of us? Or will we be such beings as was Job on whom the Lord can depend to put the tempter to flight? "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you," says James 4:7. Paul says he brought his body under and kept it in subjection: lest that by any means, when he had preached to others, he himself should become a castaway. (1 Corinthians 9:27). A minister who had only one son, in whom his very life was wrapped up, which son lived to be thirty years. No two souls ever got more out of each other's companionship than they; but the dreaded sarcoma began its deadly work and took this son from him. During his sickness, the father prayed most earnestly that this son be taken not from him. Oftentimes he would get out of his bed at night and pray to the Father to spare the son; but the inevitable came, the son died. But knowing well the lesson given in this chapter, he at once saw Satan behind it all, that his loyalty to Christ had been called in question, and that if God would allow Satan to touch that son, he would cease to preach the glorious gospel of Christ. This very thought caused this father, after the body was embalmed and the casket placed in the living room and the lights adjusted, and the nurse who had so patiently stood with him and his wife through it all, came and stated, "You may see him now," and gently led them to the casket, to lay his hand upon the son's folded hands and say, "Phil, you shall not die, for your father shall from this day till he dies live two lives—one for you and one for himself." And that father doubled his work as a minister instead of quitting as Satan thought he would. Instead of our becoming discouraged when tried and tempted, we should get a thrill in the consciousness that Satan is being overcome and put to flight.

Satan often calls us in question from the standpoint of our morality. Just tempt or test him, says Satan, with a beautiful woman, anti he will fall. You have a most interesting story of such a test being made tits Joseph, but God could depend on him." Study this in Genesis 40:7-12.

Then Satan calls others in question from the standpoint of their love for money. Give him the chance to beat you out of money in a trade and see what he will do, whispers the accuser. And how many fall at this point! Many have committed suicide because of lost money in banks that closed. And a man who talked religion everywhere he went, was always at the Bible class on Sunday, and could ask and answer more questions than anyone else, was tested by a wind going through his farm and blowing down one of the brightest prospects for a great corn crop. and, as he

viewed the destruction, he cursed the God who would permit a thing like that to happen. Had we not better examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith? (2 Corinthians 13:5).

Popularity, or getting on the winning side, is where many fall. Great preachers have here fallen. They know well the teaching of the grand old book, but will turn aside with the majority and take the curse that means most to them from the standpoint of dollars and cents and the plaudits of men. Our God has said: "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil: neither shalt thou speak in a cause to turn aside after a multitude to wrest justice." (Exodus 23:2).

Expand on this, if time permits, with other exemplifications.

22 17 Our Lord and His Eternal Word

17 Our Lord and His Eternal Word

Our Lord and His Eternal Word

Perhaps nothing could mean more to us than to know indeed the relationship between God's word and our Lord. In this study we want to note some plain-as-day statements that should be learned and never forgotten.

Beginning with David in Psalms 1, we learn the "blessed man" is one whose "delight is in the law of the Lord: and in his law doth he meditate day and night." Let us read it together:

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

Now, look these words squarely in the face. Can you think of anything more easily seen and understood? Here is the secret of absolute success. Can you think of any greater promise than "Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper?"

Note the simple conditions: "Walketh not in the counsel of the wicked." Who has been advising you? Who has been your counselor? Have you had God's word as a lamp to your feet and a light to your pathway (Psalms 119:105 or have you been walking with "feet that be swift in running to mischief"? Or with him who "soweth discord among brethren"? Or with "a false witness that uttereth lies"? It is well that we study Proverbs 6:16-19.

Remember that instead of walking with "them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned," that you are to mark them and turn away from them. (Romans 16:17). Then you must not stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat with scoffers. But your delight must be in God's law, and on it meditate day and night. Is this asking too much of us? Here is a man working on an invention, which, if he perfects it, will make him a multimillionaire. Does he not meditate on that invention day and night? Is there a day he does not have it on his heart? Well, remember souls —worth more than all the wealth of the earth—are at stake. We will spend eternity with God and the redeemed, or be cast into outer darkness to be cursed forever. And we have only a short time to stay here, and our attitude toward God's word determines where we will go when we leave here. Is it too much to delight in God's law and meditate on it day and night? Really this is exactly what we will do, if we believe as we should.

HOW CHRIST IS REJECTED AND RECEIVED

Those who reject Jesus are those who receive not his word. In John 12:48 our Lord says: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the

same shall judge him in the last day." The twentieth century translation gives it this way: "He who rejects me, and disregards my teaching, has a judge already—the very message which I have delivered will itself be his judge at the last day." And with these words, 2 John 1:9 should be considered, "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son." In 1 John 5:12 it says: "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." There is no such thing, then, as having our Lord as our Savior without receiving his word.

THE BUILDING THAT STANDS

It is the only way right building can be done. For Jesus says: "Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock. And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand: anti the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall thereof." (Matthew 7:24-27).

"Great was the fall thereof." When you think of your soul, worth more than all the wealth of all the earth, then the fall of a human soul certainly can be thought of as great. Could there be a greater loss? With these words of Jesus before us, I now introduce another translation of 1 Corinthians 7:19 : "Circumcision counts for nothing, uncircumcision counts for nothing; obedience to God's commands is everything." Then chimes in the words of our Lord in Revelation 22:14 : "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

THE LOVE OF THE TRUTH

There is such a thing as receiving "the love of the truth," that we may be saved. (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12). Then there is such a thing as knowing what God says and quoting it and arguing about it when there is no love of the truth in our hearts. So this throws us back on that great subject we have already considered —viz., love. Those who have not the love of the truth will be cursed with a strong delusion. 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12 says: "And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie. " For what cause? Because they received not the love of the truth.

Really, have we in our hearts love for God's truth? Or is it love for our own hobbies, theories, preconceived ideas and notions that we love so much, and would wreck the church that we sustain? Are we really in love with the truth, or in love rather with justifying our own wrongdoings, and would wreck the church in our efforts to justify self? Well would it be for us to give ourselves a looking over just here. Are we not commanded: "Try your own selves, whether. ye are in the faith; prove your own selves. Or know ye not as to your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you? unless indeed ye be reprobate." (2 Corinthians 13:5).

PARTIAL OBEDIENCE EQUALS NO OBEDIENCE

Love takes all of God's word. We live not by a few things God has said to us, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. (Matthew 4:4). Partial obedience equals no obedience.

Study 1 Samuel 15:1-29. Faith, repentance, and baptism undoubtedly have proceeded out of our Lord's mouth as conditions of forgiveness for sins of aliens. With our whole heart we must love and teach these words. But just as certain as these are the words of our Lord, just that certain the following words proceeded out of his mouth: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." (John 13:34). "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen. And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also." (1 John 4:20-21).

Well, it is bad to be a liar. In Revelation 21:8 it says: "All liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." And they are classed with murderers. But he that hateth his brother is a murderer. (1 John 3:15). These liars are classed with the fearful. But the fearful are those who do not love. "There is no fear in love: but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath punishment; and he that feareth is not made perfect in love." (1 John 4:18). These liars are also classed with the unbelieving. When you see men going around hating each other and striving to pick each other to pieces, just know they do not believe. If you will turn to 2 Thessalonians 1:3, you find Paul giving thanks because the faith of the brethren in Thessalonica was growing exceedingly, and, along with that growing faith, love one for another was abounding. Let us read it together: "We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren, even as it is meet, for that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the love of each one of you all toward one another aboundeth."

It has been said those who really believe what this old book teaches are going to heaven; they are not going to hell! Who could believe any sane soul would miss what the Bible says about heaven if he really believes what the Bible says about heaven? Who could believe that any sane soul would go to hell if he really believes what the Bible says about hell?

Listen to me! Don't you think our Lord had it right when he said: "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." (Mark 9:23). Does not he tell us that the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hid in a field, the which when a man findeth it will give all he has for that field? Does he not tell us that the kingdom is like a merchant man seeking goodly pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all he had and bought it? (Matthew 13:44-46).

THE CONDITION OF TRUE DISCIPLESHIP

True Discipleship Found. Our Lord says no one who comes to him can be a disciple unless he hates father, mother, brother, sister, and his own life also. (Luke 14:24-33). It can only mean that those who love God will do what he says regardless of all opposition, and they enjoy doing what he says. Just here an old Testament scene comes to me. You remember when Jacob was fleeing from Esau he landed in the home of Laban, who had two daughters, Rachel and Leah. Jacob loved Rachel and wanted her for his wife. Laban told him if he would be his servant seven years he could have her. The record says: "And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days for the love he had for her." Love in the sense of first choice makes everything easy. Our Lord's commandments to those who love are not grievous. Solomon says that love in the sense of first choice "is as strong as death", that is, you would die before you would let the object of love go. Such love, Solomon says, "many waters cannot quench, neither can the floods drown." (Song of Solomon 8:6-7). In the light of this, you understand better the words of

Paul when he said: "What mean ye to weep and break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." The brethren were begging him not to go to Jerusalem, because the Holy Spirit had testified that the enemy would persecute him and perhaps kill him if he went to Jerusalem. Yes, Paul not only loved Christ more than he did father, mother, brother, or sister, but more than he did his own life, and would lay his life down before letting Jesus go. Do you so love him? If you do, you have a joy that is unspeakable and you have a peace that you yourself cannot understand. (1 Pet. 1:8; Php 4:4-7). This all throws light on the following oft-quoted and little-understood statement: "And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." Strong language indeed are these words. That man who says he loves God and hateth his brother is a liar, the book says. That man who says he knows God and is not keeping his commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him, the book also declares.

Well, let us then know that not what we are going about saying about ourselves proves anything. It is the way we live. Not what we say about how much we love God means anything—it is how we are conducting ourselves toward what he has said. Let us remember that "he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." This is the only thing that we can have that will never be taken from us. Will we not, then, with Mary (Luke 10:38-42), choose the good part that will not be taken away from us? That is, take time to study God's holy word, and not use all of our time worrying about the perishing things of this life that will soon be taken from us. Remember the "pride of life" is not of the Father. Many church members need, before they ever go through the form of eating the Lord's Supper again, to confess their sins. Their pride keeps them from it. May God help us to think on these things.

David said: "Thy word have I laid up in my heart, that I might not sin against thee." But to him, he declares that word laid up in his heart was sweeter than honey to his mouth and more precious than gold, yea than fine gold. (Psalms 119:11; Psalms 119:103; Psalms 119:127). When thus we have such love in our hearts for the word of our Lord, we will not knowingly violate one thing it says for us to do or try to be. And when we meet him in the judgment and the books are opened, we will not be ashamed to be judged by the things we have so loved and valued.

23 18 "Thy Heart is Not Right"

18 "Thy Heart is Not Right"

18. "Thy Heart is Not Right"

There is an old saying: "Just so the heart is right, all is right." This is true. The words of Solomon in Proverbs 23:26, "My son, give me thine heart," indicate that when Jehovah has our heart he has all he wants; and the words, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life," indicate the same thing (Proverbs 4:23); also the words, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7), certainly teach that when our heart is right, all is right. But if the saying, "Just so the heart is right, all is right," be true, its opposite must also be true viz., "If the heart is wrong, all is wrong." There are many Scriptures that clearly teach that we may do the exact thing that God wants us to do, but if it is not done from the heart it amounts to no obedience at all. In Romans 6:17-18 we are told that the Roman brethren obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine delivered unto them, and were then made free from sin in that obedience. Suppose that they had done exactly the same physical act, buried in baptism and resurrected, but this act had not been done from the heart, would they have been made free from sin? Certainly not. Not one act of worship can we engage in, and our Lord accept it, unless it is done from the heart. To learn how to give unto our Lord the whole heart is one of the most meaningful accomplishments in the Christian's life.

SIMONS TROUBLE The words at the heading of this article, as doubtless the reader has already recognized, are taken from Peter's words to Simon, the sorcerer, found in Acts 8. The words should be read in their setting:

"Now when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit. But Peter said unto him, Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right before God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee. For I see that thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. And Simon answered and said, Pray ye for me to the Lord, that none of the things which ye have spoken come upon me." (Acts 8:18-24).

We can better understand Simon's plea to Peter to pray for him that none of the things Peter had spoken come upon him when we note in the marginal reading of the Revised Version that Peter said: "For I see thou wilt become gall (or, a gall root) of bitterness and a bond of iniquity." In this reading Simon is rebuked for just one wicked thought. He is commanded to repent of "this thy wickedness." He was not so bad right then as he would come to be, unless he got rid of that wicked thought. Here is the law of pardon to erring Christians clearly revealed. Simon had been a great sinner (verses 9-11); but when he also believed Philip's preaching, as did many of the other Samaritans, and was baptized, he was freed of all his past sins, just as were they. (Mark 16:16;

Acts 2:38; Acts 8:12-13). one wicked thought put him into a fallen state, and he needed to repent and pray God for the forgiveness of this sin. But the point in it all is that Simon's heart was not right before God. He had a motive or desire Lying back of the request for this power, that was all wrong. It has been said that the sin we most frequently commit before our baptism is the one we will be most likely to commit after baptism. The man who has developed a desire for strong drink by his continued drinking habit will be most likely to be tempted at this point after his baptism more strongly than at others, and so with liars and fornicators. Simon had before his baptism "amazed the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one." He had caused the people to exclaim of him: "This man is that power of God which is called Great." But he had been using sorcery, which was pretended employment of supernatural agencies. Now he sees the real power, and at once covets it, doubtless, for the purpose of causing the people again to acclaim him as a great power of God. Anyway, his heart was not right before God because of just one wicked thought, which thought if not at once abandoned, would lead him on to gall of bitterness and a bond of iniquity. Truly did Solomon say: "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." And how important that we heed the admonition, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life"!

THE HEART RIGHT, ALL IS RIGHT Let us, a little more in detail, study the thought that if the heart is right, all is right.

1. Brotherly Love. This love is at the very beginning of our lives as Christians. Repenting and going back to our first love, as the church at Ephesus was commanded to do in Revelation 2:4-5, simply means to go back to the love we had at the first. Our "first love" is the love we had when we were born again. If brotherly love is not in our hearts, then our baptism is a form without any power whatsoever. Think on the following:

"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by

the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." (1 Peter 1:22-23).

"Unfeigned" love is unpretended love—it is pure love, it is fervent (warm and wholehearted) love. Paul says in Romans 12:9 : "Let love be without hypocrisy." There is much lying done on the part of brethren as they pretend to love each other. Solomon says that: "He that hideth hatred is of lying lips." (Proverbs 10:18). The following words of Solomon describe perfectly that man who claims to be a Christian, but has not brotherly love:

"He that hateth dissembleth with his lips; and layeth up deceit within him; when he speaketh fair, believe him not: for there are seven abominations in his heart. Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be shewed before the whole congregation." (Proverbs 26:24-26).

There is no good thing that can come to a human being who carries hatred around in his heart. He is blind and cannot see. The following will suffice on this point:

"He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because

that darkness hath blinded his eyes." (1 John 2:9-11).

2. Sound Doctrine. As a rule, when we speak of sound doctrine we have in mind teaching the pure word of God, and not the doctrine and commandments of men; and certainly this we are taught to do in God's holy word. "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1), if you will read right on, has reference to our living right before God. It means that we be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience, not false accusers, not given to wine, and not only living this way, but teaching others to so live. (Titus 2:1-15). But we have already said that if our hearts are right before God it is because we have given him the whole heart, and this is exactly the whole truth in this matter. We have the following words from our Lord:

"Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me; teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Matthew 15:7-9).

If our hearts are right before God, we will try the spirits that come among us as teachers to see if they are of God. (1 John 4:1). We will "prove all things; hold fast that which is good." (1 Thessalonians 5:21). We will let God have such a place in our hearts that nothing satisfies except the consciousness that his will in us is being done as it is done in heaven. Is your heart right before God? It is a fine time to give ourselves a thorough examination. It will be too late after death comes and the door is forever shut. THE FRIEND WHO STANDS BY When trouble comes your soul to try, You love the friend who just stands by, Perhaps there's nothing he can do; The thing is strictly up to you, For there are troubles all your own, And paths the soul must tread alone:

Times when love can't smooth the road, Nor friendship lift the heavy load. But just to feel you have a friend, Who will stand by until the end; Whose sympathy through all endures, Whose warm handclasp is always yours.

It helps somehow to pull you through, Although there's nothing he can do; And so with fervent heart we cry, God bless the friend who just stands by.

—Selected.

24 19 Romans Chapter Fourteen

19 Romans Chapter Fourteen

19. Romans Chapter Fourteen

INTRODUCTION

It is wonderful to behold the beauty of studying the Bible in the light of its harmony and soul-stirring, lifting power. This lesson could be called one of the most important of all to the congregation. We remember the Pharisees' demand that our Lord tell them "when the kingdom of God should come." Our Lord knew well that there is another way of looking at the kingdom, of more importance to the human soul than knowing exactly when it would come—viz., the fact that the kingdom must be in us if we are ever to be saved. (Luke 17:20-21). In this study we will cover Romans 14, beginning with the last verse of chapter 13 and concluding with verse 3 of chapter 15. Hence Romans 14 will be studied in the light of the verse that precedes it and the verses that follow. This is studying it in the light of its context.

HOW TO RECEIVE MEMBERS INTO THE LOCALCHURCH

"Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations"; or, as the American Revised Version gives it, "not for decision of scruples"; the Twentieth Century Translation says, "not for the purpose of passing judgment on their scruples." This certainly is telling us how not to receive members into our local fellowship. Then Paul follows this by speaking of some who believe that they may eat all things, while others eateth only herbs. Paul teaches clearly to let each one be fully persuaded in his own mind and then eat and drink accordingly. He teaches the same about days. Some esteem one day above another, and others esteem every day alike. We are not to receive members into our local fellowship to argue and fuss about such things. Some in the church at Rome were setting aside and condemning others about such matters. Hence, Paul puts these questions to them: "But why cost thou judge thy brother? Or why cost thou set at nought thy brother?" Then he reminds us that we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ and each give an account of himself to God. How well we are doing when we live daily with the certainty of the judgment before us! We are admonished: "Let us not therefore judge [condemn] one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."

A PRACTICAL ADMONITION

"Let not then your good be evil spoken of." How many local churches' influence have been destroyed by party makers who had rather fuss than to be filled with the Spirit of our Lord and love and pray together! Php 2:14-16 reads well right here: "do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life."

People we can receive into local fellowship, but never should they be received for the purpose of doubtful disputations. If it is their desire to come in and set us right on some frivolous or unimportant question, tell them to go their way, that we have orders not to so receive them.

"An heretic after the first and second admonition" we are commanded to reject rather than to retain. (Titus 3:10 : "An heretic" is a factious man--one who seeks to break the local church up into parties. Well should we remember the admonition: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." This is found in Romans 16:17, not very far removed from the very chapter we are studying. The church of our Lord is often brought into disrepute and its influence destroyed by self-willed leaders in the congregation, tearing the congregation asunder over "doubtful disputations," or wrangling over things not essential to our salvation or any line of work our Lord wants the church to do. How fearful is the judgment to come for all such! For does not our God say, "These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: a proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren"? (Proverbs 6:16-19). Get it: there is no sin more hated by our Lord than that of strife and confusion and division among his people. Such destroys the influence of the church for good. For is not the reason for which he prayed, that we all might be one, as he and the Father are one, that the world might come to believe that God sent him? Strife and confusion destroy faith even in many of the members of the local church when they arise, and they prevent faith from ever being established in the hearts of those out of the church who behold the divided condition of the church.

THE GROUNDS FOR THE EXHORTATION

"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Staying with the context, Paul simply states that the kingdom of heaven does not consist of these things over which some were judging others and setting them at nought. Righteousness can be made a test of faith. Those who destroy the peace of the church can be disciplined, and should be. Joy in the Holy Spirit can be made a test of faith. These are vital things, and no one should be set at nought except over these vital things. Anyone who is wrong here is fundamentally wrong, and the local church has to take cognizance of such.

It would be well that we study Paul's letters to the church at Corinth. That church certainly had many evils in it. But as you study, you do not find Paul instructing other churches to disfellowship that church because of these evils. He certainly endeavored to get the evils out, and condemned them in no uncertain way. But he did not tell the ones who had made the mistake of saying, "I am of Paul," to disfellowship those who said, "I of Apollos; and I of Cephas." The fact of the business is, this letting a preacher have too high a regard in the heart was condemned, and our Lord was presented as the essential being to exalt. It is too sad today that some judge you to be sound or unsound, not because of your loyalty to Christ, but your loyalty to this preacher or that one. I speak this to the shame of those who claim to have fallen in with the effort to restore the true church to the people. This tendency to be too quick to disfellowship, to blacklist, is an evil that has come among us. The church at Corinth had some among them, though claiming that Christ arose from the dead, who were not very well established in the faith of a general resurrection; hence, 1 Corinthians 15 is called the "resurrection chapter." Read it. Even those members were not ordered out of the church. And with this before us, think of the little things over which churches split today

and for which brethren disfellowship brethren. It is a crime that cries to the highest heaven. The only sins for which the church at Corinth was instructed to withdraw fellowship are named in chapter 5—viz., fornication, covetousness, idolatry, railing, drunkenness, extortion. Learn what each of these words means. Take the railer. Who is he? The meaning of "railing" is: "To use scornful, insolent, or abusive language; to scold." Well, that gets by in these days in the church.

A STUDY OF THESE TERMS

Righteousness. David says, in Psalms 119:172, "For all thy commandments are righteousness." This being true, any teaching therefore that leads us to even feel indifferent toward obedience to any one of his commandments, cannot be from God, but rather from Satan. This means all of God's commandments. There is not one command given to us today that we may pick out as a little or unimportant command. Our meat and drink, spiritually speaking, must consist of, from the heart, doing as best we can everything God says for us to do. His word to us must be sweeter to our souls than honey is to our mouth. His word to us must be more precious than the finest of gold. (Psalms 119:103; Psalms 119:127). This is the kind of righteousness of which our Lord's kingdom consists. Think not, for one moment, that you have this righteousness if you are knowingly trampling under foot even one thing our Lord says for us to do.

Peace. Remember this kingdom of our Lord consists of peace. The Head of this church is "The Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6). The angels—a multitude of them—sang at his birth, "on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke 2:1-14). To his disciples he said: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." (John 14:27). The fruits of the Spirit that in us should dwell are "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith." Hence, as members of this church, we must "follow peace with all men," and "as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men." (Hebrews 12:14; Romans 12:18). We must seek peace and pursue it. (1 Peter 3:11). The members of this kingdom—that is, the true members—are governed by that wisdom that is from above that is "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." (James 3:17-18). And above all, true citizens of this kingdom are "peacemakers" and they have the blessings of our Lord pronounced upon them. (Matthew 5:9).

Joy in the Holy Spirit. There is a joy that is unspeakable for the true citizens of this kingdom. (1 Peter 1:8). And, too, associated with this joy, a peace that goes beyond all understanding. (Php 4:4-7). We are the true church, the book declares, if we hold fast our rejoicing in hope firmly unto the end. Read it in Hebrews 3:6.

WHAT FOLLOWS OUR LIVING AS HERE DIRECTED?

"For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men." Of what things does Paul here speak? "Righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

"Acceptable to God." Could you think of anything more desirable and that means more to a human soul than to be accepted of God?

"Approved of Men." This, too, is very desirable. Our lights for good must shine before men that they, seeing our good works, will be constrained to glorify our Lord. To live lives of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit before them certainly is the only way we can be salt to save

them. Oh, will we not stop letting our good be evil spoken of by biting and devouring each other before an unbelieving and lost world! In studying the model church, or the church in Jerusalem, your attention was called to the fact that it was a popular church in the good sense of that term. Acts 2:47 declares that that church praised God and had "favor with all the people." Where is the congregation whose influence is not felt far and near if in that church righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit are seen and felt?

THE CONCLUSION

"Let us therefore follow after the things which snake for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. " It would be well here to turn to the word "peace" in your concordance and read every reference on it. The peacemakers have the blessings of our Lord resting upon them, and they are called "children of God." As before stated, we are commanded to follow peace with all men. (Hebrews 12:14). We are commanded, as much as in us lieth, to live peaceably with all men. (Romans 12:18). of course, I know there is a peace that God does not want—viz., peace between right and wrong, peace between truth and error. But let us remember that our Lord is called the "Prince of Peace," and that we cannot be his disciples unless we love peace and seek peace and pursue it. If we have the spirit of Christ, we will be peacemakers, and not peace destroyers. In 1 Corinthians 14:26 Paul teaches us, in the local church, to "let all things be done unto edifying. " Every sermon we preach in the local church, every conversation we have with anyone about the work of the local church, should be done with two questions before us: (1) Will what I say promote peace? (2) Will what I say edify? But Romans 13:14 was suggested as the place to begin the study of chapter 14. It is the last verse in chapter 13; hence, is connected directly with chapter 14. And what does it say?

"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." This can only mean to put on the spirit and life of Christ, for these Roman brethren had already put him on in baptism. In receiving others into our local fellowship, receive and treat them, as nearly as poor mortals can, exactly as Christ would receive and treat them. I think it correct to say that Romans 14 goes a long way in teaching us how to put on the life of Christ. This is all the more evident when you read verses 1 to 3 of chapter 15, the words that immediately follow chapter 14. And what are these words? "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me."

Learn to always study whatever chapter, or even a short statement of Scripture, in the light of its context. It has been well said: "Any text of Scripture used out of harmony with its context ceases to be Scripture and becomes only a pretext for Scripture." These may not be the exact words of the one quoted from memory, but they express the thought exactly. We need to stay with the context in all of our efforts to teach others. The context is an infallible commentary on the Scriptures. Use it, and you will have no trouble learning what to do to be saved from your past sins, and also how to live the life in Christ he wants us to live.

25 20 The Most Destructive Famine that Ever has Been

20 The Most Destructive Famine that Ever has Been

20. The Most Destructive Famine that Ever has Been

INTRODUCTION

Reading Amos 8:11, we have these words: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord."

As to the exact time of this famine, I think there can be no doubt. Prophecies often have the setting or circumstances under which they are to be fulfilled. For instance, take Isaiah 35:3-10 as an example. This looks forward to the time when God would come (in the person of his Son—1 Timothy 3:16) and save his people. Note that it says that then, at his coming blind shall see, the deaf hear, the lame walk, and the tongue of the dumb sing. And what a flood of light this throws on John the Baptist's seemingly doubting, was recorded in Matthew 11:2-6. From John 1:29-34, you would judge that he had seen enough evidence to convince him that Jesus was the promised Messiah—and he was convinced—and he introduced Jesus to his own disciples as the one he had been telling them would come after him. But John the Baptist knew the old Testament prophecy, and knew that when the Messiah did come these signs would accompany him. Christ performed no miracles before his baptism; John was cast into prison shortly after baptizing Christ; hence, had never seen these signs. Note the significance of our Lord's answer: "Go and tell John the things which ye have seen and heard; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear," etc. This forever satisfied John. These things were to be done by the Lord, and these very things he was doing.

Reading Luke 7:18-23, you learn that some of these miracles were performed right before the two men John had sent to Jesus with the question: "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?"

Just so with this prophecy concerning this famine. By reading verses 4-6, you find some of the Jews asking when their Sabbath would be gone, thinking that when the Sabbath was removed they would be left without any law, hence do as they please. Jehovah had declared that he would remove the Sabbath, and they thought if he did this, they would be left without any restrictions thrown about them, and they wanted this, just as many today do not desire to be under rules and regulations. But when you read verse 9, you find God telling them exactly when the Sabbath would be gone—viz., "And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day." By reading Luke 23:44-45, you learn that the sun ceased to shine at noon on a perfectly clear day when Christ was dying on the cross. Now read Colossians 2:14-16, and the question is settled that the time the Spirit had in mind when this famine was to be on would be the coming of Christ. And to make this more evident, note what is said in Amos 9:8-12. The Jews were scattered to the four winds of the earth at the destruction of Jerusalem, the tabernacle of David was rebuilt as this prophecy declares would be

done at the first coming of Christ. As proof of this read Acts 2:29-36; Acts 15:13-18.

THE FAMINE DEFINED

1. Let us note what it was not to be. "Not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water." That is, the prophet here has not in mind a famine that has to do with the needs of the body. And it was not to be a famine of God's word. They would have all of the word of God then in existence right in their homes and in their places of worship.

2. The kind of famine it would actually be. It was to be a famine "of hearing the words of the Lord."

THIS WAS THE CONDITION OF GODS PEOPLE WHEN CHRIST CAME

The Jews had all of the word of God that had been revealed unto men. "For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day." (Acts 15:21). Yes, the Jews had all of the old Testament, beginning with Genesis and ending with Malachi—thirty-nine books.

But there was a famine of hearing the words of their own Bible. This was the sole cause of their not receiving Christ and having him put to death as an impostor. "For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him." (Acts 13:27). Here it would be well to read John 5:39-40 from the Revised Version: "Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me; and ye will not come to me that ye may have life."

And it will not be amiss to read this from Weymouth's translation: "Ye search the Scriptures, because you suppose that in them you will find the life of the ages; and it is those Scriptures that yield testimony concerning me; and yet ye are unwilling to come to me that you may have life." So it is easily seen that there is no famine of the word; they have the word, all of it, in their synagogues, and it is read to

them every Sabbath. But they do not hear it, and why? Because the famine is on, the most hurtful famine that any human soul could possibly have—viz., of hearing the word when it is read right into their ears. They have ears but hear not, and there is a cause for all of this.

WHAT BROUGHT THIS FAMINE ON THEM?

The traditions of the elders, the doctrines and commandments of men. "And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition." (Mark 7:9). The traditions of men had been mixed with their teaching of the law; they had made additions and subtractions, a thing they were positively commanded not to do. (Deuteronomy 4:2). Hence, much of their worship was vain because directed, not by the law, but by the doctrine and commandments of men. "Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Mark 7:7). The study here could be extended, but this will suffice to give one of the causes of this famine of hearing.

Then they were ignorant of their own law. It had been given to them to study, to read, and this they had failed to do. "Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read: no one of these shall fail." (Isa. in 16). But they had not done this. In Hosea 4:6, we have these words: "My people are

destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children." Hence, Peter says to them, in Acts 3:17, "And now, brethren, I know that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers"—viz., they put Christ to death in this ignorance and put many of the apostles to death, believing at the time that they were doing God's service. (John 16:1-2).

EXEMPLIFICATIONS

Christ was born under the law (Galatians 4:4-5), and lived perfectly and taught perfectly the law. This naturally made his teaching and conduct both sound strange and look strange to the Jews. They had a corrupted and perverted idea of the law. They had been taught a "strange doctrine." This made the true teaching sound strange to them. Do you see? Though the law was read to them in their synagogues every Sabbath, the true meaning of the words were deflected when they came in contact with their traditions and doctrines and commandments of men, and they could not hear it. They searched their own Scriptures believing correctly that those Scriptures would lead them into the way of life everlasting (2 Timothy 3:15), and yet they could not see the very one whom God had sent in perfect fulfillment of their own Scriptures. How this should drive home to our hearts the importance of studying for ourselves, and the danger of having traditions and the doctrine and commandments of men and being prejudicially wedded to these doctrines.

One of their traditions was that when the Messiah came you could not tell from whence he came. Did they not say: "Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is." (John 7:27). With this tradition in their souls and the fact that they knew where Christ was born and where he grew from boyhood to manhood, this, to them, was proof positive that he could not be the true Messiah. This falsehood produced a famine of hearing.

They also had a false idea of the Sabbath. It was made for man's good. Hence, when the welfare of man was at stake, the laws of the Sabbath could be set aside to meet this need. Study what our Lord says in Mark 2:23-28. Their doctrines and ideas of men that they had added to the Sabbath teaching made Jesus continually look to them as a Sabbath-breaker, hence he was judged as a false teacher. And go right on through the whole life of Christ among the Jews. Though they had all of God's word that our Lord came to fulfill, they saw him continually violating it because they heard his teaching through their perverted ideas of its teaching. They were like a man looking at a white piece of paper through green glasses. Of course, the paper looks green. But if only the glasses were removed he could see it then as it indeed is.

CONDITIONS AMONG US TODAY

Is there a famine of God's word today? Most certainly not. Go to every pulpit and home in our land where you find souls who believe the Bible contains God's will to man, and you will find a Bible beginning with Genesis and closing with Malachi for the old Testament—thirty-nine books—and you will find this followed by the New Testament, beginning with Matthew and ending with Revelation—twenty-seven books—or sixty-six in all. Is this not true? So there is no famine of the word among us; we have the word.

But what about hearing this word, The Baptists read it and hear it one way, the Methodists read it and hear it another way, so do the Presbyterians, and all other religious bodies who are governed in their study by their own creeds, confessions of faith, traditions, and doctrines and

commandments that their leading men have gotten up. Here is our whole trouble today. A famine of hearing is on, and it has come about exactly as it came about among the Jews.

And think how much we are like them! Did not Christ tell them that they searched the Scriptures because that in these Scriptures they thought they had eternal life, and these very Scriptures revealed him as the true Messiah and they were rejecting him as such? Do not all of these churches search the Scriptures, claiming that these Scriptures contain their doctrines and justify their respective organizations, and those very Scriptures teach as plain as day that our Lord built only one church, his church, and he wants us all to be one as he and the Father are one? (Matthew 16:13-19; John 17:20-21; 1 Corinthians 1:10 : Ephesians 4:1-6; Romans 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; 1 Corinthians 12:20, John 10:16).

Perhaps this story will better exemplify the lesson. In a revival in which the oneness of God's people, the plea for unity, was made the leading thought, a professor who was in attendance, challenged the thought with the contention that we cannot see the Bible alike. Said he: "John 3:8 forever settles this, 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.' " Said the minister to that professor: "Do you really believe exactly what that Scripture says?" "Most certainly I do," was his reply. Then the minister took out his Testament and read it to him slowly, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Said he to the professor: "There it is, just as plain as day; but, professor, I dare say that you have never seen it nor heard it." "The very idea," he exclaimed. "Don't you think I can read?" "No," said the minister, "with your present ideas on the new birth, you cannot hear that Scripture, you cannot see it. Take this book and read it slowly to me." This he did and at the conclusion the minister quoted it to him slowly and said: "Do you believe this Scripture exactly as you here find it?" "There cannot be any doubt about it," he exclaimed. Then the minister said: "No, you believe that the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is the birth of the Spirit. " And notwithstanding the fact that the minister had read it to him, and he himself had read it with his own eyes and the minister had quoted it in full twice, the professor grabbed at the Testament and exclaimed: "Does it not say

that? "

He had heard that the birth is like the wind each time because he had been taught it from childhood, when it says nothing about the new birth being like the wind, but that the one born again is like the wind. There is an inward man and an outward man. (See 2 Corinthians 4:16-18). The inward man is like the wind; he can be felt and his effects can be seen, but he is spoken of as one of "the things which are not seen." (2 Corinthians 4:18). There is a tree standing out there in a twenty-acre field. You can see the wind blowing it as though it would be broken at the ground; but you cannot see the wind. Let that tree represent the outward man and the wind the inward man. In every conversion you will see the inward man coming to control and bring the outward man under. See Philip and the eunuch riding along in that chariot? (Acts 8:29-39). You see the chariot stop and the men walk down into the water and the eunuch is buried in the water and resurrected therefrom. Though you see the outward man bending and yielding obedience to the inward or unseen man, yet you cannot see this man. The new birth is for this inward man, this unseen man.

This is the man that is born again. This inward man goes out of the kingdom of this world into the kingdom of Christ and his name is written in heaven, but you cannot see this man. You see only the effects of this inward man, guided by God's word, over the outward man. And not only is this true of such plain Scriptures as those that teach the importance of the new birth and of what it consists, but take baptism and its importance as seen in Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:1-5. The human heart has been filled with traditional ideas about baptism being an outward form of an inward grace, and really has nothing to do with our salvation. They simply cannot hear nor see these plain-as-day Scriptures so long as these errors are in their hearts to deflect the rays of God's truth.

There is but one way for us to keep from being cursed with the famine of hearing the words of our Lord, and that is to read it as though we had never read it before, to lay aside all preconceived ideas and notions and let the word have its own way in our hearts.

Go back and study again the children of Israel. They were God's chosen people. They had the word of God entrusted to them. But they allowed their leaders to bring in their own traditions and ideas, and they were believed as though they were the pure word of God. Thus their eyes were so blinded that they could not see. In connection with this statement, study Matthew 15:9; Matthew 15:12-14.

Let us close this study with the following words from Paul, in Galatians 1:6-9 : "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another [that is, not in its entirety; but simply a perversion of the true gospel]; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. [A perverted gospel is tantamount or equivalent to another gospel.] But though we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

Such is stealing God's word from the people. It is a high crime before God. "I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal my words every one from his neighbour." (Jeremiah 23:20, Let us stand with Solomon who said: "Buy the truth; and sell it not." (Proverbs 23:23).

ELEMENTS OF CHURCH STRENGTH

Loyalty to the truth of God's word. Bible teachings respecting salvation, character, and duty are the standards by which the church is to be governed in accomplishing its mission. A church faithful to the truth will be blessed by the truth.

Intelligent Christian living. It is good to have and believe the truth. It is better to live it. The church that lives well will succeed well.

Activity in service for Christ. The church becomes strong by practice. Putting forth strength is the way to gain strength The church that serves God he will honor. The working church wins.

Fidelity to the church. Fidelity to its worship, work, officers, membership, and its good name.

Unity. "In union there is strength." If unity and brotherly love prevail the church is irresistible.

Systematic and liberal giving. The church that gives will get. A liberal church is likely to be strong spiritually and every other way. —Selected.

26 21 Something Supremely Important

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Something Supremely Important

"But to keep the commands of God is everything" is the Twentieth Century translation of 1 Corinthians 7:19 b. Others so translate it. There can be no doubt that to translate it this way gives us, in our language, the thought in the original Greek.

EVERYTHING

"Everything, " of course, when used in reference to a group of objects, means every individual thing in that group. But in the Scripture we are studying it means "Something Supremely Important. " "obedience " to God's commands is just that.

There are some other statements that naturally come in here for consideration.

"And the world passeth away, and the just thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. "(1 John 2:17). "Doing the will of God" then connects us with that "age-abiding life" or eternal life. And the will of God is expressed in the most unmistakable terms in Matthew 7:21 : "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." And the will of the Father is placed before us too plain not to be seen. Speaking from the cloud, on the mount of transfiguration, God says: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. " It is God's will then that we hear Christ. God had prophesied through Moses, about fifteen hundred years before, that he would send a prophet from Abraham's seed, and that it would be a dangerous thing not to hear him. Let us read Peter's application of this prophecy: "Moses indeed said, A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me; to him shall ye hearken in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you. And it shall be, that every soul that shall not hearken to that prophet, shall be utterly destroyed from among the people." (See Deuteronomy 18:18-19; Acts 3:22-23).

Now, with all the above before you, note carefully the following words from Christ himself: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I spake not from myself; but the Father that sent me, he hath given me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life eternal." (John 12:48-50). Does not this read very much like hearing and doing what our Lord says is our only hope of life eternal?

WHAT IT MEANS TO HEAR JESUS

The Bible teaches, without any kind of doubt, that man at his very best sins. If this is not true, what can the meaning of the following Scriptures be: (1) "There is none holy as Jehovah" (1 Samuel 2:2); (2) "For there is no man that sinneth not" (1 Kings 8:46); (3) "Who can discern his errors?" (Psalms 19:12); (4) "Surely there is not a righteous man upon [the] earth, that doeth good, and

sinneth not" (Ecclesiastes 7:20, (5) "For in many things we all stumble" (James 3:2); (6) "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.... If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 John 1:8; 1 John 1:10 :

So it is correct to say that man, at his best, sins in some way, though he may not be conscious of it. Man, then, must feel his need of Christ every moment of his stay here on earth after being baptized into Christ. He must ever look to Jesus as his only hope and for perfection. Study Colossians 1:28; Colossians 2:10 : Romans 8:1; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 1:7; Revelation 14:13; 1 John 5:10-11.

But the Bible teaches just as clearly as it teaches what we have given in the above paragraph, that those who knowingly trample under foot one command of our Lord are not the obedient ones that Christ died to save. (Hebrews 5:9). To knowingly refuse to hear Christ in one thing is equivalent to not hearing him at all. Or to put it a little differently:

PARTIAL OBEDIENCE IS DISOBEDIENCE

We have done well in teaching this principle to our religious neighbors and to aliens. It is hoped that we will learn it just as well in its application to ourselves. Now to the proof of this proposition we direct your hearts.

Saul Is an Example. Turn to 1 Samuel 15:1-23 and read it thoughtfully. The command is easily seen and understood: "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." Was it possible for Saul not to have known the content of this command?

How nearly did he come to doing all the word of the Lord- in this command? Human reason would say he did practically all of it. Jehovah spake differently. He destroyed every Amalekite on earth except old Agag the king. The best of the sheep, and the oxen, and of the fatlings, and of the lambs, and all that was good were preserved to sacrifice unto God at Gilgal. And such offerings were in order under the law at that time; but there was no room in the command for any such things to be saved for such purposes.

Study the words finally put to Saul after he contended that he had obeyed the voice of the Lord. "Hash the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king." If this does not prove that partial obedience, when knowingly engaged in, is no obedience at all, what could prove it? It is downright rebellion. Could you think of anything worse?

But more proof. Let us now study together very prayerfully the following words: "Howbeit if ye fulfil the royal law, according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well.

.. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all. " Now do you believe this? This has reference to our doing all the law says with the exception of just one command, and we knowingly trample it under foot. This is rebellion to God. God says that such are as guilty as if they had violated all he says. Then he illustrates with these words: "For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou cost not commit adultery,

but killest, thou art become a transgressor of the law." Is that not plain enough?

May we know we are saved and safe? Most certainly we can. But how? By examining our own hearts and seeing if we are knowingly setting aside one thing our Lord wants us to do. The book says so, and it is right: "And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." (1 John 2:3-5). You know that you know him, because you know that you are not knowingly rebelling against a single commandment of God. How else can you know it?

SELF-EXAMINATION Are we not commanded in 2 Corinthians 13:5, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates." Now for some questions:

If Christ is really in you, would you and could you knowingly refuse to obey one thing he says for you to do? Would not your knowingly trampling under foot one command, drive him from your heart? A reprobate is one "abandoned as hopelessly wicked." Is there not a warning to us here? If we receive not the love of the truth, God will send a working of error into our hearts that we may believe a lie and be damned.

(2 Thessalonians 2:10-12). Perhaps this lie, in many cases, is our coming to think we are saved when we are not saved.

Does not Romans 4:12; Romans 4:16 declare that the promise is to those who are "of the faith of Abraham," or walk in the steps of the faith that Abraham had? Was not his faith a faith that believed everything God said and tried to do everything God said, it mattered not how painful it was to him?

Can you and do you knowingly lie on your neighbor? Are you even careless about whether what you say about others is true or false? Does not our Lord say, "All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" along with "whosoever loveth and maketh a lie"? (Revelation 21:8; Revelation 22:16). Can Christ dwell in a heart that will knowingly lie?

Do you hate everything you know is evil and abhor it and abstain from even the appearance of evil? (Study Psalms 97:10 : Romans 12:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:22).

There are plain directions how we should go about saving a brother in error. (See Galatians 6:1). There are plain directions about how to conduct yourself toward those who sin against you. (See Matthew 18:15-17). How have you been treating these Scriptures? It matters not if you have been baptized a thousand times, what good will it do you if you knowingly trample under foot such plain-as-day teaching?

Does it not say: "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him." This can have reference to only those who knowingly sin. And it further says: "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." How are you walking? (1 John 3:6; 1 John 2:6).

Paul says: "For if a man thinketh himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." (Galatians 6:3). May not one of the delusions contained in the warning in 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12). be the fact we deceive ourselves into the idea that we are saved when we

are not? What truth is it that we may refuse to love and obey that carries not this danger? How do we know we have passed from death unto life? (See 1 John 3:14). Do you really love the brethren? Does he not say that he that hateth his brother is a murderer; and we know no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him? Is this true? (See 1 John 3:15).

Then you go to 1 John 4:20-21 and we have the following words: "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also."

These words are too plain to be misunderstood. And the following words from our Lord should be studied here: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John 13:34-35).

Very well, let us now drop back to Galatians 6:1 and read it: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." How much of this is done? Is it not true that leaders rush to the papers criticizing this error in this brother and that brother, and, perhaps, has seen him a dozen times a month and not one time has one thing been said to him in a face-to-face talk about the error? Is this love? Is this the spirit of our Lord? Will such conduct on the part of leaders get by in the judgment? And go now to Matthew 18:15-17. Does this not say as plain as day if a brother trespass against thee that you go to him alone and talk it over? This is the first step. If he will not hear thee, then take one or two more; and you should be careful to take the one or two more who love him and are interested in him as they are in you. And if you fail in this second effort, take it to the church. What is the rule here, so far as the general practice is concerned? Well, to talk it to one or two or a dozen or more to this brother's back, and work up all the feelings against him you can? Is it not strange that even elders of the church and publishers of religious journals too often actually join in with members of the church in violating the plain-as-day teaching of our Lord here? Listen: You are a rebel yourself when you let the brother who claims he has been mistreated come to you and talk about the second party. Tell him that he is going at it wrong, to go to the brother who has sinned against him first, then come and get you and you will help him if this brother will not hear him. This is right.

You had as well stand with the Methodists, who have perverted the gospel in God's order by putting baptism, then teaching, then faith, then repentance, as they certainly do when they baptize babies and later teach them, as to change God's order here in the way you go about getting a brother to correct his wrongs against you. If not, why not? Would we not do well to remember: "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" (Numbers 23:19). In conclusion, may I not ask: Is it not true that if some of us get by in the judgment, God would have to lie in letting us get by? Will he do this? Are not the principles we have studied in this lesson just as binding on us as they are on sectarians and aliens? The very fact that we are capable of showing others this principle when teaching the law of pardon to aliens is proof positive that we know it ourselves, hence when we apply not this principle to our own way of treating each other, we come under the following condemnation:

"Wherefore thou art without excuse, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest dost practice the same things." (Romans 2:1).

A MORNING WISH The sun is just rising on the morning of another day. What can I wish that this day may bring to me? Nothing that shall make the world of others poorer, nothing at the expense of other great but just those few things which in their coming do not stop with me, but touch me rather as they pass and gather strength:

1. A few friends who understand me, and yet remain my friends.
2. A work to do which has real value without which the world would feel the poorer.
3. A return for such work small enough not to tax untruly anyone who pays.
4. A mind unafraid to travel, even though the trail be not blazed.
5. An understanding heart.
6. A sight of the eternal hills and unresting sea, and of something beautiful the hand of man has made.
7. A sense of humor and the power to laugh. A little leisure with nothing to do. A few moments of quiet, silent meditation.
8. The sense of the presence of God. And the patience to wait for the coming of these things, with wisdom to know them when they come.

27 22 God's Image Restored

22 God's Image Restored

22. God's Image Restored

Going back to the very beginning, we find our God saying: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." And in pursuance to this declaration he says: "And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him." (Genesis 1:26-27). That man, by transgression, lost that image, or, to a large extent, marred it, I presume, is universally admitted by all religionists among us. The great question before us today is the restoration of this image. The Bible talks about our needing to be "born again," must be if we ever see God. (John 3:3-7). our Lord speaks of "The Regeneration" in Matthew 19:28. Paul says: "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now... waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." That is, the "whole creation" is waiting for the new heavens and the new earth, at which time we will have given unto us new bodies in which to live forever in God's presence, when the "lost Eden" shall be restored to us in its greatest glory, and we shall see the face of our Lord. Study Romans 8:19-23; Revelation 21:1-7; Revelation 22:4.

How that lost image is restored to us, even now, is the practical question before us. That this can be done only through Christ, the following words clearly indicate:

"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Corinthians 4:3-6).

Please note how beautifully this Scripture harmonizes with the words of our Lord: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father;... I am in the Father, and the Father in me." (John 14:9-11).

Note that Christ came "to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Let us here raise the question: What is the glory of God? It is the character of God. About this there can be no doubt. Go with me back to Exodus 3:13-15 and study it. When God appeared to Moses to send him to deliver Israel from bondage, Moses stated that Israel would ask for his name. Do you remember Jehovah's reply? He said tell them: "I AM THAT I AM." Study this as long as you please, and what do you learn? You can learn nothing other than that God's character is God's name. He is exactly what he is. Do you know of any other glory that he has or could have? This is the glory of Christ; viz., his character, his life among men. This is the way he revealed God unto men and glorified the Father in heaven. Hence, "Look at me," he would say, "in all that I do and say, in my attitude toward persons, things, and conduct, and you see God's feelings and his attitude toward these things." That this is the how we are restored to the lost image can hardly be doubted. THE TEXT THAT PROVES IT

"But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit." (2 Corinthians 3:18). Perhaps the most literal or exact translation would be worded: "We all, with unveiled face, reflecting in a mirror the glory of Christ (the character of Christ) are changed into the same image. This tells exactly how it is done. It is by our seeing that lost image in this mirror, and having that image reflected back that our own minds and hearts are changed into the same image. It is not possible for us to become like something we do not know, some unheard-of and unseen character. We must come to know God, to see him as he is. Jesus our Lord came into this world to reveal him unto man. But remember that all of this has reference to character- likeness and not physical likeness.

WHAT IS THIS MIRROR?

It is the word of God, the teaching of our Lord that he lived before the people while here. Here is a fact that means it all to us; hence, we must learn it. Let US introduce a few Scriptures that prove this beyond a doubt. We can see God only in his word. Out of his word we cannot know him as to his character. In the great book of nature, we find abundant proof of his existence, but there we cannot learn his character. Paul says: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." (See Romans 1:20, But the book of nature does not reveal God's character. We must come to the gospel of Christ, which Paul says, is God's power to save.

1. We go to John 1:1-4; John 1:14 : "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men." "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory [character], the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

Now with this before us, how can we think of separating God and his word? It cannot be done. We see God only by looking into his word. In it we see his character; what he is, and wants us to be. But his Son is God's word incarnate or presented in the life he lived while in the flesh.

But let us look at another Scripture. In Hebrews 4:12-13 I want you to see how the Holy Spirit in speaking glides out of the Word into Christ himself. Look closely as we read: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. "

Most certainly you can see from this reading that. the eternal God and our Lord, the Judge of all the earth, is right here in the word. Do you wonder, then, that yonder at the judgment, the book will be opened, and we will be judged by the things written in this book? This is why we dare not add to God's word or take from it. This is why it would damn an angel if he undertook to preach another gospel. It would be equivalent to trying to add to God and take from God, or to preach another Christ.

But that in this word is his image proven beyond a doubt when we read this Scripture: "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled in them that perish: in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel of the glory [character] of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. Seeing it is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory [character] of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Corinthians 4:3-6). Says Jesus in John 1:18 : "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

But the point in the Scripture just given is that this image, glory, or character of God is to be seen only in the teaching of our Lord, or the gospel of Christ. The needed thing today, both to the church and those who are not members of the church, is to teach them of God, to let the people see him as he is in the Scriptures pictured to us. "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." (John 6:45). To know God always means obedience to God.

I fear we have been missing the meaning of 1 John 2:3-4 : "And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." The exact point is this, namely: That heart that comes to know God will obey God. If you think you know him and are knowingly leaving undone his commandments, you are simply deceived. Remember our Lord says: "Every man therefore that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." How important, then, is it that we know God.

THE IMAGE TRANSFERRED

Now the practical thought to us is: how is that image—lost or marred, if you please—we find here in the "gospel mirror" transferred to our own hearts and made a part of us? We have the Scripture that tells how it is done, and here it is from the American Revised Version: "Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves. For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing." (James 1:21-25).

Now, why is this? Just because a mere knowledge of the theory or character of Jehovah is not enough. The image is transferred from this gospel mirror to our own hearts in obedience. This is exactly the thought in I Cor. 7:19: "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but the keeping of the commandments of God." For when we see the truth in the mirror there, then obey it, the imprint is made, the negative, as we sometimes call it, is taken.

Now this cannot be too well seen. I not only want you to see it, but feel it. The man who looks into this gospel mirror and obeys not what he there sees and learns is like the man who looks into the glass and straightway forgets how he looks. But what about the man who looks into the gospel

mirror and continues to look, being not one who forgets, but does and lives what he there learns? He does not straightway forget what manner of man he is. Friends, we can see our Lord as he is in character in his teaching; but his likeness we cannot establish in our own hearts without doing as we learn. Whenever we see there a single characteristic, by obedience we take the brush, as it were, and make another stroke upon the canvas of our hearts in perfecting and developing therein this likeness.

Only those who get in the doctrine of Christ and abide there have both the Father and the Son. "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son." (2 John 1:9). And why is this? Because the image of God and his Son is to be found in the word, not out of it. And when we discover this image in the gospel mirror and begin to live and act like it, we begin to grow into the likeness of what we there see. It is the Spirit's part to change our nature into the divine nature or likeness. Our part is to learn and obey. We "are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord," the good book says, and I know nothing other than to believe the book is right.

SOME THINGS GOD CANNOT DO

1. It is impossible for God to lie. Talking about the two immutable things upon which God's promise to us rests, the writer of Hebrews says that one of them is the fact that it is "impossible for God to lie." (Hebrews 6:17-18). Have you noted how hard our God is on liars? James clearly indicates that it is easy to make mistakes with the tongue. "If any stumbleth not in word, the same is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also." (James 3:2). But this way of knowingly and consciously telling things you know to be false, or telling them before investigating to see if they are true, just will not do. And those who help to circulate such falsehoods will go down to death with the liars that started them. "All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." (Revelation 21:8). Do not try to justify yourself by saying your lie is just a little "white lie," or that you were told it by "so and so." All liars get all of them—those who peddle lies as well as those who start them. Remember that "whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" shall have their part with dogs and sorcerers and whoremongers. Bad company, but not too bad, unless God has made a mistake in putting them together. (Revelation 22:15). We are wont to quote Proverbs 6:16-19 and drive a lesson home to the hearts of our religious neighbors for causing divisions with their doctrines and commandments of men. And well that we do this. Let us remember while doing this that one of those hateful, abominable things in God's sight is "a Lying tongue" or "a false witness that speaketh lies." Solomon says in Proverbs 10:18, American Revised Version: "He that hideth hatred is of Lying lips." Then to go along and associate with people, making them think that you love them, that you are their friends, when deep down in your heart there is hatred, simply means you are a living, walking lie. Too bad, indeed! But the question is: Is this image of God in you, and is it developing in such a heart? To ask the question answers it. How important, then, that we "let dove be without hypocrisy," or pretense, as we are commanded in Romans 12:9.

AT WORK IN THE DEVELOPING ROOM In the new birth the idea of the negative being taken and then developed in our life and in the church is correct. Hence, we now peep into the developing room and there we see what is sometimes called addition and subtraction going on. It is a matter of growing, putting off things of the flesh and putting on things of the Spirit. We close the study with

the exact words of the Holy Spirit. He is talking to those who have just been raised from the waters of baptism into the life in the church. We read Colossians 2:12; Colossians 3:1-14 : "Having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead." "If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory. Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry; for which things' sake cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience: wherein ye also once walked, when ye lived in these things; but now do ye also put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, railing, shameful speaking out of your mouth: lie not one to another; seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings, and have put on the new man, that is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him: where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond man, freeman; but Christ is all, and in all. Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so do ye: and above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness."

Keep these things in mind and continue with us in what is to follow in the next chapter. It is not so much doctrine, for lack of which the cause of our Lord is suffering; it is a failure to live the life that conversion calls for.

28 23 More About Our Father's Image

23 More About Our Father's Image

23. More About Our Father's Image As has been before stated, when God made man he made him in his own image. "And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him." (Genesis 1:27). But man has fallen and this image has been lost or badly marred. The whole purpose of what we can religion is to restore this lost or marred image. This is the purpose of our Lord being sent into the world. He came "to give the ... knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Corinthians 4:6). our Lord declares: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father;... I am in the Father, and the Father in me." (John 14:9; John 14:11). Again he says: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (John 1:18). There is no question that is more practical than, "what is this image of God that we have lost?"

Different answers could be given to this, but the one answer that includes all others should be found and we can find it. However, there is hardly any need of our hunting for it unless we want it. The fact of the business is you will not hunt for it unless you desire it, and you will not even look at it when shown to you unless you are longing to become more and more like God. David says: "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." (Psalms 17:15). our Lord says: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." (Matthew 5:6). But there is no hope of this being accomplished unless we hunger and thirst for the truth. John says: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John 3:3). The Scripture suggests the idea that the ultimate restoration of the lost image will hardly be completed until our Lord shall come again. It has been well said that in conversion the negative is taken, this negative is developed in the church, the developing room, and the finishing touches are made in heaven, the finishing room.

Hanging on the wall of this "developing room" is a mirror. This mirror is the gospel of Christ, God's power to save. In it we see the likeness of our Lord which is the image of God. This is what Paul means in this most literal translation: "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Corinthians 3:18). And let us remember that glory of Christ means nothing other than the character of Christ. We see the character of Christ in this mirror, and reflect it from this mirror into our own hearts and lives. And as has been suggested before, if you study Exodus 3:13-15, you will find the glory of God is his character and name. When God says: "I AM THAT I AM," he can mean nothing other than that "my name is exactly what I am." There is no pretense—cannot be-- there is no such thing as seeing God and knowing God except by coming to know exactly what he is. He is always THAT, and not even the semblance of something else. But what word comes most nearly, if not absolutely, revealing God to man? This word is:

LOVE

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. " "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." (1 John 4:7-8; 1 John 4:16).

Now that tells it exactly. Let us pick a thought from this reading for special study just here. I have often stated, and want to repeat, that, in conversion, when the negative is taken, brotherly love is there, else your conversion or new birth was an abortion. Do you note that John says: "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. " Now connect this with what Peter says in 1 Peter 1:22-25 : "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.... And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

If this does not establish brotherly love in our new birth, how could it be established there? And when you connect 1 John 3:14-15 with these Scriptures just used, it places it beyond a doubt: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."

Let us stay a little longer with 1 John 4:7-8. Note these words: "Every one that loveth... knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. " In John 17:3 our Lord says: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." - To know God, then, means life eternal. But we have just read that he that "loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." Look at it as long as you please and from whatever angle and you can come to no other conclusion than this— viz., the soul that knows love, knows God, and that soul that has love stamped in his heart has the image of God there. And how true it is to say the same thing of our Lord. When you know Jesus you know love, and so long as you have love abiding in you, you have our Lord there.

God tells us how we know these things. He has not left us to guess about it. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life." (1 John 5:13). And here is what he has written: "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. ". (1 John 2:3-6).

LIGHT But just here let us look at another word that tells us what God is. In 1 John 1:5 it says: "God is light. "

Let us associate the two words, namely, LOVE and LIGHT. We may get a more vivid idea as to why a real Christian is spoken of as "the light of the world." Our Lord, in speaking to his apostles, says: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." (Matthew 5:14). Would you be surprised if we learn that LOVE and only this, in us makes us shine as lights in the world? Is this not exactly what our Lord had in mind when he said, "By this shall all men know that

ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another"? (John 13:35). That love that is the very image of God that stands for God himself gives us that "wisdom that is from above." How could it give us anything else? And that wisdom is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and goodfruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And it saves us from that "wisdom that is from" below, which is earthly, sensual, devilish, producing envy, strife, confusion, and every evil work. (James 3:15; James 3:17). And here is a Scripture that places it beyond a doubt: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life." (Php 2:14-16).

Get it: God is love. The book says so. But God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." If we will become like God in love, we are having the image restored. And to the extent we do this, we are the light of the world and the salt of the earth. But now look for Jesus, see him walking up and down in love as we now study Paul's full description and analysis of love in 1 Corinthians 13.

LOVE ANALYZED

Its Patience. Love suffers long, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Perhaps the best exemplification you can get of this characteristic of love on earth is to look at it yonder in that mother toward her own child. Does it not suffer long? Will it not bear all things and endure all things for her child? And, yes, believeth all things and hopeth all things for that child when not another soul on earth can believe in, and have hope for, her wayward son or daughter. Think of this characteristic of love. God "is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (See 2 Peter 3:9). If we could only see how unworthy we are, with God still loving us and being patient and forbearing with us, we could then get a glimpse of the lost image.

Kindness. "And is kind." Can you not see kindness in all its tenderness and sweetness in our Lord? Have you read the description Solomon gives of a "virtuous woman" in Proverbs 31:10-31, whose price, he says, "is far above rubies"? He says: "She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness." And Micah says: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8). Are you kind? When you look into the gospel mirror and see Jesus, this is exactly what you see.

Generosity. "Love envieth not." Truly did Rochester say: "Envy is a passion so full of cowardice and shame that nobody ever had the confidence to own it." Pliny says: "Envy always implies conscious inferiority wherever it resides." Perhaps nothing shows the littleness of a human soul more than envy. Can you imagine our Lord being an envious soul? Remember we are looking for the lost image. Envy must go if this image is restored in you.

Humility. "Vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up." J. Mason says: "True humility makes way for Christ and throws the soul at his feet." Ruskin says. "I believe the first test of a truly great man is humility." Augustine says: "It was pride that changed angels into devils; it is humility that makes them as angels." Guthrie says: "The Christian is like the ripening corn; the riper he grows the more he bends his head."

Courtesy. "Doth not behave itself unseemly." This simply means good manners. It is never rude, impolite, but becomes all things to all men if by any means it might save a soul. Look at it in the life of Paul. (1 Corinthians 9:19-23). Bouvee says: "The small courtesies sweeten life; the greater ennoble it." "Small kindnesses, small courtesies, small considerations, habitually practiced in our social intercourse, give a greater charm to the character than the display of great talents and accomplishments," declares M. A. Kilty.

Unselfishness. "Seeketh not her own." Emmons says: "Selfishness is the root and source of all natural and moral evils." Spurgeon well says: "Beware of no man more than yourself. We carry our worst enemies within us." And as we have learned before, Jesus puts self-denial right at the beginning of our becoming his disciples. Says he: "If any man will come after me let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (Matthew 16:24). The following poem is worth remembering:

Lord, help me live from day to day
In such a self-forgetful way
That even when I kneel to pray
My prayers shall be for others.

Help me in all things I do,
To ever be sincere and true,
And know that all I'd do for you
Must needs be done for others.

Let self be crucified and slain
And buried deep, and all in vain
May efforts be to raise again
Unless to live for others. And when on earth my work is done
And my new work in heaven's begun, May I
forget the crown I've won
While thinking still of others.

Others, Lord, yes others, May this my motto be:

Help me to live for others
That I may live for thee.

Good Temper. "Is not easily provoked," or as the Revised Version puts it: it "is not provoked. Solomon says: "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." (Proverbs 16:32). Paul says: "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil." (Ephesians 4:26-27). There are things that rightly make us angry. We need self-control that when such things come up we give no place to the devil.

Guilelessness. "Thinketh no evil." It is too sad when about all you exercise your heart in is thinking evil and as peaking evil of others. There are people who are evil-minded, and all they can think are evil thoughts because this is all their evil hearts will give birth to. You cannot imagine our Lord thinking up evil thoughts of others. He saw them and thought of them only as they were.

Sincerity. "Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." There was no evil, sin, or iniquity in which he took pleasure. He abhorred all evil, and shunned its very appearance, and so must we. David says: "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil." But our Lord's greatest joy was to be found in the truth. "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth," are his words in his prayer for his disciples. He loved every word that came from the father and never trampled one word under his feet. Think not that you have his Spirit or image in you when you can knowingly trample under foot one word of our Father. With all this before you, can you not now understand that "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." (2 John 1:9).

WHAT IF HIS IMAGE IN US IS DEVELOPING?

We Will Not Knowingly Sin. "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him." (1 John 3:6). This is what the Bible says, hence we must accept it, else be found making God a liar.

We Can Get an Audience with God. He will hear and answer our prayers. "If ye abide in me," says Jesus, "and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." (John 15:7). Could you think of anything more thrilling than that God is listening when you pray?

We Bear Much Fruit. "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." (John 15:5).

WHEN THE PICTURE IS MARRED

Almost all lovers of art are familiar with Leonardo da Vinci's great picture, "The Last Supper." His biographer tells us that while at work on this great masterpiece the artist quarreled with a man and vowed to take vengeance upon him. While in this vengeful mood he sketched the face of Judas, but when he started to paint the face of Jesus he found he could not give it the expression he so desired until he had gone to the man against whom he had vowed vengeance and sought his forgiveness. When this had been done, he was able to sketch the face of our Lord and finish the picture which proved to be one of his greatest masterpieces and brought him much fame. —Selected.

Let us remember that our Lord is looking to us to paint a picture of him each day as we before others live. This picture cannot be painted correctly if we carry in our hearts hatred, malice, envy, jealousy, or anything else we know to be contrary to the Spirit of our Lord. How truly it has been said: It is an art to say the right thing in the' right place, but far more difficult still to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment." It is just as sinful to sit and listen to the wrong thing that is being said as it is to say it.

29 24 Revealed Sense, Common Sense, Versus Nonsense

24 Revealed Sense, Common Sense, Versus Nonsense

24. Revealed Sense, Common Sense, Versus Nonsense

INTRODUCTION

Great harm has been done to the cause of Christ by those who claims to be its friends because of their substituting

nonsenseforrevealed senseandcommonsense.

When our God says, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 1:18), he says as strongly as it could be said that he has placed in man the power to reason, and that he expects man to use this ability. But remember we are to reason together with God. When we thus- exercise ourselves, we are safe so long as we let God come into the reasoning. Man alone cannot afford to depend on reasoning things out, so far as the welfare of his soul is concerned, for the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jeremiah 10:23).

Go to Acts 6 and you find some claiming that the Grecian widows were being neglected in "the daily ministrations" of food and supplies that they needed. This murmuring must be stopped, hence the twelve apostles called the multitude of the disciples unto them and said: "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables." Therefore, they were commanded to look out seven men to be placed over such work so that the apostles could continue their teaching of the word of God to the people. Just ordinary common sense would suggest that the preaching of the gospel to the people, the ministry of the word, which would save the souls who heard it and received it was of more importance than ministering to the needs of the body. The apostles were perfectly qualified and fitted for the preaching of the word. Men could be found who could not teach the word so well as the apostles, but, perhaps, could serve tables better than they, hence reason demanded that this be done.

Thus enough has already been said to show the thoughtful reader that God expects us to use our heads and hearts in the great work that he has placed before us.

Revealed Sense. By revealed sense we simply mean those things we could never have known had not God revealed them to us. The gospel, God's power to save, is such sense. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." (Romans 1:16-17). I see no need of going into details here. All know that there are many things we could never have known had not God revealed them unto us. This is true of the way in which we should walk; for, as we have already learned, it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps, and there is a way that seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. (Proverbs 14:12). This teaches the importance of our ever taking God's word as a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path.

(Psalms 119:105). We must let his word dwell in us richly (Colossians 3:16), we must lay it up in our hearts that we may not sin against God. (Psalms 119:11).

But with all this we have already learned that God expects us to reason together with him, and that the apostles themselves referred to reason or common sense for some of the things they did and had done.

Common Sense. It should be here understood that common sense is was much God's sense as revealed sense. By this is simply meant that the powers or capabilities that see within us were placed there by our God. He expects us to use these powers or faculties, and we sin against ourselves as well as against God when we fail to do so. Physically speaking, he has given us eyes with which to see, ears with which to hear, lungs with which to breathe, hands with which to work, and feet with which to walk. Every part of the body was given for a specific purpose to be used for man's good and the glory of God. But man must use these things. Man is taught to "labour, working with his hands the thing which is good." (Ephesians 4:28). How often did our Lord say: "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." (Matthew 13:9). Now the same is just as true of the inward or unseen man, as it is with the outward man which is the body in which we live. The faculties, the capabilities of the mind and heart this unseen man, are placed within him to be exercised, to be used, to be developed by use. The writer of the Hebrew letter speaks of "those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." (Hebrews 5:14 b). We have members in the church who have not thought, they have never used their brains and allowed common sense to have a chance in their lives. Congregations today—many of them—lie helpless because of such leadership. There are many things God has told us to do, and has not told us how to do these things. Get it: When God tells us to do a thing, and fails to tell us how, he is saying in thundering tones: Use common sense here! But the sad thought just here is that we too often use nonsense where common sense is supposed to reign.

SOME EXEMPLIFICATIONS

1. We are commanded to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. We are not left to guess what to preach. It is always and ever the gospel of Christ that is to be preached. With Paul, wherever we go, we are "not to know anything, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." (1 Corinthians 2:2) What to preach contains the revealed sense of our God. But will someone tell us how to go? The how is left entirely with common sense. And we are in rebellion to God when we fail to use common sense, a sense he gave us when he made us. There can be but one conclusion here—viz., we use that way of going that common sense suggests and approves. For instance, an emergency call comes for the writer to hurry one thousand miles from where he now is to help save a congregation that is about to go to pieces over a question that he can undoubtedly solve for them. Now he can walk, get on the train, in an auto, or take a plane. Which shall he do? Common sense must assert itself here. If the call is exceedingly urgent, the plane might be the only sensible way to go. But most assuredly common sense would rebel at the thought of his taking his suitcase, hang it on a stick across his shoulder, and start out walking. And if he did, every step would be a step of rebellion against God.

2. If you will study closely Paul's charge to Timothy, you find it is "Preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season" and to be diligent in preaching it in season and out of season. I would suggest that you begin in 2 Timothy 3:14 and read right on through this chapter and down into

chapter 4 through verse 5. This will give you the whole setting of this great charge. But are we told here how to preach it? No, this is left to common sense. There are times—many of them —when this can be best done by writing. And it is just as true that there are times when it can be most effectively done by word of mouth. And the radio today is a most effective way of doing it. I think, however, I have heard of objections to the radio, but those objecting certainly were not using common sense but quite a bit of nonsense in all they had to say. The Sunday School Question, Women Teachers, and Literature. These things should be studied right here. The devil well knows that the thing he has most to dread is the word getting into the hearts of the people Hence, if there are any theories that he can get started that will restrict the teaching, impede its progress, he must get them started. And the most of the confusion over these questions had its birth in his heart, just as all the theories about faith's coming or conversion being effected in some mysterious, miraculous way were started by the devil to get the attention of the people from the word and by these theories steal the word from the hearts of the people to keep them from obtaining saving faith. Study Luke 8:11-12. This Scripture teaches the faith that saves comes from receiving and holding fast God's word, hence the devil is disturbed when the word gets into the heart and he gets busy to get it out. The only way he can get it out is by intruding himself upon that heart with the theory that the word is a dead letter, your heart is totally depraved; hence, you must look to God, pray to God to send you a miraculous impact of the Holy Spirit. to enable you to believe. How well we do need to remember that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17) and that we are begotten and born again by the gospel Paul and Peter preached. Study 1 Corinthians 4:15 and 1 Peter 1:22-23.

Preaching or teaching the word in season has reference to our preaching or teaching it at the designated time and place revealed in the doctrine of Christ. The church is taught to meet on the first day of the week, not only to eat the Lord's Supper, to lay by in store as we have been prospered, and to pray and sing together, but to be taught and to teach and edify each other. (Acts 2:41; Acts 20, 7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Hebrews 10:25; Ephesians 5:18-20; Colossians 3:16). All such teaching is done in season, at a meeting suggested by our Lord, and on the day he has set apart for such. But much that we do in such meetings is left for common sense to determine. For instance, where shall we meet? We are taught to come together in one place (1 Corinthians 14:23), but this place is left for us to select and provide. Also the time to assemble, how long to remain assembled, and whether we begin with a song or prayer is left with common sense. Often I have seen the regular Lord's day worship begin with the whole church praying together. Then I have seen it begin with the congregation standing together and singing, "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name," or some other good old song. But what about this "out of season"? I think our Lord expects us to make opportunities to preach the word. Our revivals conducted at the home church or in a mission under a tent come in here. Our midweek prayer meetings come in here just here let me say that much of our midweek prayer meetings are mere formalities and a farce so far as really edifying and accomplishing any good. In 1 Corinthians 14:26 we are commanded: "Let all things be done unto edifying." This applies to anything we do, at any time or place, in season or out of season.

There were women teachers and helpers in the church in the days of the apostles. Phoebe was a servant of the church at Cenchrea. (Romans 16:1). Paul speaks of women who labored with him in the work. (Php 4:3). He gives special instructions to women -about teaching in Titus 2:3-5. There

are lessons that women can teach women much more effectively than any man can teach them. The duty of the wife to the husband as taught in 1 Corinthians 7:1-5 and how she should conduct herself at home and away from home and rear and care for her children can be better taught the wife by some godly woman.

Doubtless the widows enrolled or taken into the number (1 Timothy 5:9-10 : are widows enrolled as teachers, and they are supported while they teach and help with the work of the church. Something was said about women's work in Lesson X, "The Second Look at the Model." Turn back and review it. The use of literature certainly is one of the ways of teaching. Paul says: "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you." (Php 4:9). As we study and watch this, one of the greatest of all of our Lord's great men, we find him teaching by word of mouth, in his writings, illustrations, and every way he could, and so must we if we follow his example. God has left us no cut-and-dried method of teaching. He expects us to look for opportunities to teach, to make opportunities to teach, and then to go about it in the way common sense will allow. Peoples and communities differ. But if we have in us the Spirit of the Lord and the devotion of Paul, common sense will find the best and most effective way to preach and teach wherever we go. Here we should turn and study 1 Corinthians 9:20-23. Paul became all things to all men that he might by all means save some. It is too bad when one who claims to represent the church of our Lord starts out with a hobby to ride which forces him to try to make all men by all means bow to his hobby, or be cast out as a heretic, unsound and dangerous. Much of this nonsense we have seen among our own brethren.

Revealed sense and common sense never clash. For instance, let us take what revealed sense has to say about receiving people into the fellowship of the local church. Study again what was said in Lesson XIX, "A Study of the Fourteenth Chapter of ROMANS on how we should receive them into our fellowship. Remember it says.: Receive them not for the settling of doubtful disputations or the passing of judgment on their scruples. This has reference to souls who have obeyed the gospel, about which there can be no doubt, and who are living godly lives before the people, and are not interfering with the regular worshipful assemblies, but they have ideas about this and that that they may have and harm no one. God will not refuse them because of these ideas. Now, does not common sense approve strongly what revealed sense in this chapter commands? Making things tests of fellowship that God has not made not only tramples under foot revealed sense, but common sense as well, and goes beyond nonsense and makes those who thus do "destroy the work of God" and sin against Christ.

There is too much of this making laws where God has not made them and binding upon the church the hobbies and teaching of sin- cursed man. Nothing does the church need today more than an eldership that knows this and will arise in the name of our Lord and put a stop to the church wreckers and peace destroyers that have arisen.

A GENTLEMAN AND CHRISTIAN The true gentleman is God's servant, the world's master and his own man. Virtue is his business; study, his recreation. contentment, his rest; and happiness, his reward. God is his Father; Jesus Christ, his Savior; the saints, his brethren. and all that need him, his friends. Devotion is his chaplain. chastity, his chamberlain; sobriety, his butler; temperance, his cook; hospitality, his housekeeper; providence, his steward. charity his treasurer; piety, his mistress of the house; and discretion his porter, to let in or out. as most fit. Thus is his

whole family made up of virtue, and he is master of the house. He is necessitated to take the world on his way to heaven, and he walks through it as fast as he can, and all his business, by the way, is to make himself and others happy.

Take him in two words—a man and a Christian. —Selected.

THE LORDS DAY AND THE LORDS SUPPER

Continuing the consideration of revealed sense, common sense, and non sense, let us think, for a few moments about our Lord's Day Worship.

The command is easily seen, viz. we are commanded to not forsake our assembling to break bread and lay by in store and that this was done on the first day of the week, is just as easily seen. Acts 20, 7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Hebrews 10:25. That Paul refers to the church's claiming to come together to eat the Lord's Supper, but shows by their conduct they could not, is the whole intent of 1 Corinthians 11:20-34. Here there is no room for controversy— the first day of the week is the Lord's Day, it is a memorial day, and they assemble for the Lord's Supper on this day as well as to lay by in store, teach and edify one another. It is one of those "in season" meetings indicated in 2 Timothy 4:2 in which the word is taught.

But where shall the meeting be held? And in what hour shall the assembly come together? And again, how shall the collections be taken? —You know churches have been split by a hobby-rider coming in and saying, "you must go up and lay it on the table, the Bible says nothing about contribution plates or baskets."

Here is where the elders function. It is the duty of the elders or leaders in the local church, to set the best time and place, and to decide how the collections should be taken, who shall teach or preach in a public way. This you know. "And here is where much common sense has to be exercised by these leaders. It is too bad when the leaders substitute non sense for common sense.

But the question arises: Is it wrong for the church to assemble more than once on the first day of the week? Certainly not—they can meet and stay together all day, which I am sure was often done in the days of the apostles, or they can assemble three times on Lord's Day, as is often the case. But will it be right to let the Lord's Table be unspread more than once on this day for the benefit of those who could not be in the first meeting? I would love for someone to cite the scripture that has an intimation of its being wrong. Those who partake of the supper in the second meeting have done no more and no less than those who did so in the forenoon meeting—they partook of the loaf and fruit of the vine in our Lord's memory, and this is all that is required—why can they not do it in one hour as well as another? If the overseers and feeders of the local church think it is just to those who cannot be present in the forenoon to give them that privilege at night, who am I to rise up and say: No, there is no scripture for this? Why not rise up and say: The Bible nowhere says to do this at the noon hour, which, almost as a rule, is the hour we come to the supper. Why undertake to make laws where God has not made them? He has given us a law that puts this in the hands of the leaders—they have the right to fix the hour and place of meeting. This you know. But you say, Those who come at night could have come in the forenoon, and if not, they should be denied this privilege. Where do you get any such instruction in the Bible? But you say, they come at night because it is more convenient for them. Why object to meeting the convenience of the

members? The 11 o'clock hour has been set because it meets the convenience of more people than any other hour. But you say, those who come at night are not as sincere as those who come in the forenoon. But Paul well asked the question: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? for we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." Romans 14:10 : "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." Romans 14:13). Those who eat the supper at night are under the same instructions as those who eat in the forenoon, viz., what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11:27-29. I have taken the supper to the hospitals and homes in the afternoon on Lord's Day when the sick members call for it. This I will continue to do. There are two points to remember: (1) It is the Lord's Supper; (2) It is eaten on the Lord's Day. The time, place and circumstances are left with us. And we dare not bind laws here that God has not made. How important it is that we be silent where the Book is silent.

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