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# Evangelistic Sermons.

By

H. G. HARWARD.



Austral Publishing Co.,  
Melbourne.

## Publisher's Note.

Those who have ever heard H. G. Harward from the public platform know that he makes himself remarkably clear, and that he makes great use of the very words of Divine Revelation. The sermons which this volume contains are both clear and full of the Scriptures of God. To those who may not happen to know, we will say that Mr. Harward is the evangelist employed by the Home Mission Committee of the State of Victoria to conduct (in conjunction with E. W. Pittman as the leader of song) gospel missions in the State.

This is the first effort we have made in publishing a volume of sermons, but we hope that it will be but the forerunner of other volumes by some of our well-known preachers. When the *Australian Christian* was started some seven years ago, it was thought that we had but few, if any, writers amongst us; but now we have the paper filled from week to week with original matter which will compare favorably with other journals of its class. We believe that this volume contains sermons of power and directness of equal merit with many now in the market, and it is barely possible we may discover other fountains of equal clearness and freshness.

A. B. MASTON.

*October, 1905.*

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# The Divine Library.

**T**HE Bible is a book venerable for its antiquity, sacred on account of its character, deeply interesting because of its history, and strongly attractive by reason of the unparalleled sublimity and beauty of its style. In all these respects this book stands alone, being without compeer or rival, being as much superior to other books as are the things of which it chiefly treats superior to the ordinary pursuits of time, and as its Author is to every other being." "It is the only book which spans the arch of time. In its beginning it rests upon an eternity to us past. In its ending it rests upon an eternity to us future."

No other book has been treated like the Bible. It has been abused by its enemies. Unnumbered have been the efforts to destroy faith in the Word of God. Its adversaries have employed every means at their command to nullify the teaching of this grand old book, and to subvert its authority. Time and time again have its days been numbered. The fact of its present existence and influence is conclusive proof of its divine origin and inspiration. These lines of the poet show

how futile have been the efforts to overthrow this divine library:—

“ Last eve I paused beside the blacksmith’s door,  
 And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime ;  
 And looking in, upon the floor, I saw  
 Old hammers, worn with beating years of time.  
 How many anvils have you had, said I,  
 To wear and batter all these hammers so ?  
 Just one, said he, and then with twinkling eye,  
 The anvil wears the hammers out, you know.  
 And so, thought I, the anvil of God’s Word  
 For ages sceptic blows have beat upon ;  
 Yet, though the sound of falling blows was heard,  
 The anvil is unharmed—the hammers gone.”

More serious than the abuse heaped upon this book by its enemies is the fact that it is so frequently misused by its friends. The Bible is made responsible for all the “isms,” fads, fancies, opinions, theories and superstitions of the so-called Christian world. However peculiar or ridiculous the teaching and practice of religious societies in Christian lands may be, it is usually claimed for them that they rest upon the foundation of divine truth. If it be true that all these strange, and oftentimes antagonistic, positions have their origin in the Word of God, then it is, indeed, a marvellous and mysterious revelation. It is only possible, however, to take such a position and to make such a claim by the misinterpretation and misapplication of Scripture. It is related of Toplady, an English preacher of Wesley’s time, that he determined to preach against the prevailing custom among the ladies of fixing the hair in top-knot style upon the head. He diligently searched the Scriptures for a suitable text, and at last

# THE DIVINE LIBRARY.

PATRIARCHAL DISPENSATION, 4004—1491 B.C.  
 JEWISH DISPENSATION, 1491 B.C. to Cross.

FLESHLY COVENANT, Jer. 31 : 31-34.

**OLD TESTAMENT**  
 Or Jewish Scriptures.

CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION,  
 From Cross to End of Time.  
 SPIRITUAL COVENANT.

**NEW TESTAMENT**  
 Or Christian Scriptures.

IT IS FINISHED.

LAW.

HISTORY.

BIOGRAPHY.

HISTORY.

GEN.—DEUT.

5 Books.

JOSHUA—ESTHER.

12 Books.

MATT.—JOHN.

4 Books.

ACTS.

1 Book.

POETRY.

PROPHECY.

TEACHING—CHRISTIANS. PROPHECY.

JOB—S. OF SOL.

5 Books.

ISAIAH—MALACHI.

17 Books.

400 Years.

ROMANS—JUDE.

21 Books.

REV.

1 Book.

WHO SPEAKS ?

TO WHOM SPOKEN ?

WHAT PURPOSE ?

WHAT DISPENSATION ?

found this passage: "Let him that is on the house-top not come down." "Ah!" said the preacher, "I have it"—"*Top not come down.*" Two men were fighting. The one man struck the other, at the same time quoting the words of Jesus, "Whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." This was obligingly done. Then the second man hit back with all his power, saying as he did so, "Give, and it shall be given unto you." A man was reproved by a friend for swearing. He asked what wrong there was in that. "Don't you know," said the friend, "that you are breaking one of the commandments—'Swear not at all'?" "But," replied the accused man, "I don't swear at *all*; I only swear at *some* people." In these illustrations we have the misuse of Scripture.

It is frequently asserted that any teaching or position can be proved from the Bible. That contention is true only so far as the Word of God is misinterpreted and misapplied. If we are permitted to use any method of handling this book, we might readily prove that there is blessing attached to taking our own life. Here are some statements of Scripture:—1. "Judas went out and hanged himself." 2. "Go thou and do likewise." 3. "What thou doest, do quickly." 4. "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." Now join these separate passages together—and we can advocate the rights of suicide. "Judas went out and hanged himself; go thou and do likewise, and what thou doest do quickly. Well done, thou good and faithful servant." To this method of dealing with the Scriptures much of the false teaching and peculiar practice of Christians may be attributed.



In Paul's day there were those who "corrupted the Word of God," who "handled the Word of God deceitfully." Under these conditions he writes to the young evangelist Timothy, "Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the Word of truth" (2 Tim. 2: 15, R.V.). Only so far as he attained to that standard could he be successful as a preacher of the gospel. The workman must know his tools. Men become doctors by studying medicine; lawyers by studying law; navigators by studying navigation. We become efficient servants of God by studying this book, which is the charter of an "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

In our study of this divine volume, we must keep in mind the fact that it is a book on religion. We do not come to it to study the fascinating problems of science, the interesting questions of geography. It is something more than mere history, the record of certain events; it shows how the divine religion was given to man. In the first book—Genesis—covering a period of 2500 years (accepting the ordinary chronology of our Bibles), we have the religion of the individual, family or tribe. God deals with Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their families. The head of the house officiates as priest. From Exodus to the close of the Old Testament canon, we have the record of a national religion—the religion of Israel according to the flesh. Here one tribe, the Levites, is elevated to the priesthood. This national religion continues until the cross (2 Cor. 3; Col. 2: 14, 15), a period of 1500 years. In the New Testament there is revealed a universal religion. This

is to continue until the end of time. In this world-embracing religion all Christians are "an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession."

Many people handle the Word of truth as if it had just dropped from the skies in its completeness as we have it to-day. We must never forget the progressive character of divine revelation. Jehovah made known his will to man gradually. The divine purposes were disclosed only as they could be understood. His revelation was adapted to the condition, need, and attainment of the people whom he addressed. In the revealing of the divine will it has been "first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear"; first the starlight, then the moonlight, then the full-orbed sunlight age of God's truth; or, using another figure, first the trickling rivulet, then the small stream, again the rushing river, and finally the great ocean of a completed revelation. "It may be justly remarked that this growth of religious knowledge through a gradual revelation was not from the false to the true, from the wrong to the right, from a misapprehension of God to a true representation of him; but from the obscure, the fragmentary, and the imperfect, to the clear, the complete, and the perfect."

The messages of the Scriptures have been declared under three great dispensations—first, the patriarchal, from Adam to Moses, a period of 2500 years; second, the Jewish, from Moses to the cross of Christ, a period of 1500 years; and third, the Christian dispensation, from the cross to the end of time, an indefinite period.

The divine will was also revealed in relation to two great covenants—the one made with Abraham and his

seed according to the flesh ; the other, through Christ, with the seed of Abraham according to the spirit. In Jeremiah 31 : 31-34 these covenants are contrasted—the one a fleshly, the other a spiritual, covenant. The Old Testament is related to the former, the New Testament to the latter.

In our study of this great library, it will aid us greatly to keep in mind the questions at the bottom of the diagram. In reading the Scriptures it is necessary to ask, WHO SPEAKS? The Bible is the Word of God, but not all of its words are the words of God. In this book there are the words of the devil, of false prophets and of sinners. In it may be found the opinions and decrees of men, as well as the counsel and command of God. Again inquire, TO WHOM SPOKEN? Is the message to a patriarch, a Jew, an apostle, a Christian or a sinner? Does it belong to you, or only to the one to whom it was specially addressed? A third question will be helpful, UNDER WHAT DISPENSATION? Does the teaching belong to the patriarchal, Jewish or Christian age? Just as we study the literature of the world with reference to, and in the light of, the times in which it was written, so must we do in our meditation on the Book of Books. The fourth question is this, WHAT PURPOSE? There is no pointless argument or message in the teaching of the Word of God. Each writer or speaker had a definite purpose before him. We can scarcely hope to understand the Scriptures unless we know what that purpose was. The purpose makes the teaching plain. The application of these four questions in our study of the oracles of God will solve many problems, answer many questions, explain

many difficulties, fathom many mysteries, and throw a flood of light upon every page of the inspired volume.

The Bible is not one book, but many books, differing from one another in subject matter and literary form. It has but one Author—God—who employed some thirty-six writers in making known his will. "Prophecy came not of old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." These writers were from different positions in life—kings, shepherds, priests, fishermen, and a physician. They wrote at different times; 1600 years separate the first writer, Moses, from the last writer, John. They wrote in different countries, and in different languages—principally Hebrew and Greek. Though presented under these varied conditions, there is such a unity of purpose running throughout this divine library that we can rightly call it—The Book. The two main divisions of the Bible are familiar to us all—the Old Testament, or Jewish Scriptures, and the New Testament, or Christian Scriptures. The Old Testament contains the record of Jehovah's dealings with men during the patriarchal and Jewish ages—a period of 4000 years. The New Testament contains the revelation made known during the first century of the Christian era.

In any properly constituted and well regulated library, we naturally expect to find the books arranged upon the shelves in proper order. The nature and contents of the book determine its position. It is helpful and necessary, in our study of God's Word, to think of it, and to use it, as a library of the world's best literature. We must know the contents of these books. We must be able to separate them into their proper divisions. To

read them intelligently, we must not only bear in mind the fact that they differ in subject matter, but also with reference to the time in which they were written, and the purposes which they were intended to serve. If we fail in these things, we will fail in "handling aright the Word of truth."

There are thirty-nine books in the Old Testament, written by about twenty-eight different writers. Referring to these Scriptures, Jesus said: "These are my words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me" (Luke 24: 44). In the time of Christ this was the three-fold division of the Old Testament writings. I invite your attention, with the help of the diagram, to a four-fold division of these books.

The first five books—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy—are commonly grouped under the title—the Pentateuch, a Greek word which means a five-fold book. In our library we will put them in the division—THE LAWS OF MOSES. Genesis is the book of beginnings. It reveals the origin of the universe, of man, of marriage, of sin, of sacrifice, of redemption and of revelation. It is the seed-plot of the Bible—the introductory book to all Scripture inspired of God. Exodus is the book of departure; it tells of the going out of Abraham's seed from the bondage of Egypt. Here we see a nation called (chapters 1-11), constituted (12-18), consecrated (19-40). In this book is recorded the beginning of that law which was given through Moses. The third book—Leviticus—is the book of worship, as it reveals the laws regulating the people in their approach

to Jehovah. It received its title from the fact that these ceremonies were to be administered by the Levites. The Book of Numbers is so called because the numbering of Israel by the command of God is twice recorded in it. The book gives an account of the journeyings and other experiences of Israel during thirty-eight years of wilderness life. It is the book of discipline. The fifth book of this division—Deuteronomy—has a name which means the second law. The main part of this book consists of discourses delivered by Moses in the plains of Moab prior to his departure from among the people of Israel, and almost forty years from their exodus from Egypt.

The next twelve books—Joshua to Esther—are historical books. We therefore place them in the HISTORY department of our library. Joshua receives its name from the most prominent person in the book. It records the conquest of Canaan, and its division among the twelve tribes. In the next book we learn the history of Israel for more than 300 years under the rule of judges. "The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim." "Nevertheless, the Lord raised up judges which delivered them." These passages explain this book. The beautiful story of Ruth contains a number of romantic incidents which occurred while the judges ruled in Israel. Its purpose is to show the ancestors of David. The books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles narrate the history of the chosen people in their change of government from a Theocracy to a Monarchy. In Ezra we read the account of the return of some of the Jews to Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity, and the

rebuilding of the temple of the Lord. Nehemiah makes known the history of the rebuilding of the walls of the city of David. The last of the historical books—Esther—gives an account of a crisis in the history of the Jewish people during their exile. It reveals the over-ruling providence of God on behalf of an oppressed people.

“In the middle of our Bible, next after the books last mentioned, we find five books—Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon—which are placed without regard to their time of composition. In our Lord's classification of the Old Testament these books are all included under the title—‘the Psalms’—the Book of Psalms being the best known of the five.” Because of the prominence given to questions about wisdom and folly, it is common among scholars to include Job Proverbs and Ecclesiastes under the title—*Wisdom Literature*. As these books are chiefly of a poetic nature, we will classify them as belonging to the POETRY department of this divine library.

The last division of the Old Testament comprises seventeen books of PROPHECY. These are from Isaiah to Malachi inclusive. They were written at different times—some after the Babylonian exile, and others long before it. “They follow one another on the pages of the Bible without regard to the order of time.” There are two divisions of these seventeen books. Isaiah to Daniel are styled the *major* prophets; and Hosea to Malachi the *minor* prophets. They deal chiefly with the fortunes and destiny of Israel, and with the establishment of the Messiah's kingdom.

" This classification of the books of the Old Testament, if remembered, as it must be by all who wish to become proficient in Scripture knowledge, will enable the student at any time to readily turn to the part he wishes to read, whether law, history, poetry, or prophecy. Every part has its own peculiar value both for instruction and edification ; and no part should be neglected." Only as we keep in mind this four-fold division of these thirty-nine books can we " handle aright the Word of truth."

Between the last book of the Old Testament and the earliest events recorded in the New Testament there is a period of 400 years. These are silent centuries that intervene. No prophetic voice breaks the stillness. These two main divisions of the Bible are not only separated by these centuries of silence, but they are also separated as *standards of authority*. The cross stands between them. Before the cross the appeal was to the revelation contained in the Old Testament. " To the law and to the testimony ; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." These " things written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." " They were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." Nevertheless the Old Testament is not the standard of authority in our religious practice to-day. We do not go there to learn our obligations to God, our duty to our fellow-men. We have a new Lawgiver. " God has spoken unto us in his Son " (Heb. 1 : 2). We are to " hear him " (Matt. 17 : 5). We are to be judged by the teaching of Christ and his apostles (John 12 : 48 ; Rom. 2 : 16). This side of the cross,



therefore, the appeal must be to the revelation made known in the New Testament. That is the standard of authority for religious practice in this Christian dispensation.

There are twenty-seven books in the New Testament division of this divine library, written by six apostles and two evangelists. We may make a four-fold division of these books. The first four books are the Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. “They are argumentative literature, written to prove that ‘Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God’ (John 20: 31).” They are in the nature of fragmentary biographies, presenting a few facts in the career of Christ, and a few specimens of his teaching and his predictions. Because they are biographical in character we will place them in that department of our library. In the Gospels is answered the question, What did Jesus do for man?

The next book—Acts—is historical. It is a general history of the church for about thirty years from its beginning. The Gospels close with the great commission of Jesus, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” The Book of Acts gives an account of the obedience to that command. It is the book of conversions, an inspired handbook on revival work. “It shows how men, under apostolic preaching, were brought to Christ and became members of his church; and as the Gospels are intended to convince men that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, which is the first step towards becoming a Christian, this book shows what other steps the apostles required them to take.” The solemn question, “What must I do to be saved?” is answered in this book.

The next twenty-one books are the Epistles. Fourteen were written by Paul, three by John, two by Peter, and one each by James and Jude. They are all addressed to churches or individual Christians. They are letters of instruction to Christians. In them we learn how to live the Christian life.

The last book—the Apocalypse, or Revelation—is prophetic, and sets forth in the main the destiny of the church.

The right division of the Word is necessary to understand and appreciate these oracles of God. Here is a book, authoritative because it is the voice of God, intelligible because it is in the language of men. Yet to many it is mysterious and meaningless. This is due, chiefly, to failure to recognise the simple principles enunciated in this address. To understand the history of these Australian States, we must rightly divide that history. To know the facts and incidents of these States as a Commonwealth, we cannot go back beyond 1901, for the Commonwealth was not then in existence. The things recorded prior to that year have to do with the separate Colonies, and with events leading up to the federation. The same principles apply to our study of the best of all books. To receive the greatest benefit from the study of the Word of God, we must see divine truth in its right perspective.

The Old Testament brings Christ to the world: the New Testament brings the world to Christ. The Gospels teach us to know him, that we may believe on him; the Acts lead us to obey him, that we may wear his name; the Epistles guide us in Christian life and service; and the Revelation pictures the triumph of the

future. In the beginning there is revealed the creation of the heaven and the earth; in the end the "new heaven and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." In the beginning the "tree of knowledge of good and evil"; in the end "the tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations." In the beginning the entrance of sin into the world, and the punishment of the sinner; in the end sin abolished, and the reward of the saint. "This book contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practise it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveller's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter. Here paradise is restored, heaven opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure. It is given you in life, will be open at the judgment, and be remembered for ever. It involves the highest responsibility, rewards the greatest labor, and condemns all who trifle with its holy contents." Harken, then, to God's great Independence bell, for ever swinging in the dome of the universe.

"Cling to the Bible! This jewel and treasure  
Brings life eternal and saves fallen men;  
Surely its value no mortal can measure:  
Seek for its blessing, O soul, while you can."

# The Chain of Salvation.

"How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"—  
Heb. 2: 3.

**O**N a voyage to America several years ago I looked upon two scenes which were indelibly impressed upon my mind. Between Honolulu and San Francisco, one bright October day, a large sailing ship suddenly appeared upon the horizon. It presented itself to us, first, only in dim outline. Soon, however, we drew near enough to count the twenty-nine sails which were set to the morning breeze. Every movement of the vessel was graceful. It rode upon the calm waters like some denizen of the deep. How interested we were in the signalling between the two vessels! We wanted to know her name, her destination. With what enthusiasm we cheered those who stood upon her deck, as our "Good-bye" signals were displayed! Not many days before, near Apia, in the Samoan Islands, there had been pointed out to us the wreck of a large man-of-war vessel. In a hurricane it had been driven upon the rocks. All that then remained of that "mighty engine of destruction" was a little of the hull rising out of the water. In some respects these two pictures are descriptive of human

life. "The ocean of life lies between two mighty extremes." Man is but a voyager on this great sea, from the port of time to the distant port of eternity. Not all make the voyage under the same conditions. Some there are who, like the sailing ship, journey with fair winds and calm seas. To them everything is fair and promising, full of hope and life. They look forward with eager expectancy to the time when they shall anchor in the quiet waters of eternal rest. Others, like the wrecked war vessel, voyage 'mid storm and tempest, encounter rough seas, sometimes are wrecked upon the rocks, and go down in the sea; or else reach the end of the journey like some battered water-worn old hulk.

To shipwrecked persons there is no question so important as salvation. How the eyes are strained peering into the darkness to see if help is at hand! What efforts are made to save themselves from death in the angry waves! Though the lightnings flash and the thunders roar; though the tempests rage about them—they will hold on until the last, buoyed up with the hope of rescue. Let us for a few moments picture a vessel wrecked outside the "Heads" of Port Phillip Bay. Signal rockets flash out in the darkness of the night. These are seen by the lighthouse keeper at Point Lonsdale. Immediately he sounds the alarm, and ready, willing hands launch the life-boat at Queenscliff. Strong, brave men hasten to the vessel in distress. From the stern of that vessel those on board descend by means of a rope into the life-boat and are soon rowed to land, and are saved. Now we listen to these people telling the story of their salvation. One man declares that the *signal rockets* saved them, for



**8 HUMAN LINKS.**

- WE SAVE OURSELVES ...
- HOPE SAVES US ...
- BAPTISM ...
- CONFESSION ...
- REPENTANCE ...
- PRAYER ...
- FAITH ...
- PREACHING ...

**10 DIVINE LINKS.**

- WORD OF GOD ...
- HOLY SPIRIT ...
- BLOOD OF CHRIST ...
- LIFE OF CHRIST ...
- JESUS ...
- MERCY OF GOD ...
- GRACE OF GOD ...
- LOVE OF GOD ...
- GOD SAVES ...

- Acts 2: 40
- Rom. 8: 24
- 1 Pet. 3: 21; Mark 16: 16
- Rom. 10: 8-10
- 2 Cor. 7: 10
- Rom. 10: 13
- Mark 16: 16; Acts 16: 31
- 1 Cor. 1: 21
- Rom 1: 16
- James 1: 21
- Titus 3: 5
- Rom. 5: 9; Eph. 1: 7
- Rom. 5: 10
- Matt. 1: 21; 1 Thess. 5: 9
- Titus 3: 5
- Eph. 2: 8; Titus 2: 11
- Jn. 3: 16; 1 Jn. 4: 9, 10
- Titus 3: 4; 1 Tim. 4: 10



without these their distress would not have been known. Another attributes their salvation to the *lighthouse keeper*, for had he not answered their signals, and sounded the alarm, no help would have come to them. A third person claims that the *life-boat* was the means of their being saved, because through that they were able to reach land. Still another proves that the *life-boat crew* were their saviours, because they came to the rescue. And a fifth man readily asserts that those on the ship *saved themselves*, for had they not descended by the rope into the boat they would certainly have perished. There is truth in all of these statements. But the complete story of the salvation of these people could only be fully known as we learn all that had a part in their being saved.

Like frail barques we have been launched out on life's sea. Many are derelict vessels—drifting at the mercy of wind and wave. Others are being engulfed by the storms of passion and iniquity. Unnumbered are those who lie stranded upon the *rocks of sin*. To all such the question of salvation should be of paramount importance. Out of Christ we are unsaved. Unsaved, we are lost. Lost, our position is one of gloom and despair. With what earnestness should we seek a way of escape from the peril that confronts us! How anxiously should we desire to be saved! Many things operate in causing men to “neglect so great salvation.” Prominent among these is a lack of conviction regarding sin, and a failure to realise all that salvation means. Men suffer their hearts to become “hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” They heed not the warning, “The wages of sin is death.” “Sin is the great gulf that separates man's

moral nature from the divine ideal." The natural man is too often content with that separation from God. How can we otherwise explain the disinterestedness of so many in this question of supreme magnitude? To many others salvation does not appeal because they have no conception of all that has been necessary in order that they might "be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth." In their ignorance of the divine purpose they view this theme as of little interest, of trifling importance. The purpose of this message is not only to convict of sin, but also to lead our minds to clearer conceptions of salvation, by contemplating everything to which our salvation is attributed by the Holy Spirit.

Our appeal must be to the Word of God. It is the great lighthouse on the shores of the sea of time. Only as its cheering rays illumine this trackless ocean can we know the way of escape from the perils of sin. "The Bible with no message of deliverance from sin would be a useless luxury in a sinful world." Here is the answer to "man's cry as a sinner to God as a Saviour." We dare not be wise above that which is written. In every position maintained in this address we will let the Spirit be our teacher. "For 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 Tim. 3 : 16, 17).

Our salvation, in the first place, is attributed to *God*. Paul declares: "For to this end we labor and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of them who believe"



(1 Tim. 4: 10). "But when the kindness of God our Saviour, and his love toward man, appeared" (Titus 3: 4). And Jude writes: "To the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory" (verse 25). These, and many other passages of the New Testament, present God as our Saviour. Our salvation could not possibly have any other origin. It is the right of the one whose law has been violated to execute justice and to extend mercy. The sinner has sinned against God. He has transgressed divine law—trampled under his feet the righteous commandments of Jehovah. Salvation must come from without. Man could not, by personal effort and invention, bridge the gulf that separates him from his Maker. God saves.

We are saved by the *love of God*. The gospel in miniature is set forth in John 3: 16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." And the same message of hope sounds out in John's Epistle: "Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4: 9, 10). Our salvation is all of love. A builder had placed upon the roof of his dwelling a weather vane, upon which were the words, "God is love." A friend enquired whether the builder meant by that "that the love of God was as changeable as the wind." "No," was the ready response; "I mean that God is love whichever way the wind blows." "The sun that shines upon you may set; summer streams

may freeze ; and deepest wells go dry ; but God's love is a stream that never freezes, a fountain that never fails, a sun that never sets at night." Apart from the constant, un failing love of God, we never could have been rescued from the rocks of sin. *The love of God saves.*

" God is love : his Word proclaims it ;  
Day by day this truth we prove ;  
Heaven and earth with joy are telling,  
Ever telling—God is love."

The next link in this chain is the grace of God. " By grace have ye been saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves : it is the gift of God : not of works, that no man should glory " (Eph. 2 : 8, 9). " For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men " (Titus 2 : 11). Our salvation is not a matter of right or merit on our part. God hath " not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." It is of the favor of God we are saved. He is gracious and ready to forgive. The grace of God saves.

In Titus 3 : 5 Paul writes : " Not by works done in righteousness which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit." That is, we are saved through divine mercy. " We have done the things we should not have done ; we have left undone the things we should have done." How could we have been saved apart from the infinite mercy of our God ! Had simple justice decided our position, we must have been left to perish upon the rocks of sin. *The mercy of God saves.* And in the four things mentioned—God, his love, his grace, his mercy—we have the beginning of the sinner's salvation.

The fifth link in this chain presents Jesus as our Saviour. It was declared in the annunciation regarding the birth of Christ, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, because he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1: 21). And Paul also teaches: "For God appointed us not to wrath, but unto the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5: 9). The love, grace and mercy of God must needs be presented in the way in which they would most strongly appeal to the human family. Jesus is the grandest exhibition of divine love, the strongest manifestation of divine grace, and the clearest evidence of divine mercy. In Coney Island, a famous pleasure resort near the city of New York, there is a tower some sixty feet in height. Upon the top of this is a box-shaped cabinet with sides of ground glass, upon which the words—"Jesus saves"—are painted in startling colors. Still higher up is a flagstaff, from which floats a streamer with the same glorious inscription—"Jesus saves." Apart from him there can be no salvation. "There is none other name under heaven given among men wherein we must be saved." We must accept him or perish.

"We have heard the joyful sound: Jesus saves!  
Tell the message all around: Jesus saves!"

Again, we are saved by the life of Christ. "For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life" (Rom. 5: 10). The life of Jesus as manifested at Bethlehem, as lived at Nazareth, as spent in busy ministry, and as now at the right hand of the Father, plays an important part in

the great scheme of redemption. That life was essential to our being saved. Let us never lose sight of that glorious fact.

Intimately associated with the previous thought is the next fact—the blood of Christ saves. “Much more then, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through him” (Rom. 5: 9). “In whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph. 1: 8). The blood represents all the sacrifice and death of Jesus for the sin of the human race. “Without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sins.” “Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures.” It was necessary that one die for the people. “Once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” Thank God for the tragedy of the cross.

“ Bearing shame and scoffing rude,  
In my place condemned he stood;  
Sealed my pardon with his blood;  
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!”

Our salvation has its origin in what God the Father has done for us. Redemption's story is continued in what Jesus the Son has done for us by his wondrous life and sacrificial death. Additional links to this chain are forged in that which the Holy Spirit does for the salvation of man.

It is by the ministry of the Spirit the world is convicted “in respect of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16: 8, 9). The conversion of man is begun, continued and completed in the Holy Spirit. God hath saved us “through the washing of regeneration

and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3: 5). "Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3: 5). How the Spirit of God carries on his work is made known to us in the next two things to which our salvation is attributed—the Word of God and the gospel.

Of the former James writes: "Receive with meekness the implanted Word which is able to save your souls" (James 1: 21). Concerning the "sacred writings," Paul declares they "are able to make thee wise unto salvation" (2 Tim. 3: 15). There are many "who receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." "For this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2: 10-12). Of the gospel Paul says: "I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 1: 16). The apostles were commissioned to "preach the gospel to every creature." Paul had begotten the Corinthian Christians—"through the gospel." It was that which they had received, wherein they stood, by which also they were saved (1 Cor. 15: 1, 2). The Word and the gospel are the chief instrumentalities used by the Spirit of God in the saving of the sinner. To turn away from these is to continue in the peril by which sin surrounds us.

Thus far in this message we have considered the divine side of this great question. All that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit have wrought on our behalf has been the subject of our meditation. Let us magnify these things. Let us glorify God for a salvation pur-

chased at such infinite cost, made possible for us only through wondrous manifestations of divine beneficence and power.

“ 'Twas great to speak a world from nought,  
'Twas greater to redeem.”

Now let us ask, Can we do without any of these ten links? Can we leave any of them out? Dare we do so? Not if we would taste of the joys of salvation. There is nothing unnecessary in the divine plan. Infinite wisdom makes no mistakes. This chain would not be complete with any of these things left out. Again let us enquire, Can anything be added to strengthen these divine links, to make them more complete? Can we think of anything more that God, the Son of God or the Spirit of God need do in order that men may be saved? Is not the divine work in the plan of salvation a finished work? God wills “that all men should be saved.” He has “not appointed us to wrath.” He “willeth not the death of any.” “'Tis done, the great transaction's done”—as far as the divine sufficiency in redemption is concerned. We do not need to constrain God to be willing to save, or to do more for the unsaved. Salvation is a glorious reality from the divine view-point. “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.” And still so many are perishing! Why? Because of failure with God, or Christ, or the Spirit? Surely not that!

“O, I was the sinner, alone on the sea,  
But love's blessed signals were floating for me;  
Though thunders were rolling, and billows at strife,  
Lo! Jesus was calling—'Escape for your life!'”

Men are unsaved because they have not heeded love's signals; they have not responded to the Saviour's call. "How shall ye escape if ye *neglect* so great salvation?" This is the reason so many are lost—salvation is neglected by them. There is a human side to this question. We must leave the wreck. Salvation is *provided*. It must be *appropriated*. This is done by the forging of certain human links, necessary to the completion of this chain of salvation.

The first of these is preaching. "For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1: 21). Preaching has a place in our salvation because it is the appointed means of communicating the will of God to man. "How shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard? How shall they hear without a preacher?" Most people do not study these things for themselves. Their knowledge comes chiefly through listening to the voice of the preacher. "The Word of reconciliation" has been committed to the disciples of Christ. Through the messages of Spirit-filled men, the facts we have already studied are made known.

Again, we are saved by faith. "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; he that disbelieveth shall be condemned" (Mark 16: 16). "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16: 31). There is no promise of salvation held out to the one who disbelieves. "He that disbelieveth shall be condemned." Faith is the first step of the sinner away from sin and towards salvation. It is the soul's

response to the offer of help. It is the hand stretched forth to grasp the rope thrown to the one struggling in the sea of sin.

A third human link is prayer. "For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. 10: 13). By prayer I do not mean the agonising of some "seeker" before a "penitent form" or "altar rail" that God may come and save. Such petitions are foreign to the spirit and teaching of the Christian system. It is for the sinner not so much to *seek* as to *accept* salvation. In doing this, divine grace and strength are needed. And in his submission to the Lord's will in the things we are now considering, it ~~will~~ be necessary to look up to God for the sufficiency which alone will enable him to do these things aright.

Repentance is the next link. "Godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation" (2 Cor. 7: 10). "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3: 9). We are not saved in our sin, but from our sin. Repentance is to "quit your meanness." The wicked must forsake his way, the unrighteous man his thoughts, before he can return unto the Lord. Repentance concerns our will. If the sinner is determined to continue in sin he cannot be saved. Repent or perish. There is no alternative.

In Rom. 10: 9, 10 we are taught: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made



unto salvation." Here confession has a place in our being saved. This is not the confession of our sins to some priest, or the making known of our faults one to another. It is our acknowledgment of the Lordship of Jesus. It is joined to our belief in the fact that God hath raised him from the dead. This confession is to be made, not by raising the hand, or signing a card, but with the mouth. It is an open declaration of our allegiance to Christ, such as Peter made when he declared, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16: 16).

In the next place, our salvation is attributed to baptism. Having referred to the salvation of Noah and his family, eight souls, by water, Peter writes: "Which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3: 20, 21). According to this apostle, there is a sense in which baptism saves. In this address we are not considering *how* any of these things save, but just the fact that they do save according to the testimony of the Word of God. The Holy Spirit has revealed to us that the sinner's rescue has been accomplished by the fifteen things we have already studied. With equal clearness, and upon the same testimony, is it established that men are saved through the waters of baptism. In conversation with a lady in America some years ago, I referred to this teaching of Peter's. The lady immediately answered, "I don't believe Peter knew what he was talking about." There is much of the same spirit to-day. Theological hammers and chisels are kept busy severing this link

from this chain of salvation. Why not accept the simple statements of Scripture upon the place of the ordinance of baptism, as well as upon other phases of the scheme of redemption. The teaching of Jesus is, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved." "We are saved by the washing of regeneration," as well as "by the renewing of the Holy Spirit." "Born of water and of the Spirit" are divinely joined together. Baptism is not the *whole chain* of salvation. In itself it could not save. It is one of the links. Let us keep it in its proper place.

There are two other statements regarding salvation. "For by hope were we saved" (Rom. 8: 24). And, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation" (Acts 2: 40). This latter message is the appeal of Peter to the sin-convicted people of Pentecost. It was true of them, and is true of us, that the question of their salvation was one they must answer for themselves. Not that their doing would merit salvation, nor that any "works of righteousness" which they might do would lead to their being saved; but simply this: just as the shipwrecked mariner saves himself by turning from the wreck and availing himself of the means of rescue at his command, so may we be said to save ourselves, as we turn from sin and appropriate the salvation divinely provided. For it is true of so many that they are unsaved because they will not turn in with the overtures of God's mercy. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

Oh! fellow-voyager to eternity, what must salvation mean when it has taken all this to save! In the light of what has been done for you, and in view of what you

must do to be saved, can you longer trifle with eternal things! Act at once. Delay is dangerous. Soon the waves of condemnation will roll over you. The night cometh. Darkness is at hand. No bright star of hope will shine in the sky for you, if you continue in sin. It is impossible for you to navigate your frail barque over the sea of time that it may anchor safely in eternity. On the voyage to America, to which I referred in the opening of this address, I saw a steamer, near Honolulu, lying upon a coral reef. A few weeks before it had left Sydney, and safely reached this port of call. Outside the harbor the ship slowed down to wait for a pilot. He was slow in coming. As the shades of night were quickly gathering, the captain decided not to wait for the pilot, but to take the vessel in himself. In trying to do so, it was run aground upon a hidden reef. The captain failed because he did not know the channel. "A little lad was out at sea in his father's boat. A storm arose, and the boat was carried far out. The waves dashed high, yet the child did not seem to care. Someone asked him, 'Were you not afraid?' 'No,' the reply came; 'why should I be? My father's at the helm.'" Sinner, let the great Pilot aboard. If he is at the helm, all will be well. For we "have an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and entering into that which is within the veil"—heaven our home.

**"Poor child of the wreck, see, the life-boat is near!  
A sweet voice is heard, for the Master is here;  
He walks every billow, controls every wave,  
'Tis Jesus, King Jesus, the Mighty to Save."**

# The Divine Marching Orders.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28 : 19).

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

“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24 : 47).

**T**HERE are six periods in the progressive development of the gospel. First, the *gospel in purpose*, as set forth in such Scripture as the following:--

“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: 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” (Eph. 3 : 8-11). “Who hath saved us, and called us

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with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Tim. 1: 9). Here is the gospel in purpose in the mind of God—in the secret counsels of heaven. Again, there is the *gospel in intimation*. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3: 15). "There is here a golden gleam of the kingdom of Christ, in which man through a divine Saviour shall find expiation for his sin." The pathway from that first sin is illumined by this intimation of the coming One who should tread Satan under his feet. The next stage is the *gospel in promise*. This is given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. "And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12: 3; 26: 4; 28: 14). In this promise Jehovah proclaimed glad tidings unto the "father of the faithful." "He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Gal. 3: 16). The fourth period is the *gospel in prophecy*. This embraces all the prophetic statements of the Old Testament concerning the Messiah and his kingdom. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. 49: 10). "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel" (Micah 5: 2). The next division is the *gospel in preparation*. This includes the ministry of John, in "preparing the way of the Lord"; the personal work of Christ, as he preached the "gospel of the

MATT. 28: 18-20.	TEACH.	ALL NATIONS.	...	...	...	BAP- TISING.	FORM- ULA.	...	...
MARK 16: 15, 16.	PREACH.	ALL WORLD. EVERY CREATURE.	GOSPEL.	BE- LIEVE.	...	BAP- TISED.	...	SAVED.	...
LUKE 24: 45-47.	PREACH.	ALL NATIONS.	...	...	REPENT- ANCE.	...	...	REMIS- SION OF SINS.	BEGINAT JERUSA- LEM.
SUMMARY.	TEACH OR PREACH.	ALL NATIONS, EVERY CREA- TURE IN ALL WORLD	GOSPEL.	BE- LIEVE.	REPENT- ANCE.	BAP- TISM.	FORM- ULA.	SAVED, OR RE- MISSION OF SINS.	BEGINAT JERUSA- LEM.

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kingdom," and called upon the people to "repent and believe the gospel"; and also the service of the apostles and seventy under the first commission, to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The sixth period is the *gospel in its fact and fulness*. That begins with the day of Pentecost, and continues until the close of this dispensation of grace.

It took forty centuries to develop this plan of salvation. And this development has taken place under three dispensations—the patriarchal, Jewish and Christian. "The great truths of infinite love, rising in the bowers of Eden, rolled onward through the broad expanse of human history, wound their course through the mountains of promise, plunged into the jungles of prophecy, and re-appear at last clothed in glory in the gospel of Jesus Christ." The Christian dispensation was ushered in through the giving of that great commission read in our introductory Scripture. This is among the most important utterances that ever fell from the lips of the "Great Teacher." It was his parting message to his ambassadors, the divine marching orders to the church. In the execution of this commission we see the church rising into existence, and multitudes of people owning the sway of Jesus as their King. "The fulness of the blessing of the gospel" could never have been enjoyed had not the Saviour of men said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Never had human ears listened to a message so pregnant with meaning; never had men been entrusted with a charge so weighty as this. Other commissions in the Word of God contain limitations and restrictions not found in this world-wide and age-lasting charge of the Son of God.

In issuing these marching orders, Jesus claimed, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and upon earth." Only by virtue of that power vested in him was he able to send these apostles forth upon a universal proclamation of the good news. And to those engaged in this glorious mission is given the age-enduring promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." This commission is given to men enclosed in the casket of the divine power and presence. It is necessary for us to understand this message. It is the organic law of the Christian system. All subsequent legislation must be in harmony with the principles therein enunciated. It is the basis of all the work of evangelisation by the apostles and evangelists of the New Testament, and the eminence from which we are to view all the operations of the servants of God as they seek to extend the kingdom of the divine Redeemer. It will be easier to understand other truths of the religion of Jesus if we first learn the meaning of this.

A necessary characteristic of any commission is that it should be simple and easily understood. If it is expressed in doubtful language, capable of more than one meaning, or requires a legal mind to unravel or explain it, no one could know positively whether he had conformed to its requirements or not. Just imagine, for a moment, the Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in South Africa desiring certain work carried out by the troops. He instructs one of his Generals to take a regiment to a town twenty miles away, where sealed orders will be given to him concerning his further operations. The General carries out his instructions, and receives the sealed orders. Upon opening them to



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learn what special work has been entrusted to him, he discovers that his commission is expressed in language ambiguous in its meaning, that some of its terms may be interpreted in more than one way, and that some of its words are unintelligible. Could such orders be carried out? Would we not rightly question the wisdom of the one who would issue instructions under such conditions? When Jesus sent his apostles forth under their first commission, as recorded in Matt. 10, he stated explicitly what he desired them to do. They were not left in any doubt as to the character of their work, the sphere of their ministry, the nature of their message, or their own department. "The ministry of reconciliation" was committed to the apostles in this parting message from the Saviour. They were to witness for him "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." In this service they were "under marching orders." How necessary that these should be plainly presented! Were they not so made known? Is there anything uncertain, ambiguous or mysterious in this great commission? Is it not expressed in a most lucid manner? I think so.

In order that this theme may be presented to our minds, simply and clearly, the elements have been separated and arranged on the chart in the form of an addition in compound numbers. We will study the gospel records, and note in different columns the parts into which this commission may be separated.

First in order is the testimony of Matthew. In this address we are concerned only with the first part of the message—"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the

Son, and of the Holy Spirit." The first element is—"TEACH." This describes the beginning of their work under this commission. Those to whom this charge was given were to be teachers. They were not to set up in the entertaining business. They had attended the school of Christ. "They had been with Jesus, and learned of him." Now they are to instruct others. This implies someone to be taught. We have, therefore, the second element—"ALL NATIONS." The first commission was limited—"Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." This last commission is universal in its application. "God is no respecter of persons." The world is the parish of the disciple of Christ. No geographical boundaries or racial distinctions limit the gospel message. "Whosoever will may come." We leave some blanks on the diagram because nothing is mentioned in this record of the nature of the message to be presented, or of the condition of mind or heart of those hearing it. The third element is—"BAPTISING." The teachers were to administer this ordinance. Those taught or "made disciples" were to submit to this divine requirement. It was a personal, voluntary act. The baptism was to be "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." This FORMULA is the fourth element of this record. Matthew's account shows us very simply *what the apostles had to do in carrying out this great commission.*

Next in order we have the record of Mark. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be

saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Now we will analyse this as we did the testimony of the former gospel. "PREACH" is the first element. We place it under "*teach*" in Matthew's Gospel because they mean the same thing. The teacher was to preach, and the preacher was to teach. These things do not always mean the same to-day. There are many who stand up to preach who do not give to their audiences very much instruction. In the second column we put the second element — "EVERY CREATURE IN ALL THE WORLD." This presents the extent of the preaching. It means the same thing as "*all nations*." We fill the first blank in Matthew's record with the third element — "GOSPEL." This shows us what was to be the theme of the teaching and preaching. It was necessary for the apostles to know what message they were to deliver. In this it is revealed to them. Another blank is filled with the fourth element — "BELIEVE." In this we learn what is to be the attitude of men and women to the gospel. Mark's fifth element is — "BAPTISED." We place this in the same column as Matthew's "*baptising*," because they refer to the same act. In this narrative there is no mention of the formula. The first Gospel has revealed nothing of the design or purpose of these things, but Mark shows them in his sixth element — "SAVED." Here is the promised blessing attached to the belief and baptism. The first three elements in this record show the preacher's actions, the fourth and fifth the sinner's actions, and the last the act of the Lord in bestowing salvation.

In the third Gospel, Luke records these last words of Jesus in the following statement: "And that repentance

and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Naturally, "PREACH" is again the first element, and we therefore place it in the column with the first terms in the other Gospels. "ALL NATIONS" agrees with the teaching of Matthew and Mark as to the sphere of this ministry. Luke's third element—"REPENTANCE"—presents an item not mentioned in the other records. This shows the change of the sinner's mind or will to be produced by gospel preaching. We place the fourth element—"REMISSION OF SINS"—under "*saved*" of Mark's Gospel, because of their similarity of meaning. The one who has remission of sins is saved; and the one who is saved has the remission of sins. The last element of this testimony—"BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM"—introduces something new. We learn from this the starting-place of this world-embracing movement. Jerusalem is to be the base of operations.

Here, before us, is the united inspired testimony concerning this great commission. I would impress upon your minds the fact that no one of these records gives to us *all the contents* of these divine marching orders. In our courts of law the judge and jury are required to hear all the witnesses, and collate all the facts, and then to render their verdict in harmony with all the evidence. This is the only satisfactory method of "handling aright the Word of truth." Only as we add together all the elements in the three Gospels can we know the mind of the Master upon this inspiring theme. In the summary, at the bottom of the chart, we have the whole scope of this commission. Those to whom this sacred trust was committed were to teach, or

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preach to, all nations, or every creature in all the world. Their message was to be the gospel. Men were to be called upon to believe, repent, and be baptised. "The Father, Son and Holy Spirit" reveal the glorious names in which the ordinance was to be administered. The divine promise was to be held out to all heeding the gospel call that they should be saved, or have the remission of sins. And this world's great emancipation proclamation was to be announced first at Jerusalem.

And now, while we are listening to the authoritative voice of the Son of God delivering his great message, shall we prayerfully consider some heart-searching questions. First, Is this commission binding now? Has it ceased to be operative because those to whom it was personally addressed have passed away? There will be little conflict in answering this inquiry. The united voice of Christendom affirms the perpetuity of this charge. However much the teachers and preachers of to-day may differ concerning religious and theological questions, all go back to this commission for their authority to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. Ringing down the ages is the voice of the Master, saying—"Go!!" And it is that which sends consecrated men and women into the darkness of heathendom, and impels others to deeds of sacrifice and love for the salvation of their fellows. By reason of the ordinary limitations of life, as well as by the conditions surrounding them, the apostles could not personally carry the saving evangel to the "uttermost parts of the earth." It must be committed to other "faithful men able to teach others also." In the practice of religious bodies

there is the recognition of the age-lasting character of this charge. Whatever may be the "forms of baptism," the formula almost invariably used is that contained in this commission—"in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." None will question the continuance of these divine marching orders. The "Captain of our salvation" still speaks to his followers in this darkness-dispelling, hope-inspiring message.

A second question is this—Have we the right to *cancel* any of the elements of this commission? If it is binding still, is it not so just in the way Christ delivered it? Paul shunned not "to declare the whole counsel of God." Are there not many to-day who are preachers of an incomplete gospel—proclaiming, as did one man, "If you don't believe in a degree, and repent in a measure, you will be damned to an extent"? To answer our second question, let us review each element in order. Would it be wise to omit "teach or preach"? Hardly, "for it has pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." "How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? How shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" In view of these declarations, we dare not omit the preaching. Shall we cross out "all nations"? If we do we shall be left in uncertainty regarding the universality of the gospel. Any alteration here might leave redeeming love for "none but the Jews only," or for a limited number whom God elected to be saved. We want no limitation here. Dare we cancel the "gospel"? Would anyone suggest such a course? Not one, I am sure, would think of doing so. "The

gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth." Men are "begotten in Christ Jesus through the gospel." They will be punished who "obey not the gospel." There are already too many substitutes for the gospel. In a Kansas town where I was engaged some years ago, a preacher delivered a series of Sunday night discourses on the subject—"TRILBY." These addresses may have been interesting, amusing, and possibly instructive. But I am confident that they were the means of bringing comfort to the sorrowing, strength to the weak, grace to the needy, or hope to the disconsolate. They contained no power by which men could be saved from sin and fitted for life eternal. Jesus said, "Preach the gospel." Let us keep close to this theme. Shall we drop out "*believe*"? I am not in favor of doing so. "He that believeth not shall be damned." "Without faith it is impossible to please God." This is the great channel along which every divine blessing flows into human lives. Men must believe to the saving of their souls. What shall we do with "*repentance*"? Rub it out? If it could be done, many would be pleased. But there is no limitation to this command. "God commandeth all men everywhere to repent." Jesus teaches: "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." It would be dangerous to make any alteration in this place. Should we omit "*baptism*"? Now many of you are prepared to answer, "Certainly; it is a non-essential." And if we look at it in the light of most modern preaching, we must admit this to be so. In the pulpits of to-day, rarely, if ever, is any importance attached to this part of the commission. Is this attitude an honest one? Is this position Scriptural? I want

you to notice that two of the three Gospels mention this ordinance. Mark presents it as a command to be obeyed by the believer. Matthew represents it as one of the duties to be discharged by the preacher. It is placed here by the great *Lawgiver* himself. It is mentioned more than eighty times in the New Testament. This is not the baptism of the Holy Spirit, because that was *administered by Jesus*, and was a *promise to be enjoyed*, not a command to be obeyed. If, by the authority of this commission, men stand up to preach the gospel, why should they not keep to these conditions laid down by the Saviour? Dare we be silent regarding baptism in order to popularise our ministry of the Word, or to make it easier for the people to surrender to Jesus? God help us to be faithful to the perishing, but also to the message of his Son! Shall we leave out the *baptismal formula*? It so beautifully reveals the relation into which our obedience brings us that we prefer to let it stand as it is. May we cancel "saved" or "remission of sins"? This is the great legacy of divine love to be offered to a needy world. Salvation is man's great need. We must not leave this item out. Shall we omit "begin at Jerusalem"? Then we would not know where this great movement was to begin. We might not know whether Oxford, Geneva, Wittenberg or other centres of reformatory work were to form the "base of operations." Now that we have reviewed all these elements, let me ask again, Can we cancel any of them and be faithful to the Lord's will? Suppose that in a time of illness the doctor makes out a prescription, which you take to the chemist to dispense. The doctor has included "quinine" as one of the elements of the medicine you



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are to take. But you don't like that, and instruct the chemist to leave it out—it is so distasteful. Would he do so? If that were done, would the prescription be of any value? You answer, "No! If I trust the physician, I must take the medicine as he ordered it." In this commission the "Great Physician" of the soul has prescribed for the awful malady of sin. Let not your past training, your personal opinions, your likes and dislikes, keep you from taking Jesus at his word.

Again, I call your attention to a third question—Can we change the order in which the elements of this commission are mentioned? That this is done throughout Christendom hardly needs any demonstration. Those who advocate infant baptism put the ordinance in a position not found in these "divine marching orders." With them baptism is the first step in the plan of salvation. Does that not make this ordinance too important? If Christ had meant it that way, would he not have said, "He that is baptised and believeth shall be saved"? There are others who will not see any connection between baptism and salvation. They change the order by placing the ordinance after the remission of sins. In their practice the commission reads, "He that believes is saved and should be baptised." Now if our Lord meant it that way, is it not reasonable to suppose that is the way he would have said it? Let us be satisfied that Christ says what he means, and means what he says. The positions of belief and repentance are also sometimes changed, the latter being placed first. There are several passages in the New Testament which seem to support this position. It will be sufficient in this address, I am sure, to point

out the fact that repentance is a *fruit*, not a *root*, an effect requiring an adequate cause. How anyone can repent who has not first trusted in Jesus is more than I can understand. The turning from sin is hardly possible if we have not first believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. The order of the terms of this commission is not accidental, but is a part of the plan and purpose of the divine Giver.

And now, this last question I want to place before you with all earnestness—Can you claim all the blessings if you do not fulfil all the conditions? In this memorable message Jesus has not only given instructions to the preacher who proclaims the glad tidings, but also to the one who hears the Word of life. He commands you to believe, to repent, and to be baptised. Have you been obedient to your Lord? You may have attended to some of these things. Have you attended to them all? Are you claiming the blessing while still in unbelief or disobedience? The great lesson from the Word of God is—"To obey is better than sacrifice." You remember that Joshua was commanded to lead Israel around Jericho once a day for six days, and on the seventh day seven times. Then, when the long blast of the trumpet sounded, and all the people shouted, the divine assurance was given that the walls of the city should fall. It was not the tramping or shouting of the people, nor the blowing of the trumpets, that caused the walls to crash to the ground. That was accomplished by divine power. But that power would not have been manifested had Joshua and the people departed from the charge of Jehovah. Leprous Naaman, with all his need, draws near to Elisha, the prophet of

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God. Simple and definite instructions are given to him for his healing. "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." But this is not theatrical or dignified enough for the "captain of the host of the King of Syria." Abana and Pharpar are certainly better than the waters of Israel. Is there not cleansing in them? No, for they are not the appointed means of blessing. Then this great man is prevailed upon to go to Jordan that he may "wash and be clean." "He dipped himself seven times." Would healing have come to him had he immersed himself once or twice or three times? Assuredly not. For not only was the Jordan the place appointed for deliverance from that loathsome disease, but "wash in Jordan *seven* times" the condition of receiving that blessing. The Lord hath not as great delight in offering and sacrifice as in obeying his voice. "He that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life." "What shall be the end of those who obey not the gospel?" May the Lord not have to say to any of us, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?"

Jesus said to his ambassadors, as he committed to them this sacred trust, "Begin at Jerusalem." And we are not left in ignorance concerning their discharge of this duty. The second chapter of Acts is an inspired commentary on this great commission. The gospel message—embracing the life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension and coronation of Christ—is proclaimed to "devout Jews out of every nation under heaven." They believe, and cry out under conviction of sin, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2: 37).

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Triumphantly the answer is given by Peter, "Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2 : 38). "And those who gladly received his word were baptised." The preacher is faithful to the "divine marching orders." And the people eagerly accept the conditions of this emancipation proclamation. Are you prepared to do the same? You believe that to Christ "all power is given"; you rejoice in the promise, "Lo, I am with you always"; and now, because you recognise that power, and would claim that presence, will you gladly, and willingly, be loyal to all that stands between them in this glorious message? So will you be faithful in time and fearless in eternity.

# The Supreme Question.

"Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2: 37).

"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16: 30).

**T**HE Bible contains many questions of thrilling interest—such questions as, "Where art thou?" "If a man die, shall he live again?" "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" "How long halt ye between two opinions?" "Will a man rob God?" "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" "What good things must I do to inherit eternal life?" "Which is the great commandment in the law?" "Who is my neighbor?" "What think ye of Christ? whose Son is he?" "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" "What then shall I do with Jesus?" "What shall the end be of those who obey not the gospel of God?" "Where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?" Each one of these questions appeals to us personally. But the supreme question of the Word of God is the question of salvation.

"Oh, what shall I do to be saved

From the sorrows that burden my soul?

Like the waves in the storm when the winds are at war,

Chilling floods of distress o'er me roll.

What shall I do? What shall I do?

Oh, what shall I do to be saved?"

It was the anxious inquiry of the sin-convicted murderers at Pentecost, when, pricked to the heart, they cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" It was a subject of greatest importance to the fear-stricken jailor of Philippi when he asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" That man is a sinner is written upon almost every page of the Scriptures. Its history is chiefly the record of sin. Its law was given to regulate men's lives away from sin. Its psalms are either expressions of penitence on account of sin, or songs of thanksgiving because of victory over sin. Its prophecy is concerned with the coming of One who should "save his people from their sin." Because man has "sinned and come short of the glory of God," he needs a Saviour. He cannot save himself. If left to drift, he must drift away from God. Unless help comes from without he is undone. He must find a Saviour or perish. Therefore, written over against the fact of sin is the other great fact—salvation. "The presence of a clear message of salvation is an essential element in the proof of the inspiration of the Scriptures."

Not only is this the supreme question of God's Word, but also of every life. There cannot possibly be anything of such importance to you as being saved. A learned professor was being rowed across a river by an illiterate boatman. The teacher conversed upon many scientific subjects, and then began to question the man at the oars. "Do you understand anything about mathematics?" was the first inquiry. The boatman admitted that he was not acquainted with anything like that. "Well then, a *quarter of your life* is lost." "Have you ever studied astronomy—the wonders of the heavenly

# THE SUPREME QUESTION.

Acts 2: 37.

Acts 16: 30.

6. REWARD		CROWN OF LIFE. 2 Tim. 4: 6-8; James 1: 12.
5. OBLIGATIONS		FRUITS OF SPIRIT. Gal. 5: 22, 23; 2 Peter 1: 5-9.
4. BLESSINGS	Prom- ises.	GIFT OF SPIRIT. Acts 2: 38; Acts 5: 32. PARDON. Acts 2: 38; Acts 3: 19.
3. PUBLIC ACTIONS	Commands.	BAPTISM. Acts 2: 38; Acts 22: 16. CONFESSION OF FAITH. Rom. 10: 9-10; Matt. 16: 16-18. } <i>Public Devotion.</i>
2. PERSONAL ACTIONS	Commands.	REPENTANCE. Acts 3: 19; Acts 17: 30. FAITH. Mark 16: 16; Acts 16: 31. } <i>Personal Surrender.</i>
1. GOSPEL PREACHED	Facts.	DEATH BURIAL RESURRECTION } OF CHRIST. 1 Cor. 15: 1-4.
		Matt. 24: 14. Rom. 1: 16. Eph. 1: 13. 2 Thess. 1: 8.

bodies?" Again the boatman confessed his ignorance. "Then," commented the professor, "a *half of your life* is lost." A third question was asked—"Do you know anything of the beautiful science of chemistry?" And the third time the uneducated man acknowledged his deficiency in that respect. "Ah! my poor man," the teacher sadly replied; "*three-fourths of your life* is lost." Just then the boat upset, and professor and boatman were thrown into the water. As soon as they rose to the surface of the stream, the boatman eagerly asked, "Can you swim, Professor?" "No," was the sad response, "I can't." "Well, then," answered the boatman, as he swam toward the bank, "*all of your life* is lost." To the teacher there was nothing so necessary as to know how to swim. Other knowledge did not avail to save him from drowning. Again I repeat, salvation is the supreme question of your life. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" "What shall he give in exchange for his soul?" We have a false standard of the worth of the one who dies. We ask, "What did he leave?" We search the papers to learn how much money or property he *relinquished* when he bade farewell to this life. A man, at death, is worth, not the treasure he has laid up on earth, which he leaves behind, but the treasure he has laid up in heaven, which awaits his coming—"the good foundation against the time to come." "What shall I do to be saved?" is the most solemn inquiry of the human soul. To be unsaved is to be in a sad and perilous condition. No wealth, position or pleasure of this world can be sufficient recompense for being eternally lost.

For you and me, my dear friend, there is no salvation



out of Christ. "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." "God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." "He died for our sins, according to the Scriptures." "In him, we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." The sacrifice that propitiates has been offered up. The blood that atones has been shed. Still, many are unsaved. Why? There has been no coming short in the divine provision for our salvation. Almighty power and infinite love need do no more for us. There has been no failure on God's part. Salvation has been *provided*; it must be *accepted*. It is freely *offered*; it must be freely *received*. Men are unsaved because of *failure to appropriate salvation*.

The question of our introductory texts implies that there is something for the sinner *to do* to be saved. The people at Pentecost recognised this. So did the jailor. They seek enlightenment upon this from those qualified to instruct them. Too often have the unsaved been taught that they could do nothing to be saved—that it *has all* been done for them. They must wait for God just to come in some mysterious way and speak the word of peace to their souls.

"Cast your deadly doing down,  
Down at Jesus' feet."

It is certain that man can do nothing to save himself in respect to *providing* salvation. It is equally true that he can, and must, do something to *appropriate* salvation. If he does not do so, it will never be his.

The answer to this inquiry will depend upon the condition of the inquirer, and upon his position relative

to the cross. The answers were not the same the other side of Calvary as they are in this dispensation of grace. The divine way of escape from sin before the crucifixion of Christ was not the same as it has been since Pentecost—save in a typical and prophetic sense. Those who lived before the cross lived in different dispensations, and were saved under different laws from those by which we are governed in this Christian age. Most of the confusion upon this subject arises from the failure to recognise this fact. Many are looking for the Lord to say to them to-day, "Thy sins be forgiven thee. Go, and sin no more," because that is how he addressed some in his personal ministry. During that period Jesus had the power to dispense this great legacy of salvation from sin according to his own will. After his resurrection, and before his ascension, he proclaimed the conditions of pardon in the giving of his great commission. We find, too, that the *condition* of the one seeking the light made some difference in the answer. An *unbeliever* asks the question, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" and is instructed to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 16: 30, 31). *Believers* inquire, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" and are taught to "repent and be baptised" (Acts 2: 37, 38). And a *penitent believer* makes inquiry, "What shall I do, Lord?" and receives the command, "Arise, and be baptised, and wash away thy sins" (Acts 22: 10-16). These answers are not contradictory. They are addressed to persons in different conditions of mind and heart. Do not overlook this.

Now, if you will turn with me to the chart, we will note the Scriptural steps in answering this supreme question.

The preaching of the gospel is the first step. That must always precede an intelligent answer to this inquiry. Ignorance of the gospel message means ignorance of the way of salvation. Gospel light must shine across man's pathway to illumine the way of escape from sin. "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matt. 24 : 14). It is declared by Paul, "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 1 : 16). The Ephesians trusted in Christ "after that they heard the Word of truth, the gospel of their salvation" (Eph. 1 : 13). In his coming again the Lord Jesus will "take vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel" (2 Thess. 1 : 8). Not only has there been the ushering in of a new dispensation, but also the revealing of new conditions of approach to God in the preaching of the gospel message. The gospel analysed presents to us certain facts to be believed, definite commands to be obeyed, and assured promises to be enjoyed. The facts of the gospel are set forth in 1 Cor. 15 : 1-4—"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." The death, burial and resurrection of Christ are the foundation facts of the divine system of human redemption. All that the sinner is called upon to do rests

upon that which Christ has already done. The finished work of the Lord makes it possible for the unsaved one to complete his work in accepting salvation.

The second step reveals two *personal actions* of the sinner—faith and repentance. These are both repeatedly emphasised in the teaching of Christ and his apostles. Of the former we read—“He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be condemned” (Mark 16: 16); “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16: 31); “Without faith it is impossible to please God”; “He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God.” Without implicit confidence in the Lord Jesus, a loving trust in him as a personal Saviour, there can be no salvation for those to whom the message of life has been declared. Faith is a personal act. One person cannot believe for another. It is personal because it takes place between the sinner and the Saviour. Others may listen to the declaration of our faith. They may see its manifestations. Of its genuineness they are not always able to judge. Only he who “searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins of the children of men” can do that. Faith is the entwining of our heart's affections around the loving Saviour. “Only believe” or “faith alone” are not doctrines of Christ and his apostles in the instruction of the seeking soul, though they are very common statements in modern preaching and revival work. “According to your faith be it unto you” is certainly a standard of measurement for every blessing of the divine life. But it is *not* the *only* avenue of

approach to the Saviour and to the salvation he so graciously bestows.

Concerning the second personal act—"repentance"—Jesus taught that "repentance and remission of sins were to be preached in his name." Now "God commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17: 30). We must "repent and turn again" if our sins are to be blotted out (Acts 3: 19). "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Repentance concerns our will. It has to do with our turning from sin, and reformation of life. Our continuing in sin makes salvation impossible. Repentance in the first instance is a personal act. It is between ourselves and our Saviour. None but ourselves and God know the extent of our sin, the depths of our degradation. There are secret as well as open sins. This makes it impossible for others to judge of the sincerity and completeness of our repentance.

Faith and repentance are *commands to be obeyed*. It rests with the sinner whether he will obey these commands or not. And because they are personal actions the sinner may give heed to them at any time, in any place, and under almost any circumstances. In the quiet of the inner chamber, in the place of business, out in the forest, or in the sanctuary of God, there may take place the heart's trust in Jesus, the life's turning from sin. And in these things there is made evident our *personal surrender to Christ*.

These two personal actions are not all that is necessary in walking in the way of salvation. They are to be followed by two public actions—confession and baptism. It is not possible to be a secret disciple of the Lord. The sinner has lived openly against the Saviour. Even

so must he as openly yield allegiance to him. Initiation into the membership of a society; entrance into the citizenship of a country of which we are aliens; the union between husband and wife—all require some declarative act. It is right that it should be so. It would not be wise for these to belong to our secret or private experiences. It is of the wisdom of the Lord that he has ordained these acts of confession and baptism as means to our salvation. It is necessary for the sinner to have some definite act of committal to the service of Christ—something that will remain as a sure ground of confidence for the hope he has within him. In these two public acts this has been provided.

This "*confession*" is not the acknowledgment of our sin to an earthly priest; not the making known our faults one to another; not the testimony of a godly life (that is necessary afterwards); but the declaration of the heart's faith in Christ as the Son of God. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10: 9, 10). Notice that it is confession "with the mouth"—not by raising the hand, or signing a card. It is something definite—"Jesus as Lord" (R.V.). Here is our acknowledgment of the Lordship, the Sovereignty, of Jesus. It is associated with, and is the result of, "believing with our heart in the resurrection of Christ." It is such a confession as Peter made at Cæsarea Philippi in the memorable words—"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16: 16).

It was required from the eunuch before his baptism. "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" was the declaration antecedent and necessary to his going down "into the water" (Acts 8: 37, 38). "Among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12: 42, 43). "The Jews had agreed already that if any man did confess that he was the Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue" (John 9: 22). It was this open confession of Christ as the Son of the living God which separated the people in the personal ministry of the Saviour. This "confession is made unto salvation."

The second public act is baptism. Jesus explicitly stated in his commission to the apostles, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved." The question of our first text—"Men and brethren, what shall we do?"—brought the response, "Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit?" (Acts 2: 38). And right here I want to enter a plea for a little less *interpretation*, and a great deal more *acceptation* of Scripture. There are far too many engaged in explaining away the Word of God. Let us ask, "What saith the Lord?" and stand by that. This is specially needful concerning the place of baptism in the plan of salvation. Many fear to detract from the pre-eminence which belongs to Christ by teaching these things, and at the same time rob him of glory by nullifying his Word. When Ananias was sent to Saul to answer his question, "What shall I do, Lord?" a part of

the instruction given was conveyed in the words, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptised, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22: 16). Professor Agar Beet says, in commenting on these words: "They evidently mean, remove the stain of thy sin by the water of baptism. Ananias knew that Christ had expressly ordained and commanded the rite; and had thus made it a condition of his favor and of the salvation he proclaimed. Therefore, for the repentant persecutor, there was no forgiveness and purification except by formal confession of Christ in baptism." Again he writes: "By solemnly ordaining baptism our Lord made it obligatory on all who seek his favor; and thus made it a condition of salvation. For we cannot enjoy his smile while we refuse to obey his express command" (Treatise, pp. 14, 16). This eminent Wesleyan commentator thus endorses the Scriptural position of baptism in the scheme of redemption. Brother Peter also informs us that "the like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3: 21).

There is no saving efficacy in either these personal or public actions. It is Christ who saves. The efficacy is in his redeeming power. But he has ordained these things for our observance in coming to him. You purchase a bottle of medicine. The directions read: "Take a tablespoonful three times a day, after meals." Where is the healing power? Is it in the directions, or in the medicine? "In the medicine," you reply. But supposing you take the medicine in one draught, or in



other ways do not follow the instructions given; can you expect the virtue in it to avail for you? Certainly not. Whatever power there may be in that medicine will be for your benefit only as you follow the directions. So it is not our faith, our repentance, our confession, our baptism, in themselves, which save. It is Christ. But we come to him for salvation by taking these steps he has marked out for us.

Our next step in the study of this theme reveals two blessings attached to the foregoing commands—pardon and the gift of the Holy Spirit. These are the first two promises of the gospel. The dual command of Acts 2: 38—"Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ"—was, in the first place, "for the remission of your sins." The instruction to the hearers in Solomon's Porch was, "Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3: 19). The penitent Saul was instructed to "be baptised, and wash away thy sins." The assurance of pardon is the first need of the sinner in coming to Christ. Other blessings are of little value if this is lacking. To many the question of pardon is problematical. Some even reason that no one can be certain of his salvation or acceptance with God. It is a kind of lottery to be drawn in eternity. You may draw a prize, or, just as likely, a blank. Others, again, are saved one day because they are happy, and the next day are not saved because they feel miserable. The remission of sins is not a question of feeling, but of fact. Forgiveness does not take place *in us*, but *in God*. The result of that we enjoy when, by the riches of his grace, our sins are blotted out. There is no uncertainty in the

testimony of the Scriptures upon this question. "Knowing, brethren beloved of God, your election." "Being made free from sin." "We know that we have passed from death unto life." "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling." These definite statements of divine truth can be multiplied many times. The forgiveness of sins is never unconditional. If, on God's part, provision is made for our redemption, on the part of the sinner there are the conditions of receiving the blessing. The unfailing promise of the Lord assures us of pardon upon obedience to these commands of the gospel. His word never fails. And we have the knowledge that "our transgression is forgiven, our sin is covered," because we have fulfilled the requirements. The pardon we are now considering relates to our past transgressions. Salvation is in three tenses—past, present and future. It is provision, first of all, for our sin before we "first trusted in Christ." The law of pardon for the erring child of God is not the same as for the alien sinner. The former seeks forgiveness anew by repentance, confession and prayer (Acts 8: 22; 1 John 1: 9); the latter through the steps set forth in this address.

The second blessing attached to these conditions of salvation is the "gift of the Holy Spirit." In obedience the alien has become a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Formerly he has walked after the flesh. Now he is to be led by the Spirit. In the past the desires of the flesh and of the mind controlled him. In the future he is to be "filled with the Spirit." His body, in his

life of sinfulness, was a temple in which the spirit of passion, selfishness and evil reigned. In his new life his body has become a sanctuary in which the Spirit of God dwells. The Holy Spirit is the birthright of the saved. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts." "We are witnesses of these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey him." The energy of the flesh, the wisdom of human understanding, and the power of one's own personality, are not sufficient for this new life into which we are "born of water and of the Spirit." The sufficiency is of God. And this is provided by the indwelling of the Spirit. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." As our past need has been supplied by the pardon of our sins, so our present need is met by the "gift of the Holy Spirit."

"I have a wonderful Guest,  
Who speeds my feet, who moves my hands,  
Who strengthens, comforts, guides, commands,  
Whose presence gives me rest."

This supreme question—"What must I do to be saved?"—involves the consideration not only of cleansing from past sins, but also of a present and future salvation. We need to be saved from the guilt and power of sin, amid the temptations which assail us, even after our union with Christ. Many do not "hold the beginning of their confidence firm unto the end." They *come* to Christ, but do not *continue* in Christ. "They put their hands to the plough, but look back." A present salvation is enjoyed by our daily walking with God, in the fellowship of the Spirit. We are to meet the *obligations* of the Christian life by bringing forth the

“fruit of the Spirit”—“love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance” (Gal. 5 : 22). “We must work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.” With all diligence we must “add to our faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1 : 5-11).

“Now is our salvation nearer than when we first believed.” “There is a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1 : 5). This is eternal. It covers our future need. There is “the crown of life which the Lord has promised to them that love him” (James 1 : 12)—“the crown of righteousness” for all those who love the appearing of the Lord. The crowning act of our salvation will be in the reward we receive at the Father's right hand, when our feet press the streets of gold and we dwell in the eternal sunlight of our Redeemer's presence.

“Life's battle fought, life's victory won,  
The soldier then receives his welcome and his crown.”

And now, in these quiet closing moments, let me ask, Are you saved? I do not ask, Have you education? what are your worldly prospects? how are you prospering in business? do you possess much money? what is your social position? These are questions of interest. But in the light of your deepest need, and in view of all that Christ has done, the question of your salvation is of supreme magnitude. This is the greatest thing in the world. For salvation has depths no one can fathom; heights no one can reach; breadth no one can span; and lengths eternal. Your happiness and greatest usefulness in time, your destiny in eternity, are at stake. The issue is in your hands. You may settle the matter now by receiving Christ and obeying the gospel. Will you do so? "The heart of man is never held by himself; either evil or God will reign there. Let Jesus Christ, your Saviour, be your Lord." Surrender to him. Surrender now. I plead with you not to be among the number who are—

" Going away unsaved to-night,  
Away from redeeming blood;  
Going away from glorious light,  
From pardon, life, and God."

# Faith.

“ Without faith it is impossible to please him ” (Heb. 11 : 6).

“ **M**AN's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him for ever.” As the work reflects the skill, and brings honor to the worker, so should our life's purpose be to bring glory to him whose workmanship we are. With supreme confidence Jesus was able to declare: “He that sent me is with me; the Father hath not left me alone, for I do always those things that please him.” Only in proportion to our faith will a like experience be ours. However varied may be our possessions; however great our attainments; however noble our ambitions; and however commendable our actions—if we have not faith, we cannot please God. He will accept no substitute in its place. “He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” Because of this importance it is natural that we should find this subject of faith occupying a very prominent position in the Word of God. The chapter from which our text is taken is wholly devoted to it. It is the divine picture-gallery of the “heroes of faith.” Here men move before us

governed by this principle. When faith falters men fail. When faith is strong they prevail. "Through faith they obtained a good report." Every movement of this chapter is explained by this.

Faith is also most important in the things of this life. It covers every activity of our being. It is the main-spring in the machinery of human affairs. Along every avenue of our ordinary existence "we walk by faith." There is domestic faith—that which is manifest between husband and wife, parents and children. There is commercial faith—that which leads the baker and butcher to leave their property with you, while waiting until another day for payment—that which leads a man to hand over his money to the banker, and receive a receipt in return. "How the family would dissolve if faith were to be withdrawn from the hearts of its members! How the State would crumble if the faith of man in man were destroyed! How the wheels of commerce would be clogged if men could not deal with each other on the principle of faith! How impossible education would be, and the growth of science and literature, if men could not believe!" For "faith is the largest force that moves humanity in its grandest marches, its noblest achievements and its highest joys." "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Therefore, in inviting your attention to this soul-refreshing theme, we are considering that which is not only prominent in religious but also in secular matters.

In earlier addresses of this series, we have already noted the prominence given to faith in the great scheme of redemption. All are agreed that it is one of the

conditions of salvation for responsible beings. "He that believeth not shall be damned." "He that believeth not is condemned already." "God hath from the beginning chosen us to salvation, through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth." So important have some religious teachers considered it to be that they have, in theory, made it the only condition of salvation. "Only believe" has been a prominent doctrine with them. That we may get this subject before us in the simplest possible way, let us ask and answer three questions—What is faith? How do you get it? What do you do with it?

The first question is very necessary. If we cannot please God without faith, we want to know what this is which makes such a difference with us before God. A Negro preacher, on one occasion, announced his text, and then said, "Bredren, we'll now proceed to *confound* this subject." Very often we confound rather than expound the Scriptures. Our explanations do but mystify. We can all sing very lustily—

" My faith looks up to thee,  
Thou Lamb of Calvary,  
Saviour divine ";

or again—

" Oh for a faith that will not shrink,  
Though pressed by every foe,  
That will not tremble on the brink  
Of any earthly woe !"

Are these mere sentiments? Or do they express our desires, our experience? When we sing of faith's upward look, of its fearlessness, what do we mean?



What is faith? The first verse of our lesson chapter teaches, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." This is sometimes called a definition of faith. But the Bible defines by example rather than by stated terms. It shows what the thing is by its manifestation in the lives of men. Therefore this chapter *illustrates* rather than *defines* faith. This principle has to do with unseen things—not with the objects of sight and knowledge. The things known to us through the senses are not matters of faith. "Were we shut up to the evidence of our senses, and capable only of being moved by what we know, the sphere of influences bearing on us would be exceedingly circumscribed." "But we have faculties in the exercise of which we can believe that which we never saw, and hope for that which we have never realised." Faith as an intellectual exercise relates to facts and principles. "It is simply a belief or persuasion of them as true." Faith as a moral power relates to persons. It is a "confidence or trust in them, in the character, office or work in which they are presented to us." Robinson translates Heb. 11 : 1—"Faith is confidence as to things hoped for; conviction as to things not seen." This is very clear. Faith is thus defined as relating to two classes of objects—things hoped for, and things not seen. In all faith the elements of conviction and confidence must be present. We speak of faith in God, in Christ, in heaven. What is faith in God? Is it not conviction as to the being of God, and confidence in him as our heavenly Father? We "believe that he is [conviction], and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him [confidence]." What is faith in

Christ? Is it not conviction concerning the office and claims of the Son of God, and confidence in him as a personal Saviour? What is faith in heaven? We do not know there is such a place, like we know of the existence of Melbourne. The latter we have seen; the former we have not seen. It is an object of our faith—conviction as to its reality, confidence that we will some day share its bliss. A little child was one day engaged in animated conversation with her uncle. She declared that her mother had told her something. "But," said the uncle, "mother is wrong." "No," was the reply, "mother isn't wrong." "Well, then, she's fooling you." "No, uncle, she's not fooling me. If mother said it is so, it is so, whether it is so or not." The little one had faith in mother, and could not doubt her. In reply to the question, "What is faith?" a small boy answered, "Taking God at his word." Touching Abraham's faith it is written, "He 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." Abraham took God at his word. His full persuasion of the truth of God's promises is the description of strong faith. There is a little girl in your home. Nothing could persuade her to go into a dark room by herself. But you—her father—take her by the hand and accompany her into the dark room. At once all her fear vanishes. She is convinced of father's power, and has confidence that, in his love, he will shield her from all harm. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Unless you recognise his power and love, and are willing to trust him, it cannot be well with you.

" If our faith were but more simple,  
We would take him at his word ;  
And our lives would be all sunshine  
In the presence of the Lord."

Our second question is—How do you get faith? What is the source of this conviction and confidence? Under the enthusiasm of a great religious gathering, a pious old lady prayed, "O Lord, send down faith on a grain of mustard seed." Is this some indescribable gift infused into the heart by God? Is it something to be obtained only after most earnestly imploring God to bestow it? How often have sinners been taught to pray to God for faith—to seek it at the altar or penitent form until he shall be pleased to grant it to them! To prove that faith is the *direct* gift of God this passage is often quoted: "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." But it is quite evident that the gift referred to here is salvation, not faith. Here is a man "seeking salvation"—desirous of being a Christian. He lacks faith. He is taught to pray for it. Is that the Scriptural process by which faith is produced in the heart of man? We all know that faith is a condition of acceptable prayer. "And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matt. 21: 22). "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering" (James 1: 5, 6). Now, if faith is necessary in our petitions, we cannot pray without it. And if we already possess it before our prayer, we don't need to pray for it. Again, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Can a person draw

near as a suppliant for divine favor if he does not believe in God, and has no faith in him? Is not such prayer sinful? "He that believeth not shall be damned." Is God going to damn a man if he does not believe, if faith is a divine gift? If supplication is the appointed means of possessing faith, why do not the heathen "have faith in God" in answer to prayer? Listen attentively to this statement: *Nowhere in all the teachings of Christ and his apostles are sinners taught to pray for faith.*

We want it. How shall we get it? How do the jury have faith in the innocence or guilt of the prisoner who is on trial before them? Simply by the evidence presented to their minds. How do we get faith in the doctor to whom we trust ourselves in the hour of sickness? Is it not generally from testimony presented to our minds concerning him? The phenomenal expansion of the patent medicine business is due, in no small degree, to the wonderful testimonials which the manufacturers are able to produce. "*Advertise or bust*" was a great American motto. Let the people know if you want them to believe. "Faith is produced by testimony, and as far as testimony goes faith may go; but where the testimony stops, faith must and will stop." So that the faith which pleases God is not something to be handed down straight from heaven. "It is not an effect wrought by an abstract or mysterious influence." Men cannot believe if they do not know. We must all be taught of God.

The *testimony* of godly lives will produce faith. Of the Christians at Rome it is written: "Your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world" (Rom. 1: 8). And Paul testifies concerning the church at Thessalonica:

"In every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad." These people were witnessing to the claims of Christ by the power of their own transformed lives. "Ye are epistles of Christ." And to the extent that Christians are partakers of the divine nature do men, very frequently, believe in the divinity of the Son of God. Unbelievers are more interested in studying the Scriptures as *translated in the actions* of the Christian in daily life and service than they are in studying the most beautifully bound copy of the Bible in existence. A detective stood on the outside of an open-air meeting, and listened with considerable interest to the earnest words of a Christian man who was addressing the gathering. The heart of the detective was touched by the burning words which fell from the speaker's lips. He was anxious to know whether the man's life was as good as his message, and resolved that he would "shadow" the man for twenty-four hours, just as he would a criminal. He did so. The result was that the detective found the Christian to be not only an earnest speaker, but also a consistent, consecrated follower of Jesus. The testimony of the man's life led the officer of the law to become a Christian. A Japanese merchant was a passenger on a large steamer. He had studied the Gospels, and had been impressed with the power and beauty of the Saviour's life. He resolved that if he could see someone who lived like Christ he too would become a Christian. A Christian missionary was a fellow-passenger on the steamer. The merchant studied her life very carefully, and saw that Christ was the controlling power in all she did. For her to live was Christ. The testimony of her life made the printed page

more real, and the Japanese believed the gospel and trusted Christ for salvation. A young man was under examination for church membership. He was asked the question, "Under whose preaching were you converted?" His reply was, "Under no person's preaching; under my mother's practising." "An inconsistent Christian is a stumbling-block over which multitudes trip into perdition." The message of the life is most eloquent testimony for or against Christ.

The Word of God, however, is the primary source of faith. "In order to save sinners, God approaches them first of all with his Word. He speaks to them. He demands their attention." He wants men to trust in him. That they may do so he has something important to say. He asks them to listen. "The Bereans were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so. *Therefore, many of them believed*" (Acts 17: 11, 12). In the council at Jerusalem, Peter, in addressing his brethren, said: "Ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles *by my mouth should hear the word* of the gospel, and believe" (Acts 15: 1). Paul and Barnabas entered into the synagogue at Iconium, "and so spake that a great multitude both of the Jews, and also of the Greeks, believed" (Acts 14: 1). "Many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed, and were baptised" (Acts 18: 8). "Howbeit, many that heard the Word believed" (Acts 4: 4). These, and many other passages of Scripture, are illustrative of the teaching in the Roman epistle— "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the

Word of God" (Rom. 10: 17). How shall men call on him in whom they have not believed? How shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard?" John writes: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But *these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name*" (John 20: 30, 31). Christianity's greatest proposition is to be believed upon the evidence furnished in the Gospels. The order is *fact, testimony, faith*. The fact must exist, the testimony must be produced, before faith is possible. All beyond what evidence reveals is mere speculative opinion. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God." How do we understand this through faith? Because we read: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The faith that pleases God is not a product of abstract reasoning, or dreaming, or prayer. It is the result of the testimony furnished by his own blessed Word. The sinner must *know about* Christ, and *believe concerning* Christ, before there is any possibility of his *trusting in* Christ. Many declare they cannot believe, or have no faith, and act as if the reason of this was all outside of themselves, and beyond their power to remedy. Why do they not believe? Why is faith lacking? Just because they never come to the source of faith. The Bible is neglected or carelessly read. Other things crowd out the book of God. A revival of Bible study will lead to a revival of faith. Let the unbeliever reverently study the life story of Jesus of Nazareth contained in the Gospels, and he will rise from that

meditation with a sincere heart-trust in him as a personal Saviour. "While doubt and unbelief prepare their theses on the decadence of Christianity, and the ultimate failure of the gospel"—

" Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,  
And looks to that alone,  
Laughs at impossibilities,  
And cries, ' It shall be done.' "

This brings us to our third question—WHAT DO WE DO WITH FAITH? What is its value? What office does it fill? And I am sure you will accept this statement: "*Faith induces the performance of every act of acceptable obedience to God.*" What does faith in the doctor lead the sick man to do? Is it not this: to send for the physician, place himself completely in his care, and conform to all that is required of him to do? Beyond his faith in the medical man he will not be willing to go. Our interest, our effort, our attainment, in any movement will generally be in proportion to our faith. "According to your faith be it unto you" is not only the measure of divine blessing, but also of achievement in the great things of this life.

"A very good and wholesome doctrine" of Scripture is *justification by faith*. "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5: 1). This has been perverted into the unscriptural doctrine of "*justification by faith ALONE.*" This makes faith the only condition of salvation. The answer to the Philippian jailor is usually quoted to prove this position: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16: 31). But notice, it does not say "*only believe.*" The command to believe is



followed by preaching and baptism. "The devils believed and trembled"—but they remained devils still. "Among the chief rulers also many *believed* on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not *confess* him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue." Their belief was worthless, because they would not take sides with Christ. "Faith without works is dead, being alone." We are to "add to our faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge," and so on through all the graces of the Christian life. Faith is the foundation. It has its value in the superstructure raised upon it. The importance of faith will be manifest in the fact that it will lead its possessor to do what God says, and in God's way. It led Abel to offer "unto God a more excellent sacrifice than that of Cain." It led Enoch to walk with Jehovah in the life that was pleasing to him, and "he was translated, that he should not see death." It led Noah to heed the divine warning and to prepare an "ark to the saving of his house." It led Abraham—"the father of the faithful"—to turn his back on every interest of life that he might follow the leadings of the Almighty; it brought him in triumph through the supreme test of his life—the sacrifice of Isaac. It led Moses to renounce the favors of Pharaoh's court, "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." "But what shall I more say?" For the time is too short to describe the sacrifices, to portray the sufferings, to picture the conquests or to declare the glories of these mighty men of faith. Their whole lives in relation to God were animated by this principle. A large brick building was being demolished. A strong rope had been fastened to

the top of one of the walls, and a workman instructed to pull steadily from the other end. He did so. A fellow-workman couldn't see any benefit in doing that, and laughingly joked the other man about it. The workman pulled away, and just answered, "The boss told me to do this, and I guess he knows the purpose of it." In a little while the wall crashed to the ground. The pulling on the rope was just part of the plan. And because the workman had faith in the master-builder, he did as he was told.

"The influence of faith over its possessor will depend on the *objects* that faith rests on. If he puts confidence in that which is true and pure, he will come into fellowship with truth and purity; if his faith rests on that which is false and corrupt, false and corrupting influences will pour in upon his own soul." Christ is the object of the sinner's faith. He is to put his trust in the Son of God; not in a creed, not in an ordinance, not in a religious system, but in a person—and that person ~~one~~ who embodies in himself all the wisdom, love, power and goodness that we need. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "I know whom I have believed." "In him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and we are made complete in him." We are to centre our trust in Jesus. He must be the object of our faith if we would be saved. This is more than a mere intellectual ~~argument~~ ~~argument~~ to some truth concerning Christ. It is the putting of

one's life, character, destiny, into his keeping for time and eternity, believing in his power to save and to help. This is a solemn thing to do. "It is a great thing to be convinced of our helplessness and need of a Saviour; it is a greater thing to trust Jesus as that Saviour, and to make ourselves over to him in solemn covenant, to trust his power to save, and to do whatever he commands." Speaking of faith, a negro once declared: "If the Lord tells me to jump through a brick wall, it is my business to jump, and the Lord's business to make the hole." That is, faith will lead us to do the Lord's will while leaving the results to him. There will be no essentials and non-essentials to the man of faith. Faith will inquire what the will of the Lord is, and then will render glad obedience. The one who has "first trusted in Christ" will turn from sin in genuine repentance; will with joy "confess with the mouth Jesus as Lord"; will yield himself up to be "buried with Christ by baptism"; and will "walk by faith" in the life of daily sacrifice and service to which he has been called.

" Lord, give us such a faith as this,  
 And then, whate'er may come,  
 We'll taste, e'en here, the hallowed bliss  
 Of our eternal home!"

Dear unsaved friend, "have faith in God." Trust his Word. For "faith when it rests upon the Word of God" is immovable. "They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved." Trust in him *now*. "He that believeth not shall be damned." You are in awful danger if you have not faith. Delay is dangerous. God puts no premium on procrastination. "Now is the accepted time; to-day is

the day of salvation." Soon faith will be lost in glorious sight. "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now we know in part, but then shall we know even as also we are known." With surrendered heart and subdued will, will you now say—

"Nay, but I yield, I yield,  
I can hold out no more;  
I sink, by dying love compelled,  
And own thee Conqueror!"

# Repentance.

"The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked ; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent" (Acts 17 : 30).

**T**HE human will is one of the greatest obstacles to the success of the gospel. It is not difficult to get men to believe. In this goodly land, with our open Bibles, free institutions, and Christian civilisation, it is not an easy matter for any person to continue in unbelief. It is true that there are those who strenuously assert their infidelity, and profess to be superior to any such myth or superstition as the religion of Jesus Christ. But this attitude generally changes when such persons are face to face with danger, sickness or death. Two sailors were quietly talking together one evening on board ship. The one was speaking to the other of his earlier life, and of the lessons of piety which he had learned at home. The other man—George—ridiculed, declared that there was no God, and that all this talk was mere moonshine. They separated, and went on duty. A little later George was drawn overboard. In response to his cry of distress a boat was quickly lowered, and in about half an hour he

was safe in his bunk. The next morning, the former sailor spoke to George. "Did you think that the ship was going to leave you, and that you were lost?" "Yes, I did," said he. "Now, George, be honest; what did you do then?" "I prayed to God." "But I thought you did not believe in God." George replied, "When a man is overboard, on a dark night, and the ship going away from him, and he expects to die, a man *thinks* different, and *feels* different and *talks* different from what he does when he is on the top-gallant fore-castle spinning yarns in safety." There is as much sham infidelity as sham religion in the world. How many refuse to act up to the consciousness of their own need, and to their conviction regarding the claims of Jesus! Their judgments are convinced, their imaginations are kindled, their feelings are moved—but their wills remain unsubdued. This was the experience of the Great Teacher. He spent eighteen months in ministry in Galilee, "teaching in the synagogue, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and disease among the people." Christ had a busy time. Yet he turned his back on the scene of those labors with but little accomplished. Why? Because of the stubborn wills of the people. "Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes" (Matt. 11: 20, 21). "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented

at the preaching of Jonah; and, behold, a greater than Jonah is here" (Matt. 12: 41). It is a terrible thing that a man's will can keep him from the Saviour, and shut him out of heaven. Repentance concerns the will of man. It is commanded because without it we cannot come to God.

It is a very prominent subject of New Testament teaching. The message of the Baptist was, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." "Bring forth fruits meet for repentance." Jesus sounded out the same call. In his charge to his apostles he commanded that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name." The Pentecost command was, "Repent, and be baptised"; the instruction in Solomon's Porch, "Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." When the Christian Jews heard of the conversion of the Gentiles, "they glorified God, and said, Then hath God also unto the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." To the Athenians Paul declared: God "commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent." God is "not willing that any should perish but rather that all should come to repentance." A preacher was conducting a series of meetings in a town noted for its ungodliness. He preached one night on repentance. The following night he discoursed on the same subject. A third night his theme was the same. Again on the fourth night he addressed his audience on the same topic. Then the people could endure it no longer, and suggested to the preacher that he change to something else. The preacher replied: "Just as soon as you repent I am ready to move on to another sermon." We might lose in popularity, but would

assuredly gain in power, if there were more calling to repentance in the preaching of to-day. Only as men are led to repentance can the enriching influences of the gospel enter their lives. "As great blocks of granite or bricks are laid in soft mortar and then harden into one solid structure, so when repentance, godly repentance, softens and renders pliable our spirits, it is then that gospel principles can be laid into righteous character and can harden into granite strength and endurance."

The command to repent is universal. It is for "all men, everywhere." It cannot be restricted to the Jews. We cannot pass it on to others. None can escape its requirements. It is God's command. It is for us to obey. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." This is the fearful consequence of disobedience. "The gospel is a system of means and agencies divinely adapted to a great end—the regeneration of our nature. It is meant to 'bring us to God' in desire, will, and action, that we may be like him and enjoy his fellowship." These things are impossible apart from repentance. It is necessary, then, that we first of all consider the question—What is repentance? For unless we know what it is we cannot tell whether we have obeyed the divine mandate.

The most common idea concerning repentance is that it means sorrow for sin. If this were true, it would not be easy to find many who have not repented. Are we not all sorry for sin? The vilest offender has seasons of grief over his wrongdoing. The man who is enslaved by drink weeps bitter tears over the sin which is degrading and destroying him. He sorrows because it is ruining his business, tarnishing his family name,



and making him an offence in the eyes of his friends. But he keeps on drinking. The woman whose tongue is an "unruly member" is sorry for the biting, scathing words which she allows to pass from her lips. She cries over her sin, and still keeps on offending. Men do not usually glory in their evil ways. They are ashamed of them. They seek to hide them as far as possible. Much of the so-called deathbed repentance is nothing more than the emotion of sorrow. A preacher in England visited a noted pick-pocket, who was seriously ill. The consolation and hope of the gospel were presented to him. The thief expressed his penitence, and his assurance of forgiveness for his past misdeeds. The preacher sat by the bedside awaiting the end. He was suddenly startled by the dying man exclaiming, in almost his last words, "Look out for your watch!" The pick-pocket had taken it from the preacher even while he sat there. Here was sorrow for sin, possibly, but certainly not repentance. There can be no repentance without sorrow for sin, but there is frequently sorrow for sin where there is not repentance. That these two things are not the same is illustrated in Paul's message to the Corinthians: "I now rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye were made sorry unto repentance. . . . For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, a repentance which bringeth no regret: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (2 Cor. 7: 9, 10, R.V.). Their sorrow and repentance were not identical. The latter was the result of the former.

Neither are repentance and reformation two words for the same thing. This is a common mistake. We

are to "bring forth fruits meet for repentance." A transformed life is a result or an effect of repentance. It is not the tree, but the fruit gathered from its branches.

Repentance, then, is something standing between godly sorrow for sin and reformation of life. It is a result of the former and a cause of the latter. There are two words in the New Testament commonly translated repentance. One of these would be more fittingly translated regret. We read that Judas, "when he saw that Jesus was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders." Then, having cast the money down, "he went out and hanged himself." Judas could not have taken his own life had he truly repented. He regretted his act of betrayal, and, in despair, became a suicide. His was a "sorrow of the world that worketh death." The other word is one which means a change for the better. It indicates a change of the mind or will in respect of sin. "When a man is so thoroughly filled with sorrow, and mourning, and self-reproach, on account of his sins that his will is subdued to the will of God, and he says, I will sin no more, I will hereafter submit to the will of God," he has repented. The stubborn will is the seat of all rebellion against God, and of all rejection of Jesus Christ. In repentance that will is subdued, and we can truly say—

" Renew my will from day to day,  
Blend it with thine, and take away  
All that now makes it hard to say—  
Thy will be done."

Jesus declared: "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and, behold, a greater than Jonah is here." Now, what did the Ninevites do which Christ calls repentance? The inhabitants of this city were very wicked. Jehovah sent his messenger to them. Jonah began to proclaim: "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." The people were at once aroused. They believed God. They proclaimed a fast. They humbled themselves. They cried mightily unto God. They heeded the admonition of the King—"to turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands." Here is such a sorrow for their past sins that they humbled themselves before God, and determined to forsake the things which were bringing upon them the divine condemnation. In the far country the prodigal reflected upon his great folly in leaving the father's house, and in wasting his substance. He sorrowed over it. He determined to change his course. He said: "I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." Here his resolution was formed. "And he arose, and came to his father." In this his determination was carried into effect. He had repented. "It is not the renunciation of this or that particular vice, but the renunciation of sin itself, in all its forms and grades and hues, and the withdrawal of heart and life from fellowship with it," which constitutes repentance. "This word is expressive of change. Faith respects that which is *true*; repentance that which is *right*. Faith looks away from falsehood

and error to the truth ; repentance looks away from sin to righteousness and holiness." "What is repentance?" asked a Sunday School superintendent ; and a little girl wisely answered, "It is being sorry enough to quit."

" Repentance is to leave  
The sins we loved before ;  
And show that we in earnest grieve  
By doing so no more."

Now I call your attention to a second question—What produces repentance? How is the will of the sinner brought into subjection to the will of God? Is it something effected by miraculous agency? Notice, this is a command. Commands are to be obeyed. Divine injunctions are reasonable. God *never* calls upon men to do impossible things. The fact of the command being given is proof of the power to obey. "God also unto the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." But not in the sense that it was a gift miraculously bestowed upon them. It was a divine gift because the Lord made it possible for them to repent, by sending the gospel to them. The change of the will is just a question of the presentation of adequate motives. "When God would change our wills he presents motives embracing every good thing in this life, and everything in the life to come—motives as high as heaven, pure as Jesus, and strong as the pillars of the throne of Jehovah." Let us now consider some of these motives.

Paul teaches: "Godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation" (2 Cor. 7 : 10). Here is one motive—godly sorrow for sin. The sinner has transgressed God's law, despised God's mercy, spurned the benevolence of the Father's love. He is an offender against

the Almighty. "Godly sorrow is produced by respect for God and his violated law." David cried: "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight." He had sinned against others. But his wrongdoing was specially grievous in his eyes because he had offended against the righteousness and holiness of Jehovah. Not until the sinner realises that he has "sinned against heaven"—not until he sorrows toward God—will he repent. "The sorrow of the world" may be produced by the fact that a man is detected in crime, suffers in body and mind, injures his business, loses his friends, blasts his reputation, or fails to succeed in some of his schemes. There is nothing of God in his sorrow. It worketh death.

A second motive is the goodness of God. "Ov despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" (Rom. 2:4). Here is a theme calculated to inspire the heart and subdue the will of man! Have you meditated upon God's wonderful goodness to you? Have you received of his bounty, and never said, "Thank you"? "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness!" It is manifested in a thousand ways.

" We read it in the sky above,  
We read it in the earth below,  
In seas that swell, and streams that flow."

It is exhibited in the daily providences of our lives. So many other things demand our attention—so many others are the objects of our care—we lose sight of the "Giver of every good and of every perfect gift." If we would but take time to

## Repentance.

Count our *many* blessings,  
Name them one by one,  
Then it would surprise us  
What our Lord had done.

Most of all is the "goodness of God" declared in the glories of redemption. "He has not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." Had God done so, how many would have been crying, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are unsaved"! But, "when there was no eye to pity, and no arm to save, his eye pitied, and his arm brought us salvation." "God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." If you question God's goodness, just try to think what the world would be like if Christ had not come into it to save sinners, or what it would be like if Christ could be taken out of it. Just think of what you owe to God for his unspeakable gift. Is there anything of beauty, of power, of inspiration, of comfort, of hope or of usefulness presented to your life, and to the world, which cannot be attributed, directly or indirectly, to the goodness of God in the gift of Jesus Christ? Rob the world of Christ, and it must be left in awful gloom. "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?" Shall we not "take the cup of salvation" and call upon his name? Meditation on the "goodness of God will lead to repentance.

The Athenians were instructed that "God commandeth all men everywhere to repent; because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath

raised him from the dead" (Acts 17: 30, 31). The certainty of the judgment is here presented as a motive to repentance. This was also the message of Christ to the cities of Galilee. And, surely, if men are not constrained to surrender to the will of the Lord by any other motive, the thought of a coming judgment will lead them to do so. "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after death the judgment." God has a day in which "he will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ." "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." "Each one shall give account of himself to God." The Lord will judge in righteousness, and the unrighteous will not be saved. A court room is a sad place. Oh, what will the judgment day be to the impenitent! "God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." How foolish for the sinner to *appoint himself* to wrath by neglecting salvation. I would ask every impenitent sinner here in this meeting, Have you ever sat down and calmly and thoughtfully considered the consequences of your sinful life? Think of what sin means to this life—its destroying, deceitful power; its misery, shame, and degradation. How it blights, saddens, and enslaves! What a world this would be if sin were banished from it! Then think, too, of sin's eternal consequences—separation from God and heaven; eternal condemnation. "The wages of sin is death." "There shall not enter therein anything that defileth or worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, but they that are written in the Lamb's book of life." I am sure you have reflected upon these things at some time. But not sufficiently. You have run away from these sad thoughts. You have let other things crowd them out of your mind.

You did everything in your power to banish them. There is power enough in this thought of the judgment to lead you to repentance if you will seriously reflect upon it. Will you do so? Will you meditate on these words—"IT IS APPOINTED UNTO MEN ONCE TO DIE, BUT AFTER THIS THE JUDGMENT"? God help you.

"The tender and encouraging sympathy that heaven cherishes for the penitent" is also a strong motive to repentance. The sympathising Jesus assures us "that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance" (Luke 15:7). How wonderful a thing it is that all heaven should be interested in our obedience to God! The purpose of the gospel is to lead men to do God's "will on earth even as the angels do it in heaven." When the sinner repents it means the enthronement of Christ, and the coming into harmony with the will of God. This is the cause of joy even among the angels of the divine presence.

"There is joy among the angels,  
And their harps with music ring,  
When a sinner comes repenting,  
Bending low before the King."

A third question is both necessary and important—What are the results of repentance? John said to the multitude who came to his baptism: "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance." "And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do, then?"—that is, to manifest their repentance. The answer was: "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat,



let him do likewise." Their charity and philanthropy would be "fruits meet for repentance." Then the publicans came, and asked, "What shall we do?" John replied: "Exact no more than that which is appointed you." They were to show they had repented by their honesty and justice. "The soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do?" They were instructed: "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages." Self-control and contentment were the fruit they had to bear if they were truly repentant.

Scriptural repentance bears fruit in two directions—*restitution and reformation*. The former does not receive as much emphasis as it should. In conversation with the Saviour, Zacchæus said: "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold" (Luke 19: 8). Salvation came to his house because Zacchæus was a changed man. His repentance was bearing fruit. He was making restitution—restoring fourfold—for his former wrongdoing. Had he refused to do so there would have been nothing genuine in his repentance. A popular commentator—Adam Clarke—says: "No man should expect mercy at the hand of God, who, having wronged his neighbor, refuses, when he has it in his power, to make restitution. Were he to weep tears of blood, both the justice and mercy of God would shut out his prayer, if he make not his neighbor amends for the injury he has done him. He is a dishonest man who illegally holds the property of another in his hands." A young evangelist was telling me recently of an experience which illustrates this. A

young friend came to him one day to make restitution of two stamps. The preacher had been showing him a collection of stamps, and while he was not looking the young man took two of them. They were not missed. But the young man was subsequently led to give himself to Christ. One of his first acts after his conversion was to seek out the preacher, confess his sin, and offer to return the stamps or their value with interest added. It was only a little thing. But it indicated the genuineness of the change in the young man's life. "Can any man think that he is sorry for that sin or wrong which he has done, when he makes no effort to make amends to him who was injured in person, character, or property, by it? Works worthy of his professed repentance are wanting, so long as any being whom he has injured in person, property, or reputation, is unredressed to the utmost extent of his ability." Restitution concerns the actions of our past, in relation, chiefly, to our fellowmen. We must get right with them, by undoing the wrongs as far as we can, before we get right with God. Such evidence of the sincerity of a sinner's penitence is necessary both for the "satisfaction of the penitent himself and for the good of the community."

The other result of repentance will be reformation. "It is not the purpose of the gospel to save men in their sins, but from their sins." To assert that we have repented, while continuing in our former ungodliness, is to give the lie to our professions. The Ninevites repented, because "God saw their works, that they *turned from their evil way.*" The prodigal repented, because when "he came to himself" he forsook the life in the far country, and came back home again. There

are many Scriptures which illustrate this. "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." "Amend your ways and your doings." "Cease to do evil; learn to do well." We are "new creatures in Christ Jesus." We are to "put off the old man with his deceitful nature, and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and holiness of truth." We are to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us." We are to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live righteously, soberly and godly in this present evil world." Christ is to be formed in us. Repentance means that the liar must speak the truth; the blasphemer must swear not at all; the drunkard must be sober; the immoral must be pure; the ungodly must be Christlike; and the selfish must be unselfish. In a word, the sinner must turn from "darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God."

A wicked city repented under the preaching of a prophet. The message of One greater than Jonah has come to you. Yet you have not repented. God is calling you. Jesus invites. Will you cast your sins behind you, and cry, "I yield, I yield, O Lord! Thy goodness, thy infinite compassion, thy great mercy, have subdued my stubborn will. I cast myself upon thee. Henceforth I will be thine, yea, thine alone"? Will you do this now? To-morrow may be too late.

"There is a time—we know not when;  
A point—we knew not where—  
That marks the destiny of men,  
For glory or despair."

**“Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”** Think what it will mean to you to perish in your sin. How awful a position! Be wise and obey this divine command, and accept the overtures of divine mercy.

## The Confession.

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10: 9, 10, R.V.).

**C**ÆSAREA PHILIPPI was the scene of one of the most interesting incidents in the life of Jesus. He was soon to leave the sphere of his labors in that northern country. His life was rapidly drawing to a close. His face was toward the south—toward the agony of Gethsemane, the suffering and shame of Calvary. He gathered his little band of disciples around him. And while they were looking earnestly up into his face, he asked them the simple question, "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?" "Jesus knew what was in man." He did not need to ask this question to receive information. The inquiry is made for the benefit of those called upon to answer it. Have you noticed that the Lord did not draw men out in expression of opinion regarding his teaching? He seeks, rather, their testimony concerning *himself*. "What think ye of Christ? whose Son is he?" That is the test question of the Master. If men get into

right relations to Christ, they will get into right relationship to his truth, to everything of the Christian system. The people held different views of Christ. The disciples knew this from mingling with them. Therefore they answered their Leader's question by replying: "Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets" (Matt. 16: 13, 14). All believed him to be more than an ordinary man, but none had true conceptions of his position. Then Jesus became more personal. These disciples had been with him now for some time. Others had not had opportunities of knowing Christ as they had. They were in daily touch with his marvellous life. How pertinent, then, his next question!—"But whom say ye that I am?" Peter—the impetuous—answered for that little company: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Had the apostle been influenced by the discussions of men—had he been governed by the opinions of his day—he never would have made such a declaration. His was a heaven-born conception of the dignity of the Nazarene. Flesh and blood had not revealed it, but the Father in heaven. What understanding of divine truth we might possess; what comprehension of the position of Jesus we might enjoy, were our ears but open to the voice of the Father! From the banks of the Jordan that voice still declares: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Do we wonder at Jesus' pronouncement of blessing upon Peter as he proclaims this sublime fact of the gospel!

It was in connection with Peter's confession that Jesus reveals one of the supreme purposes of his

ministry—to erect a spiritual structure which he calls “my church.” “And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matt. 16: 18, 19). Here is a picture in which Jesus is presented as a builder; the building upon which he was to work is the church; and Peter was to be the doorkeeper. “The gates of hell”—all the powers of the unseen world—should not be mighty enough to overthrow it, for “it was founded upon a rock.” The church of Christ was not then in existence. Jesus was going to build it. It was to be built “*upon this rock.*” What was the rock? Was it Peter? It could not very well be so, because he was the appointed doorkeeper. He could not have the keys, and be the foundation as well. Centuries before this, the prophet had said: “Behold I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence: and he that believeth on him shall not be put to shame.” Years after, Paul declared: “Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” Here is the rock on which the church should be built—Christ alone—and especially upon him as “the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” This was the truth confessed by Peter. The church must stand or fall upon the truth of this proposition. If this dual position does not rightly belong to Jesus, the church could not possibly continue to exist. “We are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.”

Membership in any organisation usually requires a declaration or statement of some kind. Constitutions must be signed; articles or bye-laws accepted; principles endorsed; or some affirmation made, by those seeking membership. In religious societies it has been customary to subscribe to some written creed, to accept some standard of government or discipline, and to relate Christian experiences, preparatory to enrollment as members of the body. To become a member of the body of Christ—the church Jesus built—it was not necessary to recite the so-called Apostles' Creed; to accept the Westminster Confession of Faith; to endorse the Thirty-nine Articles; to learn the Catechism; to narrate some experiences in discipleship; to confess belief in the Trinity; to acknowledge publicly faith in the divine origin and inspiration of the Scriptures; or to declare one's views on predestination, election, future punishment and many other interesting themes. The creed of the apostolic church was a Person; the only confession of faith, the simple declaration, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." As Neander says: "At the beginning, when it was important that the church should rapidly extend itself, those who confessed their belief in Jesus as the Messiah (among Jews), or their belief in the one God and in Jesus as the Messiah (among the Gentiles), were immediately baptised, as appears from the New Testament." The acknowledgment of this one great fundamental fact of Christianity was the only public pronouncement required from the one yielding to Jesus, in the earliest ages of the church. Is it not all-sufficient now?

This confession is definite and distinct. It concerns a



Person. It is not, however, always clothed in the same words. It is presented in rich and varied forms of expression. In the lifetime of the Saviour, men gave utterance to this great truth in many different ways. Andrew has spent the night with Jesus, and comes forth from that interview to seek Peter, that he may declare unto him, "We have found the Messiah." Philip has no sooner responded to the call of Christ than he "findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses, in the law and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph." Nathanael, too, is ready to acknowledge the greatness of this One, as there bursts from his lips the words, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel." From Jacob's well the woman of Samaria goes into the city to make known the conviction of her heart in the invitation, "Come, see a Man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" The teaching to which the men listened led them to say: "We know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." In the hour when his disciples were forsaking him, Jesus turned to his apostles with those words of exquisite pathos: "Will ye also go away?" How quickly the answer is given: "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!" The dark cloud of sorrow hangs over the Bethany home. Death has invaded it. The grave holds one dearer than life to Mary and Martha. Jesus comes to weep with and to comfort the sorrowing ones. From his lips the words of hope fall on the ears of Martha: "I am the Resurrection, and the Life; he that believeth on

me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" Even in this sad hour no blinding mist of doubt rises between Martha and her Lord, and she confesses: "Yea, Lord; I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." From the annunciation message to the shepherds at Bethlehem—"Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord"—to the pre-ascension confession of doubting Thomas—"My Lord and my God"—Jesus was acknowledged in some simple statement which recognised his divine position and office.

I desire you to notice, now, some illustrations of this confession of faith, in connection with the proclamation of the good news by the apostles and evangelists of the New Testament. "Paul appeals to the past while exhorting Timothy in the pursuit of eternal life." "Fight the good fight of the faith; lay hold on the life eternal, whereunto thou wast called, and didst confess the good confession in the sight of many witnesses" (1 Tim. 6: 12, R.V.). The apostle bids the young evangelist "look back and recall a scene and re-hear a voice. There in Lystra, a city lying on a dreary plain at the foot of a volcanic mountain, the population generally idolators, there in the very first days of the preaching of Paul and Barnabas, a Jewish boy was modestly standing in the sight of many witnesses, a grandmother's kindly eye resting upon him, and a mother's heart throbbing with joy. He is but a little way in his teens; yet, in the hushed assembly, bravely and beautifully he speaks aloud the faith of his youthful

heart—"I believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.'" In that "good confession," Timothy had committed himself to the service of the Redeemer. He is a man now. Years of experience in the ministry of the gospel have been his. But he must not forget his first public acknowledgment of his Lord. That must be kept fresh in his mind as a holy incentive in the warfare in which he is engaged, and in laying hold of the hope set before him.

Here is another picture. A man has journeyed far to engage in worship at Jerusalem. He has faithfully discharged his duties, and his face is turned towards his home again. As he rides along the way he earnestly meditates upon the Scriptures. The message which has attracted his attention is all an enigma to him. A preacher's simple question—"Understandest thou what thou readest?"—draws out the response, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" He needs instruction, and this is furnished, as, from the same Scripture, Philip "preached unto him Jesus." Nothing further is made known concerning the truths presented to this inquiring mind. Peculiar results follow. As they ride along the way they come near to some water. At sight of this, the eunuch turns inquiringly to the evangelist with the question, "What doth hinder me to be baptised?" Is there any obstacle in the way? Simply and clearly the answer is given: "If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest." Here is the condition—faith in the Lord Jesus. The preacher's voice is hardly silent before we hear in thrilling triumphant tones the earnest words: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Immediately following

this simple declaration, Philip and the eunuch "went down into the water," and the latter was "buried with Christ by baptism" (Acts 8: 26-39). The message of the evangelist led the Ethiopian to know the Lord, to believe on him, and to desire to obey the gospel. Between his faith and baptism there stands this "good confession," expressive of the former, and necessary to the latter. It satisfies the preacher as to the fitness of the eunuch for this ordinance of divine appointment. It expresses the confidence this seeker now has in him who "was wounded for his transgressions."

Some of you may be saying in your own minds, "Why, any person could stand up and repeat the words, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God,' and not mean anything by it." That is true. But the confession is not merely in the repetition of these words. Its value is in what this declaration means. It is the "good confession" only as it represents three things on the part of the confessor. It is, first, **THE RECOGNITION OF THE MESSIAHSHIP AND DIVINITY OF JESUS.** That was its meaning at Cæsarea Philippi when it came with heaven-born inspiration from the lips of Peter. Whilst others looked upon Jesus as John the Baptist, Jeremiah, Elijah or one of the prophets—that is, a great and good man—Peter recognised the divine office and position of Jesus. He was first of all the Christ, the Messiah, or the Anointed One. As such he was the fulfilment of the promises and prophecies to Israel, the object of Jewish longing and hope. In the ninth chapter of John there is recorded the miracle of the healing of the blind man. "But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight." They therefore

inquired of the young man's parents: "Is this your son who ye say was born blind?" "How, then, doth he now see?" The parents answered: "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but by what means he now seeth we know not . . . he is of age; ask him; he shall speak for himself." "These words spake his parents because they feared the Jews; for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue." To recognise Jesus as the Messiah led to excommunication from the synagogue fellowship. Therefore the person who does not believe in the Messiahship of Jesus cannot make this confession.

It is also the recognition of the divinity of Jesus. He is "the Son of the living God." This was the meaning of Peter's confession. It was what the eunuch and Timothy declared. Paul says that "Christ Jesus, before Pontius Pilate, witnessed the good confession" (1 Tim. 6: 13, R.V.). By the law of the Jews he ought to die, "because he made himself the Son of God." Upon that memorable trial before the Roman Governor, Jesus had to face the charge of making himself equal with God. He does not deny the accusation. He is a King, though his kingdom is not of this world. Upon the mount of transfiguration God declared: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him." Jesus asked the blind man whom he had healed: "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" He answered: "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" Jesus said: "Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee." "And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him." He was declared to be the Son of God by the

resurrection from the dead. More than forty times in the New Testament is that title given to Jesus. This confession is the recognition of that fact. The unbeliever, the one who looks upon Jesus as a man, or as a son of God, in the ordinary sense, cannot make this good confession.

The great postulate of the Christian religion—that for which all the evidence in the Gospels is presented—is : “That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God” (John 20 : 30, 31). The design of the Gospel narratives is to lead to this twofold conviction, and through that to the enjoyment of a life-giving faith. In this confession, then, we first of all make known our conviction of these facts.

Again, this confession means THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST. The revised version of Rom. 10 : 9 makes this thought clear : “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth JESUS as LORD.” “Of the Son, God hath said, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.” “All authority is given unto him.” “To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become children of God.” To confess Jesus as Lord is to submit to his Sovereignty—to say from the heart, “*My Lord and my God*”; to determine, “Where he sends, I’ll go ; what he says, I’ll do ; what he wants, I’ll be.” It is to accept Christ in his three official relations. First, as Prophet, or Teacher sent from God. Man needs a teacher. God speaks through his Son. Men are to “hear him.” The confession is the covenant of the surrendered life to hearken unto the voice of Jesus. Second, as Priest. As Prophet, Jesus represents God to man ; as Priest, he represents man to God. The

confessor publicly proclaims his acceptance of the Priesthood of Jesus, as he "offered up one sacrifice for sin for ever," and "ever liveth to make intercession for us." And, again, as King. To Jesus has been given the divine right to reign and rule over all the sons of men. The heart is his throne; the life, territory to be subject to him. Everything is to be under his dominion. All this is to be recognised and accepted in this confession of faith. Consequently, no person can make this confession who says, "Christ is not going to rule over me. I am going to plan my life for myself. I will do as I please."

This confession also has this third meaning—THE PLEDGE OF PERSONAL ALLEGIANCE TO CHRIST. We read in John's Gospel: "Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12: 42, 43). Here was conviction, but not confession. The fear of losing the praises of men kept the rulers from taking a stand for Christ. Their confession of him would have been expressive of allegiance. This they were not prepared to give. In the declaration, "I believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," we have the lover plighting his troth; the "I will" of the marriage vow; the soldier's pledge of loyalty. Can anything be more solemn and impressive than the transfer of one life into the keeping of another? Is there no value in a covenant of service? Is there no meaning in the oath of allegiance to the King? This confession stands for all of these things. It is the penitent believer saying—

“ My life, my love, I give to thee,  
O Lamb of God, who died for me ;  
And may I ever faithful be,  
My Saviour and my God.”

It is of interest, too, to notice *how* and *why* this confession is to be made. We are not left in doubt upon these questions. “ If thou shalt *confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord.*” “ *With the mouth* confession is made unto salvation.” Timothy thus confessed Christ “ before many witnesses.” It is not made by signing a card, by raising the hand when no one but the preacher is looking, by going into an inquiry room, or by kneeling at a penitent form or an altar rail. It is a declarative act, a public committal to the service of the Redeemer. For this reason it is to be made with the mouth. And its purpose is “ unto salvation.” Paul attaches the promise, “ shall be saved,” to two things—confessing Jesus as Lord, and believing “ in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead.” This reveals the importance of this act.

We owe it to Christ thus to confess him. He has done so much for us. “ He was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor.” “ He died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God.” He has endured the contradiction of sinners. All the forces of evil, all the enemies of righteousness, and all the powers of darkness, are opposed to him. We cannot remain neutral concerning his claims. We must be for or against him. There is no other position possible. Are you not involved in great debt to the Saviour ? In one of his wars Cyrus took captive an Armenian princess. She was condemned to death. Hearing of this, her husband came into the camp of his



conqueror and offered his life in her stead. Cyrus was so touched with the devotion of the prince that he resolved to pardon them both, and to restore them to their dominion. Officers and soldiers stood there talking over the magnanimity of their great leader. The princess was near by, her eyes filled with tears. Some one turned to her with the question, "What do you think of Cyrus?" "I was not thinking of Cyrus," was her reply. "Of whom, then, were you thinking?" And, looking up into the face of her husband, her eyes luminous with love, she answered: "I was thinking of the one who would willingly have died for me." Because of all he has done for you, you ought to confess Christ.

" Under an eastern sky,  
Amid a rabble cry,  
A man went forth to die—  
For me !

" Thorn-crowned, his blessed head,  
Blood-stained his weary tread,  
Cross-laden he was led—  
For me !

" Pierced were his hands and feet ;  
Three hours upon him beat  
Fierce rays of noon-tide heat—  
For me !

" Thus wert thou made all mine !  
Lord, make me wholly thine ;  
Grant grace and strength divine—  
To me !"

It is due to the church that we confess Christ. The church is his body. It is the pillar and support of the truth. It is the great moral hospital, the spiritual sanitarium, of the world. "That which is vital to the

church is the divinity of its Founder, and his Sovereignty as the Christ of God. On this the church is built. Out of this grows every obligation of her membership, every duty, every hope, every motive to Christian life. No one who believes this can rightly refuse or neglect to take a place in the church of Christ."

For the sake of an unbelieving and perishing world it is necessary for us to confess Christ. "No man liveth unto himself." If we have been brought by faith and penitence to turn from sin, we owe it to others to acknowledge him who has won our love and subdued our will. We have reached the point where we are obliged to bring out and confess that which is in our hearts. "The confession is the birthplace of the unselfish element in religion." It is consideration for others. It is "to the glory of God the Father," but also to the welfare of those who hear. It is the "Christlike impartation" of good to them. We must share our treasure.

"Now I will tell to sinners round  
What a dear Saviour I have found ;  
I'll point to his redeeming blood,  
And say: ' Behold the way to God ! ' "

But it is specially due to ourselves to confess Christ. We are confronted by so much danger. The influence of sin is everywhere manifest. Our conflicts are very real. The Adversary is no myth or phantom of our imagination. "We are not safe until we have committed ourselves openly, unreservedly and irrevocably to Christ and his cause." This act of committal will be a source of strength to us in the hour of temptation. It will save us from defeat many a time. As with Timothy, it will

be an incentive to "press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." There is the assurance of personal gain to us in this confession. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God" (1 John 4: 15). What inspiration in that assurance! Again: "Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 10: 32). It will need grace to confess Jesus "*before men*"—before loved ones, friends and companions. But what encouragement the Lord gives to us in so doing! Before a grander company, and in purer and holier surroundings, he will confess us.

The time is coming when "every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." If we have not with gladness confessed him here, we shall with sadness confess him there. If we have not confessed him unto salvation, it will be ours one day to confess him unto condemnation. "If we deny him, he also will deny us." If we have denied him before men, he will deny us before the Father and the holy angels. Don't take any risks. Come, and confess him now.

# Baptism.

“And he commanded them to be baptised in the name of the Lord” (Acts 10 : 48).

EVERY truth of the Christian religion is important. Every step in the plan of salvation has its rightful place. The Lord makes no mistakes.

There is no unnecessary thing in the economy of God. A wise and beneficent purpose is attached to every command resting upon divine authority. “The things written” are “for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” It is impossible for us to analyse divine revelation, and give proportionate value to the truths therein made known. There is no ascending or descending scale of value in the things the Lord commands. It is “whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.” Yet many people have but two chapters in their Bibles—the one on *essentials*; the other on *non-essentials*. The former contains the things which agree with the opinions, training and desires of the respective owners; while the latter consists of all the things which many have no wish to know, and less desire to do. The former is our orthodoxy, and the latter the other persons’ heterodoxy.

The subject of this address will be found very frequently in the chapter on non-essentials. It is somewhat surprising to notice how ready many are to assent to the fact that baptism is a command, and in almost the same breath assert that it is non-essential. Surely both these statements cannot be true. Can you conceive of the Lord giving an unnecessary command? And if that be true of baptism, why may it not be true of other things? Who, then, will tell us where to draw the line between what Christ means and what he does not mean? How unpopular this topic is—unpopular even with many who profess to love the Lord! How much it is neglected by the preachers and teachers of the day! Year in and year out men will stand up to preach the gospel, and their lips are silent upon this theme so prominent in the preaching and practice of the pioneer preachers of the cross. World-famed revivalists travel far and wide, addressing multitudes of people, pointing them to Christ, and yet saying nothing about this ordinance so in evidence in the great commission of the Redeemer. Paul “shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God.” Can preachers of a perverted gospel say the same? Is it any wonder that the one who, in preaching and practice, seeks to restore baptism to the position and power it holds in the New Testament so often has to meet the charge of believing in water salvation, teaching baptismal regeneration, or rejecting the blood of Christ! Why should it not be possible to present this ordinance with its Scriptural significance without having to meet such ridiculous assertions? A man went to hear Spurgeon preach. His theme was, “The Right Use of Money.” The first point was,

# BAPTISM.



WHO ?

HOW ?

WHY ?

GOSPEL PREACHED. Mark 16: 15, 16; Matt. 28: 19; Acts 16: 32.

RECEIVED WORD. Acts 2: 41; 19: 5.

TRUTH BELIEVED. Acts 8: 12.

REPENTANCE. Acts 2: 38.

FAITH CONFESSED. Acts 8: 36, 37.

DEATH TO SIN. Rom. 6: 2.

WATER. Acts 10: 47; 8: 36.

MUCH WATER. John 3: 23.

COMING TO WATER. Acts 8: 36; Matt. 3: 13.

GOING DOWN INTO WATER. Acts 8: 38.

COMING UP OUT OF WATER. Acts 8: 39; Matt. 3: 16.

FORM OF BURIAL. Rom. 6: 4; Col. 2: 12.

FORM OF RESURRECTION. Col. 2: 12; 3: 1.

FORM OF BIRTH. John 3: 5; Titus 3: 5.

FORM OF WASHING. Acts 22: 16.

SAVED. Mk. 16: 16; 1 Pet. 3: 21.

REMISSION OF SINS. Acts 2: 38; 22: 16.

INTO DEATH OF CHRIST. Rom. 6: 3.

PUTTING ON CHRIST. Gal. 3: 26, 27.

WASHING OF REGENERATION. Titus 3: 5.

SYMBOL OF BURIAL AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST. Rom. 6: 3-5; Col. 2: 12; 3: 1.

*"Get all you can."* The auditor was delighted. The position was in complete accord with his own views. He had been practising that all his life. His pleasure was intensified when the preacher announced his second division—*"Save all you can."* The man was glad he had attended that service. He drank in every word. He had never before heard a preacher the equal of that one. Many an "Amen" resounded in his heart as he listened. He had just about made up his mind to join that congregation, when Spurgeon announced his third heading—*"Give all you can."* The man was disgusted. The preacher had just spoilt the whole address. Is there not much of that spirit to-day? It is easy enough to popularise the gospel, by eliminating the things which do not accord with the views and opinions of the people. It is my honest conviction that many of the prominent preachers of the day say nothing about baptism because of their desire to popularise their ministry, and to avoid antagonising the teaching and tradition of men. But upon this, as upon every other question, it is for us to "speak not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts."

Baptism is not an obscure subject. The word in its different forms is used more than eighty times in the New Testament. The Holy Spirit has given considerable prominence to this ordinance in the revelation of the Christian dispensation. It is equally prominent in the teaching and practice of every evangelical body in Christendom. The Methodist Catechism teaches that baptism is to continue "until the Lord's coming at the end of the world." The Presbyterian Standards declare that it is "to be continued in his church until the end of

the world." The Prayer Book gives to it even stronger emphasis. The teaching of denominationalism makes the ordinance, in some form, necessary to church membership. But while we might appeal to theological writings and church practices to establish the validity and importance of baptism, we prefer to appeal to the one book that speaks authoritatively on the question—that is, the New Testament. All that is made known to us by divine authority on this subject is contained in that book. Ignorance will be excusable if we are not made wise by the teaching of Christ and his apostles. And to "understand what the will of the Lord is," we must keep in mind three questions—Who should be baptised? How should we be baptised? and, Why should we be baptised? These three divisions will cover all we need to know concerning this ordinance. The chart will aid us in this study.

The first question—WHO SHOULD BE BAPTISED?—refers to the *Scriptural subject* of baptism. None will question the right of believers' baptism. The controversy is over the position of infants. Are they Scriptural subjects of this ordinance? And the question is sometimes limited to the "*children of believing parents.*" There are few champions for the poor babe who, without any fault of its own, belongs to parents who do not believe. Isn't that rather unfair toward that little one? In an article in the *Expositor* for September, 1900, p. 184, Ian McLaren writes: "Without doubt the perfect idea of baptism is realised when one who has come to years of discretion makes himself his own profession of faith in the Lord, knowing what he has done, and having counted the cost, and then is immersed in the waters of



baptism." Prof. Agar Beet, in his "Treatise" on this subject, says: "It must be at once admitted that the New Testament contains no clear proof that infants were baptised in the days of the apostles" (p. 28). Then why practise it? In all that inspired record there is not *one passage* where infant baptism is mentioned, and not a *single example* of its administration. By no fair, reasonable or necessary inference of Scripture can this doctrine be established. It generally rests upon the foundation of "original sin." The advocates of this position assume that the child is born in sin; and then, by a process of intricate reasoning, seek to establish the need and benefit of some rite, ceremony or ordinance to fit the babe for acceptance with God, or citizenship in the Redeemer's kingdom. Now, is the infant a sinner? What is sin? "Sin is the transgression of the law." Has the baby transgressed God's law? "All unrighteousness is sin." Is the little one guilty of unrighteousness? "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Does that apply to an infant? "The Spirit shall convict the world of sin, because they believe not on me." Does the infant refuse to believe on Christ? Sin itself is not transmitted or inherited. Its fruit, or consequences, may be. "Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Sin is personal. Through the finished work of Jesus Christ the child is saved. When old enough to personally sin, the child must then personally accept the Saviour. Jesus took the little children in his arms and blessed them. *He did not baptise them.* Though unbaptised, he said concerning them, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven"; and again, "Their angels do always behold the face of the Father who is in heaven."

This question will be answered most satisfactorily by learning what preceded baptism as revealed in the New Testament. The first column on the chart shows these things. Every recorded instance of baptism was preceded by the *preaching of the gospel*. That was in harmony with the commission—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16: 15). "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations" (Matt. 28: 19). To the jailor and his family, Paul and Silas "spake the Word of the Lord" (Acts 16: 32). "Faith cometh by hearing." The message of life is addressed to the intelligence of the individual. No preacher ever attempts to teach an infant in order to its baptism. We notice, too, that before there was the administration of this ordinance the subjects *received the Word*. At Pentecost, those who "gladly received his word were baptised" (Acts 2: 41). At Ephesus, it was after they had received the truth from Paul that "they were baptised in the name of the Lord" (Acts 19: 5). The Christian is begotten by "the Word of truth, which liveth and abideth for ever." The seed of the kingdom is the Word. That must be received into good and honest hearts. Again, before baptism the *faith* of the subject was made known. "When they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptised, both men and women" (Acts 8: 12). "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest" was a condition of the eunuch's baptism (Acts 8: 37). This accords with the marching orders of Christ—"He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved." *Repentance* also was an antecedent of baptism. Peter instructed the sin-convicted inquirers at Pentecost

to "repent, and be baptised." A fifth condition is presented in the Ethiopian's confession—"I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8: 37). Acknowledgment of the Sovereignty of Jesus must of necessity precede this ordinance. Probably the most striking prerequisite of baptism is this—*death to sin*. Paul reasons against the apostasy of those who had been baptised, by saying, "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Rom. 6: 2). In this connection baptism is likened to a burial. We do not think of burying the living. Death must first take place. This must be true in order to the Scriptural observance of this ordinance.

These six things are mentioned as taking place before the administration of baptism. They are not all *directly mentioned* in every case. They are, however, necessarily implied. For all were under the same Lawgiver, and were to be obedient to the same law—the gospel. The administrators of the ordinance were acting under the instruction of the commission of Christ. "God is no respecter of persons." It would be unreasonable and unjust for more to be required of one coming to Christ than of another. These antecedents manifestly declare baptism to be a voluntary personal act. In infant baptism it is neither voluntary nor personal. Nothing is done by proxy in the Scripture. There is no evidence that one person can act for or through another, in the vital matters of faith and obedience. In view of these facts, I believe that it is *Scripturally impossible to baptise an infant*. For baptism is not simply the sprinkling or pouring of water on any person (if these were the proper actions), nor the immersion of *any* person in water. I

might immerse a man a hundred times, but if he did not believe on Christ, and had not obeyed the antecedent commands, it would not be *Scriptural* baptism. Therefore, as the infant cannot, and does not need to, fulfil these conditions, it is impossible to baptise it, however much men may long to do so. Even if we did not question the validity of infant baptism, such inquiries as these might be interesting:—1. What benefits accrue to the baptised infant that it would not otherwise receive? 2. What does an infant lose by not being baptised? 3. Does it make any difference to God's reception of the little one? 4. What about the baptism if the parents are not *believers* in the New Testament sense? 5. What will be the fate of the millions of babies who have not been baptised? 6. Who is to blame, the infant or its parents, if it is not brought to baptism? The Prayer Book teaches that "it is certain by God's Word that children which are baptised, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved." We can more truthfully say that baptism has absolutely nothing to do with the salvation of those who have not reached the years of personal responsibility. The Scriptures are as silent as the grave upon the practice of infant baptism.

Our second question—HOW SHOULD WE BE BAPTISED?—relates to the action of baptism. Here is an action of which Christian preachers were to be the administrators, to which penitent believers were to submit. What is that action? It is necessary for the preacher to know in order that he may be sure of his faithfulness to the "divine marching orders." It is necessary for the subject to know in order that he may have assurance of his obedience to the will of his Lord.

It is easy to say with reference to this ordinance that "God's grace does not depend on the quantity of water, but on the quality of the heart." But is that true? If that which we do is *not what the Lord commands*, does the divine favor attend it? Naaman reasoned in that way concerning the Jordan, but "God's grace" was manifest when he dipped *seven times in that stream*. He might have done so a hundred times in Abana and Pharpar and remained a leper. The question is whether sprinkling, pouring, or immersion, *or all three*, constitute the Scriptural action of baptism. No one will question the baptism of the penitent believer who has been immersed. That meets with universal acceptance. The controversy is all concerning sprinkling or pouring, whether they fulfil the Scriptural requirements.

In addressing you upon this subject, I do not think we need to discuss words and their meanings. That, of course, is very helpful. But if our understanding of this ordinance depends upon our knowledge of Greek, most of us will have to remain in ignorance. Upon the things pertaining to our salvation, the Bible is a plain book for a plain people. And I fully believe that, with the Bible in our own language, any diligent and honest investigator can learn what the will of the Lord is. That we may answer this second question, let us now study the Scripture to see what things were necessary to the action of baptism. These are placed in order in the second column of the chart. Peter said at the house of Cornelius: "Can any man forbid *water*, that these should not be baptised?" (Acts 10: 47). Philip and the eunuch "came to a certain *water*" (Acts 8: 36). This is the first essential of baptism. The ordinance is

impossible without water. The three actions in dispute require this. Then baptism required *much water*. "John also was baptising in Ænon near to Salim, *because there was much water there*" (John 3 : 23). The presence of much water is given as the reason why John baptised in that particular place. Neither sprinkling nor pouring needs this requirement. In baptism, too, there was the *coming to the water*. "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptised of him" (Matt. 3 : 13). As already pointed out, the evangelist and the Ethiopian "*came to a certain water*" (Acts 8 : 36). We never read in the New Testament of anyone *being brought* to baptism. It was a voluntary personal act. In immersion the subject comes to the water. In sprinkling and pouring this is not generally the practice. *Going down into the water* was also necessary to the ordinance. "And they went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptised him" (Acts 8 : 38). The baptism took place after their entrance into the water. It is impossible to meet this condition if the action be sprinkling or pouring. The advocates of these never think of doing this in their administration of the ordinance. A prominent Melbourne preacher argued against the eunuch being immersed by saying he often took his horse down into the water to drink, but he never immersed it, and therefore it was no evidence that Philip immersed the Ethiopian because they both went down into the water. But the preacher took his horse for a drink, not for baptism ; while in this Scriptural illustration the going down into the water was a vital part of the ordinance. Can you imagine such an action taking place if Philip only had to sprinkle a few drops

or pour a thimbleful upon the convert's head? Again, there was the *coming up out of the water*. "And Jesus, when he was baptised, went up straightway out of the water" (Matt. 3 : 16). "And when they were come up out of the water" (Acts 8 : 39). This is equally impossible unless the action be immersion. Then in baptism there was a likeness to a *burial*. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death" (Rom. 6 : 4). "Buried with him in baptism" (Col. 2 : 12). Here is the fact of burial made known. It is something which takes place in baptism. Even with the most vivid imagination it is not possible to discern this likeness in sprinkling or pouring. It needs no imagination at all to see a burial in the act of immersion. A form of *resurrection* was also present in baptism. "Wherein also ye are risen with him" (Col. 2 : 12). "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above" (Col. 3 : 1). Christ did not remain in the grave. Like him we rise to walk in newness of life. In sprinkling or pouring this likeness is not found. Jesus said to Nicodemus: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3 : 5). The only water there is in the Christian system is the water of baptism. If Christ had desired the ruler to understand something rather than water he would have used some other word. In baptism there is a likeness to a birth. A birth does not give life, but manifests already existent life in a new state or environment. It introduces life into a sphere where it is capable of growth and development. This is true of baptism. The penitent believer has been begotten of God, by the Holy Spirit, through the gospel. He has been quickened

into spiritual life. Baptism is the appointed means of his birth into the kingdom or church (1 Cor. 12 : 13). There is not the faintest resemblance to a birth in either sprinkling or pouring. In baptism also there is a form of *washing*. Ananias said to Saul: "And now, why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptised, and wash away thy sins" (Acts 22 : 16). As, in immersion, the body of the one who has surrendered to Christ is buried beneath the water and raised again, there is this likeness to a washing. Here before us, then, are nine things which entered into baptism as revealed in the New Testament. Only the first element—water—is found in sprinkling or pouring. They are all present in immersion. What, then, do you think is the Scriptural action of baptism?

The third question is a necessary one—WHY SHOULD WE BE BAPTISED? This relates to the design or purpose of the ordinance. Is it a "*mere form*"? Does it belong to "*good works*" by which nobody can be saved? Is it "*only a command*"? You have all heard such statements made regarding it. But even if such things were true, and the Lord had instituted this ordinance, would it not be necessary for us to be obedient? If it were absolutely meaningless, dare we refuse to do our Lord's will? That baptism is pregnant with meaning is recognised by the standards of different religious bodies. The Presbyterian Confession of Faith teaches that it was "ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptised into the visible church, but also to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God through Jesus Christ to walk in newness of life." The Methodist



Catechism declares that "our being cleansed from the guilt and defilement of sin, and receiving a new life from and in Christ Jesus" "is the inward and spiritual grace signified" by baptism. But what saith the Scriptures? The third column of the chart presents the things with which baptism is associated in the teaching of Christ and his apostles. This series of addresses has made you familiar with the declaration of Jesus: "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved" (Mark 16: 16). Surely, if language is not meant to *conceal* but to *reveal* thought, this passage indicates that in the purpose of Christ there was a relationship between baptism and salvation. You will all agree that in this passage *faith* or *belief* precedes and is necessary to being saved. Does not baptism occupy the same position? Again, Peter writes: "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us . . . by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 3: 21). Does not this endorse the teaching of Jesus? Peter instructed the inquirers at Pentecost to "repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2: 38). What blessing was attached to their repentance? All agree that the dual promise of this passage was for them on the condition of their repenting. What was the purpose of their baptism? Were they to be baptised because they had "the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit," or was it in order to receive these blessings? Does not Peter's answer teach that both the repentance and baptism were for the same purpose? Saul was instructed to "arise, and be baptised, and wash away thy sins." In the minds of these preachers the putting away of sin

was associated with baptism. This is not *water salvation*, but salvation through Christ upon the conditions he himself has imposed. In Rom. 6: 3 we read: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into his death?" Does not this mean that through this Scriptural appointment we are brought into all the benefits and blessings of the death of Christ? Surely this is most desirable. Again, Paul teaches: "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3: 26, 27). In the light of this passage, is baptism meaningless or unnecessary? Here it is viewed as a marriage ceremony. It is the union of the surrendered life with Christ. It is the putting off of the old man and the putting on of the new. In another passage we are taught that God hath saved us "by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3: 5). Most commentators accept the former statement as referring to baptism. This is not baptismal regeneration. The "*washing* of regeneration" is not the regeneration itself, but something associated with it. Compare this passage with John 3: 5. This ordinance is also a symbol of the burial and resurrection of Christ. "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." There is no act of the sinner's surrender to the Saviour in which Christ is so much associated as in baptism. It is "buried with him"; "baptised into his death"; "risen with him." In a previous address I pointed out that the death, burial and resurrection of Christ are the great facts of

the gospel. It is interesting to notice that Jesus has symbolised these facts in the two ordinances of the Christian system—the Lord's Supper and baptism. In the former we "proclaim the Lord's death until he come." In the latter is constantly set forth the truth that Christ was buried and rose again. How precious these great souvenirs should be to us!

Baptism is not simply a bodily act. Spirit, soul and body all have a part in it. These Scriptures we have studied make it luminous with meaning and rich in spiritual significance. Like every other condition of our surrender to Jesus, it has been appointed as a means of blessing to ourselves, as well as that through which we may glorify God.

Many of you may be saying in your own hearts—Is it necessary for me to be baptised? Let me ask you—Is it necessary for you to obey the Lord? Hearken to these declarations from God's Word. Jesus says: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I have commanded you." "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments." John writes: "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." "What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of Christ?" "He that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life." The Lord in his coming again will "take vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ."

**I plead with you not to be forgetful hearers, but doers of the Word. If you "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," then "repent, and be baptised." If you are a penitent believer, then "arise, and be baptised, and wash away thy sin, calling on his name." Come!**

**" Trust and obey,  
For there's no other way  
To be happy in Jesus,  
But to trust and obey."**

# The Church.

"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5: 25).

**T**HE New Testament recognises the existence of but one church. It knows nothing of denomination-ism. Sectarianism it most strongly condemns.

Division is opposed to its spirit and teaching. In the Christian world to-day there are scores of different churches. There are seventeen different bodies of Methodists; thirteen different kinds of Baptists; twelve varieties of Presbyterians; Episcopalians—High Church, Low Church and Broad Church; Roman Catholic; Christian Catholic; Catholic Apostolic; and so on through the long list of denominational bodies. In the light of the Lord's prayer—"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17: 20, 21)—is not such a condition a sad commentary on the modern corruption of Christianity? Is not division a tragedy and shame? There is "*one body*" (Eph. 4: 4), which is the church (Eph.

1 : 22). Jesus said : " Upon this rock I will build my church " (Matt. 16 : 18)—not sectarianism. " In one Spirit are we all baptised into *one body* " (1 Cor. 12 : 13)—not into many bodies. " We are many members in *one body*." " Christ also loved the church"—not churches. He sanctified and cleansed it " that he might present it to himself a *glorious church* " (Eph. 5 : 25-27). Is that possible with the multiplied divisions which exist to-day ? As *Head* of the church, Jesus can only have one body. As *Bridegroom*, he can only have one bride. As *Cornerstone* he can only have one building. There are no *branches* of the church. The branches are the individual disciples (John 15 : 5). When the plural expression " churches " is used in the Scripture, it refers not to different bodies, but to different congregations of the one body, separated geographically.

" In unity there is strength." The rapid multiplication of organisations is explained by the recognition of this principle. Claims can be advanced, interests can be protected and good can be accomplished most successfully by co-operation. In the midst of many societies the church stands—the greatest institution in existence. It is easy to disparage the church. Many are fond of declaring, " The church has lost its power." In modern times it has never had the opportunity of making its power fully manifest ! The Delilah of division has shorn it of its strength. Let the church as established by Christ be restored, and it will go forward upon a career of unparalleled conquest. As that eminent Methodist—Dr. Fitchett—has declared, " there will never be a converted world until there is a united church." Therefore, with an open Bible, an open mind,

and a truth-seeking spirit, let us study the church revealed unto us by the Holy Spirit.

In tracing the history of any organisation, it is customary to go back to its beginning, and ask, Who established it? and where did it begin? The first question of interest to us is—

#### WHO WAS THE FOUNDER OF THE CHURCH?

In religious literature, in church standards, in public addresses, and in anniversary celebrations, it is customary to refer to John Wesley as the founder of Methodism; to Calvin as the founder of Presbyterianism; to Luther as the founder of Lutheranism; and so on through the lesser lights of church history. It is admitted that these bodies were established by men. They are of human origin. This is not so of THE CHURCH. Its origin is divine. Jesus said: "Upon this rock I WILL BUILD my church" (Matt. 16: 18). Here we are introduced to the Builder or Founder of this wonderful institution. If there was a church in existence before this time, it was not Christ's church. Jesus places it still in the future. "I will build" could not be said concerning a super-structure already erected. The operation of building the church began on the day of Pentecost, A.D. 30, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit and the apostles (Acts 2). The denominations of our day cannot trace their existence back beyond the reformation under Luther. That fact makes them at least 1500 years too young to be the church Jesus built. Since the day of Pentecost the Lord has employed many persons as *workmen* in the *erection* of this divine edifice, but he has never *authorised any man* to be the founder of a new church. "We are built upon

the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

A second question of interest and importance is—

#### WHO IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH ?

It is impossible for a body to exist without a head. It is not natural for a head to have more than one body. Every society has its president. Every organisation has its recognised leader. The supreme authority of human institutions is usually invested in its executive. There is only one divine church, and Christ is its Head. Jesus claimed: "All authority is given unto me in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28 : 18). The "voice out of the cloud" said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matt. 17 : 5). In "these last days God has spoken unto us through his Son" (Heb. 1 : 1). "He gave him to be Head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1 : 22, 23). "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the church" (Eph. 5 : 23). "And he is the Head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence" (Col. 1 : 18). The church is *subject unto Christ*, not unto synods, councils, conventions or conferences. His dominion is absolute. The Scriptures are as silent as the grave concerning any church of which the Pope, or King, or any other man, is the recognised head. A body must have one head. It cannot have more—unless it be a monstrosity. This is true of the church.

Again we inquire concerning—



## THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHURCH.

In every society there are private and official members. We look upon the president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, etc., as belonging to the latter class, while all those who occupy no official position belong to the former. There are both official and private members in the church. Concerning the gifts bestowed by Christ we read: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4: 11, 12). "Officers there must be while there are offices, or services to be performed. As long as the Christian body is an organised body, having many services to perform, it must have organs or officers by which to enjoy itself and operate on society." "For the setting up of the Christian institution officers extraordinary were needed." The passage just quoted refers to the officials in the church who were endowed with peculiar gifts which enabled them to carry on their work. The word "apostle" means—one sent, a messenger or ambassador. The term has a three-fold application in the New Testament. Jesus is called an Apostle, because he was one sent by God (Heb. 3: 1). Barnabas, Paul and Epaphroditus are called apostles because they were sent forth by the churches upon their ministry (Acts 14: 14; Phil. 2: 25). The name is one, however, given especially to those whom Jesus chose, and trained, and sent forth upon their special mission in the setting up of the church. "These twelve were not only ambassadors from Christ, but witnesses that he had risen from the dead." To be an apostle, in the same sense that these

men were, it was necessary to have seen the Lord (Acts 1: 21, 22; 1 Cor. 9: 1). It is a self-evident fact, therefore, that there cannot be apostles to-day as there were then. All modern efforts to restore the apostolic office in the church overlook the primary application of the term, and the peculiar endowments of the position.

“God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers” (1 Cor. 12: 28). This second class were inspired men. They spake under the immediate control and guidance of the Holy Spirit. 1 Cor. 14 shows the special nature of the office. There is no prophesying to-day; consequently there are no prophets. When an institution has been established, it only requires an ordinary administration of its affairs. When the church had come “to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God,” these officers with their miraculous gifts ceased to be necessary, and therefore passed away. Special miraculous powers were not essential in the qualifications of the evangelists, pastors and teachers for their offices in the church, and they remain.

Paul’s letter to the Philippians is addressed “to all the saints in Christ Jesus, which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons” (Phil. 1: 1). Associate this passage with Eph. 4: 11, and we find that the regular and unchangeable “ministry of the Christian community” consists of bishops (including elders, pastors, teachers), deacons, and evangelists. Not all of these would be found in every assembly of believers. In the first establishment of a congregation there would not be any competent to be appointed to these offices. But as soon as there were brethren of the proper qualifications

for this service they would be set apart to the work. So should it be to-day. Did you ever read of the Reverend, Right Reverend, Very Reverend, Reverend Father in God, Dean, Canon, Vicar, Archdeacon, Archbishop or Pope in the pages of God's Word? Yet that is the book Christians are supposed to look to for guidance. Neither were the present-day distinctions between clergy and laity a feature of New Testament Christianity. All Christians were priests unto God. Peculiar distinction of dress did not separate the preacher from the people. The official members of the church were bishops, deacons and evangelists, and the unofficial or private members were called saints.

#### WHAT WAS THE NAME OF THE CHURCH?

This is a pertinent question. There is much in a name. Without it no society or institution could exist. It is a constitutional part of any organisation. Names serve to distinguish and identify things. A woman was visiting in one of the schools among the poorer classes in England. She addressed a tall lad who was industriously pursuing his studies. "My lad, have you been *confirmed* yet?" The youth was somewhat bashful, and nervously replied: "Yes, marm, I think so; I've got the marks on my arm." Vaccination and confirmation were the same thing to him. We will notice first the name of the church as a body or society. It is called the CHURCH OF GOD. Paul writes to the "church of God which is at Corinth" (1 Cor. 1: 2). He says: "Beyond measure I persecuted the church of God" (Gal. 1: 13). This name is mentioned several times in the teaching of the apostles. It is also called the church

of Christ. In Rom. 16: 16 we read: "The churches of Christ salute you." This is in harmony with the declaration of Christ, "Upon this rock I will build *my church.*" The bride wears the name of the Bridegroom. Is it not fitting that Christ's bride should wear his name? The church is frequently referred to as "the *body* of Christ." These are all Scriptural designations for this divine organisation. It is nowhere called Baptist, after an ordinance; Presbyterian, after the eldership; Congregational, after that form of polity; Methodist, after certain ways of doing God's service; or Wesleyan or Lutheran, after godly men. As an organisation it had the congregational form of church government, recognised the eldership, was constituted of baptised believers, carried on its work "decently and in order," commended the lives of consecrated men—but it was not called by any of these things. These statements of Scripture are generally accepted, and apology made for the use of so many other names by saying: "All churches are churches of Christ, or of God." If that be true, why are these names not recognised in advertisements, upon sign-boards, in trust-deeds, in denominational literature, etc.? And if they are all made after the same pattern in the New Testament, why is there not more agreement?

Now let us notice the names given to the members of this church. In relation to Christ as the Great Teacher they are called DISCIPLES (Acts 9: 1); in relation to each other in the Lord they are called BRETHREN (Matt. 23: 8); in relation to God as their Father they are called CHILDREN OF GOD (1 John 3: 1); because of their holy character they are called SAINTS (Acts 9: 13); and to distinguish

them as followers of Christ they are called **CHRISTIANS** (Acts 11 : 26). The Holy Spirit never refers to them as **Baptists, Episcopalians, Adventists, Mormons, etc.** All such titles for the followers of Christ are unscriptural and sinful *because they perpetuate division* among the people of God. As I was passing into a chapel in America some years ago, I stopped to speak to a young lady who stood at the door. I asked her this simple question : "*Are you a Christian ?*" Her reply somewhat startled me : "No, I'M A **METHODIST.**" Peter writes : "If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God *in this name*" (1 Pet. 4 : 16, R.V.). Why not be satisfied with Bible names for Bible things ? Are not all these human additions an insult to the wisdom of the Founder and Head of the church ?

We will consider now this fifth question—

#### WHAT WAS THE CREED OF THE CHURCH ?

Every student of church history recognises the fact that humanly-devised creeds have been the theological battle-ground of the centuries. Every great heresy trial has been over the departure from the teaching of some creed of Christendom. The New Testament church had a creed. What was it ? Was it the so-called Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Augsburg Confession, the Westminster Confession, or any other creed of modern denominationalism ? If so, then why are these not mentioned in the inspired record ? Human creeds are just the intellectual conceptions of the compilers upon the subjects of which they treat. In this sense the apostolic church had no creed. The apostles formulated no articles of belief. They compiled no list of doctrines.

They arranged no religious system to which the people were to give adherence. The creed of the New Testament church was a Person—Jesus Christ. To him men were attracted. The heart-searching question was: "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" Jesus declared: "And I if I be lifted up will draw all men unto me." "Jesus only" was the theme of the early preachers. When men believed on him, they acknowledged their faith in the simple statement: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God." This was the one article of the early faith. To know him and the only true God is life eternal. Human creeds are contradictory and divisive. They need constant revision to keep them abreast of the times. Here is a creed that needs no revision. It is unchanging and unchangeable—Jesus Christ "the same yesterday, to-day and for ever." This was a satisfactory creed for the primitive church. Is it not all-sufficient for the church of the twentieth century?

Again, let us find the answer to this question—

#### WHAT WAS THE STANDARD OF GOVERNMENT IN THE CHURCH?

Every society must provide some rule of authority for the government of its members. This is generally presented in the form of articles, constitutions, bye-laws, etc. In religious organisations the same need is manifest. It would be both unwise and unworkable to leave the church to be governed by the individual opinions of its members. The early church was governed by the teaching of Christ and the apostles and evangelist; or we may truthfully say by the teaching of Christ, for the others spoke as his representatives. They had been

promised that the "Spirit should guide them into all truth, and bring to their remembrance all that Christ had spoken." At first the church was governed by the personal oversight of the apostles and evangelist, through the oral messages delivered by them. Later, in the Gospel records, and in other writings of the New Testament, the teaching assumed a permanent form. "All Scripture inspired of God" was accepted by the early church as "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, furnished completely unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3 : 16). But not all of divine revelation was recognised as equally binding in authority as a standard of faith and practice. The appeal was not "to the law and to the testimony," but to the teaching of Christ and his apostles. The church life was to be conformed to the will of its Head—not to the tenets of Judaism. The Saviour said: "He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words hath one that judgeth him: the *word that I have spoken*, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12 : 48). Paul teaches that "God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ *according to my gospel*" (Rom. 2 : 16). While the whole Bible must be accepted as the Word of God, the New Testament is the book of government for the church. Some years ago I was talking with a missionary from India, who was visiting in America, upon the subject of church government. He made inquiry regarding the standard of authority used by the churches of Christ. I informed him that the only book we recognised was the Bible, and that we appealed especially to the New Testament in all matters of

discipline. He then asked: "How do you find it work?" "Splendidly," I replied, "for that was all the early church had." When the United States Government took possession of Cuba, all the leading religious bodies sent missionaries there. Each society had to be recorded with the Secretary of Justice, and leave with that officer a copy of the book of authority recognised by it. The church of Christ deposited the Bible, but most of the other societies some other book. The native officials were confused, and began asking, "Why should so many religions be recorded here? Here is the Methodist religion, the Baptist religion, the Presbyterian religion, etc., etc." Humanly-devised standards are unnecessary, and are a reflection on the wisdom of the Head of the church in providing for the government of his body. If they contain more than the Word of God they contain too much; if they contain less they contain too little; if they are the same they are obviously unnecessary.

#### WHAT WERE THE TERMS OF ADMISSION INTO THE CHURCH?

This is a vital question. If the church is the greatest institution in existence, it is necessary to know how to become members of it. All societies provide for their growth by the introduction of new members. Definite laws are enacted for their admission into membership. All must enter in the same way. The door never swings upon the hinges of individual pleasure and convenience. Simply and clearly the way of entrance is made known. This is true of the church. Membership is not a question of *feeling*, but of *fact*—the fact of obedience to certain



commands of the great Lawgiver of the Christian dispensation. These commands are made known in the great commission, and in the inspired record of church history—the ACTS OF APOSTLES. In other addresses I have already pointed out that by faith, repentance, confession and baptism people were added to the Lord. It is not necessary to go into these things in detail here. I desire to impress upon you the fact that in the New Testament the things which made a man a Christian also made him a member of the church. He was not made a Christian by certain acts, and then constituted a church member by something in addition. Prayerful obedience to these commands brought men into the church. Nothing further was needed. These laws are still binding. Christ has not changed them. Men have neither the *right* nor the *power* to do so.

Our last inquiry concerns the

#### WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH.

This body is distinguished from all other societies in that its meetings are assemblies for worship. Of the first converts it is said: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2: 42). At Troas, "upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them" (Acts 20: 7). The members gathered together that they might "edify one another in love"; that they might speak to one another "in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in their hearts unto the Lord" (Eph. 5: 19). The Lord's table occupied the central position in the worship. To

lovingly and gratefully remember the dying love of Jesus, the disciples met *every first day of the week*. They attended to the other acts of worship in the assembly just as frequently as they attended to the Lord's Supper. There was no such thing as *weekly* worship, and *monthly*, *quarterly* or *yearly* communion. The presence of some special church dignitary was not necessary to the observance or sanctity of that feast. The fact of discipleship entitled all to participate in these acts of worship. As members of one family these early Christians gathered around the table of redeeming love, and without any distinctions joined together in worshipping God "in spirit and in truth."

Just in mere outline I have been permitted to present to you this study of the church. You will all agree, I am sure, that the view you have had is a Scriptural one. And even while you are looking upon it this question presents itself to you—*IS THAT CHURCH IN EXISTENCE NOW?* I may answer that by asking—*What is necessary to its existence?* Is apostolic succession necessary? That is one of the things in which many denominations glory. Some years ago I was living in a town where a Church of England preacher conducted a mission. He asserted that his church was the only one in the line of apostolic succession. The Presbyterian preacher took exception to that statement, and became equally positive in the declaration that his church had the best right to that position. A vigorous discussion upon the subject was carried on in the daily paper. But I have never forgotten that these preachers made no appeal to the Word of God. All their ammunition was obtained from church fathers, uninspired records, and such authorities. To

have the church in existence as it was in the New Testament, it is not at all necessary—even if it were possible—to trace the existence of some body, in an unbroken line, back through all the jungles of error, superstition and corruption, to the days of the apostles. Listen! *All that is necessary to the existence of that church is APOSTOLIC PRACTICE.* Moses in the construction of the tabernacle was enjoined to make all things according to the pattern shown him in the mount. The plans and specifications were all divinely supplied. He had neither to change nor to improve them in any way. In the New Testament the great Master Builder has given to us the perfect ideal of the church in every essential particular. Whenever, and wherever, a body of believers is satisfied to copy that design, then and there the church Jesus built is in existence. Only so far as a church is built after that New Testament pattern is it a church of Christ. In whatever it departs from that model it is non-apostolic. This is safe, Scriptural and satisfying. The world needs not a new church, but the *restoration* of the oldest one in existence. We cannot grow beyond that church of the first century. It is unsectarian and divine. In it all followers of Christ may be one. Outside of it unity is impossible. For this we plead. To this end we labor—that the church of Christ may be restored. We invite you to union, not with a sect, or party or denomination, but with the church for which Christ gave himself, and which he will one day “present faultless before his presence with exceeding joy.”

## Conversion.

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

**T**HIS text is one of the most remarkable that ever fell from the lips of Jesus. His life is rapidly drawing to a close. The disciples, little understanding the spirit and purpose of his mission, are engaged in an unseemly controversy over the question of position in the kingdom. They approach their Leader with this question on their lips: “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” In a very striking manner is the answer given. “Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them.” I can imagine the look of inquiry upon the faces of these disciples as they see the action of their Leader. “What has a child to do with our question, or with the kingdom?” is the interrogation of their eyes. Then, looking first upon the little one, the Master turns to his followers with his answer, “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Jesus lays before them the condition of entrance into that kingdom rather than the condition of greatness. The former was the more vital to these disciples, as they were in danger of not gaining admission.

These words of Christ also introduce the subject of this evening's address—one of the most important upon which the attention of the human mind can be fixed. Conversion is one of the most prominent themes of the Christian religion. The one who has been converted is in the kingdom, is a child of God, an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ Jesus; he has the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. To the unconverted person none of these blessings belong. How necessary it is that we should understand what this subject means! The more so because so much mysticism and confusion have gathered about it. In devoting attention to it we will be wisely and profitably employed.

To have the subject before us in the simplest way, we will consider first what *conversion is not*. It is not merely a *change of opinion*. It may, and probably will, involve that. There are many people who hold correct views of truth, who are thoroughly orthodox in their opinions, but who are still unconverted. A man may change from Calvinism to Arminianism; from Unitarianism to Trinitarianism; from Buddhism to Christianity, or the reverse—and then only have performed an intellectual somersault.

Conversion is not simply a change in the *outer moral habits* of a person. Morality is not religion, though there can be no religion without morality. We need to distinguish between morality and Christianity, between the moral man and the Christian man. Many who are of vicious habits "cease to do evil" without being converted. The drunkard might go from this meeting and never get drunk again; the blasphemer, and never

swear any more; the immoral to become pure—and with all that remain in an unconverted state. Educational influences, business interests, personal disgust, family honor, as well as many other things, may lead a man to refrain from many vices. No thought of God or Christ or religion has influenced him. Here may be the polish of worldly culture, but not the fruit of real conversion.

Again, conversion is not *benevolence or charity*—the good will to men. There can be no conversion where there is not benevolence, or the doing of good to all men as we have opportunity. But there may be a change of our disposition from selfishness to unselfishness without meeting this divine requirement. A favorite motto with many people is—"Charity covers a multitude of sins." It isn't a blanket large enough to cover a single sin. Men are charitable as philanthropists, for business reasons, for political ends, and from motives of personal gain. The unconverted may sometimes be in a position to excel in charity the converted.

*Attendance at church* is not conversion. We cannot be converted and wilfully forsake the assembly of the people of God. But we may pay pew rents, contribute regularly to the collection, and never miss a meeting, and still fall far short of this condition of entrance into the kingdom of heaven. I was well acquainted with a man, some years ago, who was one of the most regular attendants of the congregation for which I was preaching. He was a man of high moral character, knew his Bible well, attended all the services of the church, had heard thousands of sermons, and enthusiastically championed the cause among outsiders. But with all this he was not converted. A farmer, who was an elder in the

Presbyterian Church, had a dog which regularly accompanied its owner and his family to the Lord's day service. It would enter the building, lie down near the pulpit, and sleep during the sermon—as some people who are not dogs do. During the doxology it would rise and shake itself, and then, after the benediction, it would pass quietly out. After a time the owner died, and the farm passed into other hands. The new proprietor was a Baptist. On the first Sunday the new family went to church, followed by the dog. They came to the chapel where the dog had received his religious training. The farmer passed on down the street to another chapel, but the dog stopped, and went into the old and familiar place of worship. With the dog church attendance was a matter of habit, and not a question of principle. The same is true of many people who attend religious services to-day. It looks well to go. It is good for business. There is some novelty and change in it. There are thousands of unconverted people in the churches at the present time. These are usually classified as adherents. They help to increase denominational statistics, but are not enrolled in the Lamb's book of life. Keep this in mind, therefore, that the change of our opinions or habits, and our good works and church attendance, do not in themselves constitute conversion.

What is conversion? Is it something mysterious and unintelligible? Is it an indescribable experience through which people pass in order to fit them for the kingdom of heaven? Definitions are both necessary and useful. The boy thought so who was asked the question, "*What is a lie?*" He replied: "A lie is an abomination to the

Lord, and a very present help in time of trouble." We need to know what this is which Jesus made the great essential for citizenship in his kingdom. Words do not lose their regular and accepted meaning when used in a religious sense, or when employed to describe spiritual experiences. This word "convert" in its different forms is not an uncommon one. It is frequently used to denote changes which we all understand. In ordinary conversation we speak of water being converted into steam; of rags being converted into paper; of paper being converted into books; of a free-trader being converted into a protectionist; and of a drunkard being converted into a sober man. A chapel building in America was recently converted into an *ice-house*. I presume the worshippers had all departed to other buildings, as it is now used for the purposes of cold storage. Cromwell on one occasion was being shown over a great cathedral in England. He went into one of the small chapels, where, in a niche in the wall, a group of silver statues stood. "What are these?" he asked in thundering tones. The attendant tremblingly replied: "They are the twelve apostles, Sire." "Well, then," answered the great Ironsides, "take them, and melt them down, and coin them into money, and send them out into the world to do good as their Master did." These silver apostles were converted. A missionary was awakened one morning by a noise outside his bungalow. Looking out of the window, he saw one of the native Christians with a large bundle, which he had just opened. It contained a number of idols, made of different kinds of metals. "What are you doing with those things?" the missionary asked. "They are for you," the native



replied. "What would I do with idols? I don't believe in such gods, and haven't any use for them. Why have you brought them to me?" said the preacher. The Hindoo answered: "The native Christians have gathered these together, and have sent them to you because they thought you could have them melted, and then made into a bell to put on our chapel to call us together for worship." This was done. The idols were converted into a bell. When we speak of conversion apart from its religious signification, we mean simply the turning or changing from one state, condition, use or position to another. Its meaning in the Scripture is the same.

The word from which convert, converted, converting, converteth and conversion are derived means just this—TO TURN. Let us look now at some passages of Scripture. Jesus said to Peter: "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; but when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22: 31, 32). In the Revised Version the latter part is translated: "When once thou hast turned again, establish thy brethren." The instruction given to the multitude in Solomon's Porch was: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3: 19). The Revised Version changes this to "Repent and turn again." So with our introductory text, where we read: "Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." These Scriptures will prepare us for this statement: that conversion is the Scriptural process by which the inner becomes a

**Christian.** It involves the *turning from the love and service of sin to the love and service of the Lord.* It is a dual turning—a turning *from*, and a turning *to*. Of the Thessalonians it is written: "Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God" (1 Thess. 1: 9). This is a very clear illustration of what conversion means. These people had been idolaters. Under the preaching of Paul they were converted. The first change which took place in them was—"they turned from idols." They might have done that and remained unconverted. It is said that many of the Japanese in recent years have given up idolatry. Civilisation and modern ideas have led them to do so. But they are not converted, for many of them are drifting toward infidelity. As I have already pointed out, many people change from their bad habits, and evil ways, without any thought of Scriptural conversion. The Thessalonians also *turned to God and his service.* In that their conversion was completed. Anything short of that would not have fulfilled this divine requirement. It is not sufficient to turn from sin: we must also turn to God. While we "*cease to do evil,*" we must also "*learn to do well.*" Here is a vessel employed in the slave trade. It is solely devoted to that fearful traffic in human life. It is captured, and a new master takes possession. He at once renovates it. It is fitted out anew, and then used to carry missionaries to their service in the islands of the seas. The vessel has been converted. Even so is it with the sinner. He is in the service of sin. Christ the new Master seeks to win him from that service. Only as he yields to the wooing of Christ, and turns from "darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God," is he a converted man.

Another necessary question is—WHAT PRODUCES CONVERSION? How is the sinner to be turned from the love and service of sin to the love and service of God? Is miraculous agency necessary to effect this? There are two answers given to this question. The first is—that conversion is effected by the *direct* operation of the Holy Spirit upon the heart and life of the unconverted. This means the operation of the Spirit *independent of any means*. In modern revivals it is not an uncommon thing to hear men pray to God: "Send down converting power upon this people." "Lord, send the Holy Spirit into the hearts of these sinners, that they may be converted." Have we Scriptural authority for this position or for these petitions? I confess my ignorance of any passage where such teaching is found, or where any example of such practice is given. There are three objections to this answer:—1. Why preach the gospel if the Holy Spirit comes directly to the unsaved? "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 1 : 16). 2. Why send missionaries to the heathen? If it were the Lord's way of converting them, how much easier it would be to unitedly pray the Father to send his Spirit into these dark places! And I ask with all reverence this third question—Who is responsible when sinners are not converted—God or man? Many will assert that the Holy Spirit has never come in this way to them. How can they, then, be converted if the Spirit does not do so? This position makes it possible to throw the responsibility upon God, and at the same time cause the sinner to wait for something miraculous to take place in order that his conversion may be effected. Jesus said to his disciples: "And I

will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth, *whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him*" (John 14: 16, 17). The Spirit is not for the world—the unconverted—but for the believer (John 7: 37-39).

The second answer to this question is—that conversion is effected by the Holy Spirit through the gospel. "God is the efficient Cause, the Holy Spirit is the divine Agent, and divine truth is the means or instrument." Jesus gave instructions to "preach the gospel to every creature." Paul charged Timothy the evangelist to "preach the Word." This was necessary even though it was the work of the Spirit "to convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." Paul and Barnabas "passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles" (Acts 15: 3). How had the Gentiles been converted? Certainly not by any abstract operation of the Holy Spirit. The good news had been proclaimed to them. Through that they had been convicted of sin and led to turn to the Lord. James teaches that we may be instruments used for the conversion of erring ones. "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5: 19, 20). The Lord sent Paul unto the Gentiles "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive the forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified" (Acts 26: 18). Converting power was manifest through

the service and message of the great apostle. Even under the old dispensation, David realised something of the power he might possess from God to influence men for the right. In his penitential psalm he cries : "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit ; then will I teach transgressors thy ways ; and sinners shall be converted unto thee" (Psalm 51 : 12, 13). The testimony of these Scriptures is sufficient to prove that men are turned from the love and service of sin to the love and service of God by the power of the gospel of Christ. There is no conversion where there is no gospel. We never hear of conversions in heathen lands unless the gospel has been preached either by the message of the missionary, the teaching of the Book, the tract, or the life of some convert. Converting power enters the life through the eye, ear and mind.

In this connection, I desire to impress upon you all that conversion is *not* an act which God does or effects on our account. The idea so long has been that men have to BE CONVERTED—that it is something to be done to or for them. Consequently they must wait until something happens so that this change may be wrought in them. In conversion, man is not a *passive recipient*, but an *active participant*. The sinner must turn from Satan unto God. The prophet says : "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found ; call ye upon him while he is near." Then he teaches how this is to be done : "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" (Isaiah 55 : 6, 7). It is the

sinner who "forsakes" and "returns." A regiment is passing along one of the main streets of this city. The commander desires them to be converted physically—to go in the opposite direction. Does he lay hold of each soldier, turn him round, and start him off the other way? Certainly not! The Captain cries, "HALT! RIGHT-ABOUT FACE! MARCH!" When the soldiers obey their leader they have converted themselves. So it is with the unconverted. The Lord supplies the power; they must do the turning. He says to the one in "the broad way that leads to destruction," "Halt! Right-about face! March!" and as that one obeys and turns into "the narrow way that leadeth unto life," he is converted.

A third question will be of interest, and is very important—WHAT ARE THE CHANGES EFFECTED IN CONVERSION? Luther declared that in conversion there was a "change of the head, heart, and pocket-book" or purse. In the Scripture this word is used to describe the whole process of a sinner's turning to the Saviour. As we look into this subject in the light of God's Word, we will find that it is expressive of a four-fold change. It is first a change of the intellect from unbelief to belief, wrought by faith in Christ through the testimony of divine revelation. It is, second, a *change of affections* from the love of sin to the love of the Lord Jesus Christ. The heart is purified by faith. In conversion it entwines about the Saviour. In the third place, it is a *change of the will*, from the purpose to live in sin to the determination to live for and in Christ Jesus. The fourth change is a *change of the state*—from being out of Christ to being in Christ; from putting off the old man to putting on

the new man ; from the putting on of self to the putting on of Christ ; from the dwelling amid the powers of darkness to the "translation into the kingdom of his dear Son." This change takes place in baptism. Each step of our approach to the Lord is, in a sense, a conversion. But that change is consummated in the act which changes our state. The marriage ceremony introduces the contracting parties into a new relationship. All the love, courtship, engagement, etc., is consummated in the ceremony which makes the twain "one flesh." So is it with baptism. By our faith, our love and repentance we become engaged to the "Lover of our souls." In baptism, we are "united with him in the likeness of his death, that we may be also in the likeness of his resurrection." Conversion embraces this four-fold change. How pregnant with meaning are these steps of approach to and union with the Lord, when viewed in the light of his Word ! There are too many half-converted people in the world to-day. They have not experienced all these changes. They are satisfied with a turning to the Lord only in some of these things. Let us not be content with anything less than a full turning to Christ in intellect, affections, will and state.

Jesus said : "Except ye be converted, and become *as little children*, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." He set the child up as a standard. What did Christ mean by "*as little children*" ? Certainly not that it was possible to go back to the days of childhood, or become a little one again. He meant *like* little children, in disposition, desire, character, etc. The child is innocent, free from sin. Conversion brings us

into a state of purity, of cleansing from the defilement of sin. The child is teachable, ready to receive instruction, a little bundle of interrogation points. The converted one will be ready to sit at the feet of Jesus and learn of him, anxious to be taught the "all things whatsoever" he has commanded. The little child is trustful, ready to confide in others. This will be characteristic of the person who is converted. He will trust in the Lord, confide in him under all circumstances. The little child is obedient, ready to respect and yield to authority. If we are truly and fully converted, we too will be obedient, ready at all times to respect the will of him whom we recognise as having all authority and power. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" will be the constant inquiry of the person who has turned to the Saviour.

For you, dear friend, there is no promise or possibility of entrance into the kingdom of heaven unless you fulfil this divinely-appointed condition. The matter is entirely in your own hands. Whether you turn from sin to the Lord rests with yourself. It is not impossible for you to do so. All the converting power needed is presented to you in the gospel. God is gracious. The Saviour is full of compassion. Will you turn? It is possible to *resist converting power*. Concerning Israel, Isaiah wrote: "The people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Matt. 13: 15). They deliberately closed their eyes, stopped their ears and hardened their hearts against the power



of God appointed for their conversion. You may do the same. A young man was a regular attendant at the mission services held in a tent. He was convicted of sin and convinced of the claims of Christ. The time came when he knew that he must decide for or against the Lord. He resolved to remain away from the meetings for a time. The first night he did so, friends urged him to attend. But he replied: "If I go to-night, I will have to take a stand for Christ, and I don't want to do so yet. I will wait a little while longer." He went off to a party. A few days later he was stricken with typhoid fever, and within a week he had passed away. He had resisted converting power. Are you doing likewise? "No man can serve two masters." Jesus said: "He that is not with me is against me." Where do you stand? Oh, while it is possible for you to turn from sin and to turn to the Lord, I plead with you to do so. "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve."

# A Soul-stirring Inquiry.

“What then shall I do with Jesus which is called Christ?”  
(Matt. 27 : 22).

**I**N all the records of law there is nothing to compare with the trial of Jesus Christ. Whether we consider the matchless character of the prisoner, the bitter prejudice of his accusers, the vacillation of the judge, or the unjust verdict rendered, that trial is without a peer. Because it was not lawful for the Jews to put any man to death, they had brought Jesus before the representative of Roman authority—Pilate the governor. In that kingly palace, such as in his days of freedom he had never trod, began the last agitating scenes which preceded the final agonies of Christ. The judge *suspected* the innocence of Jesus. He knew that for envy they had delivered him up. His wife's message came to him, “Have thou nothing to do with this just man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.” The meek, ineffable grandeur of that sinless One was sufficient to acquit him of guilt. Then away from the raging crowd Pilate proceeded to *ascertain* the innocence of Jesus. In the quiet of the judgment hall, he asked him in tones of pitying wonder :

"Art thou the King of the Jews?—thou poor, worn, tear-stained outcast in this hour of thy bitter need, with the foul traces of the insults of thine enemies upon thy face and upon thy robe—art thou the King of the Jews?"

"Yes, I am a King, but not in this region of falsities and shadows: my kingdom is not of this world. I am come to bear witness unto the truth." Then the judge *proclaimed* the innocence of Jesus in the thrice-repeated declaration: "I find in him no fault at all." The soul-stirring inquiry of this text came with thrilling interest from the lips of Pilate. With all the strength of a feeble pride; with all the daring of a guilty cowardice; and with all the pity of which a blood-stained nature was capable, he sought to release the Son of God. He appealed first to the custom of the feast, saying, "Ye have a custom that at the feast day I release unto you a prisoner, whom ye would. Whom will ye that I release unto you? Jesus or Barabbas?" They all say, "Release unto us Barabbas." "What then shall I do with Jesus which is called Christ?" "Let him be crucified." Next, he appealed to their Messianic hopes and expectations. Pilate knew that the Jews with longing eyes and anxious hearts had been peering down the unborn ages of the future, if perchance they might look upon him who was to sit upon David's throne, and restore the former splendor and power of Israel. The governor is acquainted with these longings and hopes. He appealed to them as he asked, "Shall I crucify your King?" And, flinging to the winds every hope and expectation centreing in their Messiah, they cried out, "We have no king but Cæsar." Then Pilate washed his hands in attestation of his innocence, saying, "I am innocent of

the blood of this just person: see ye to it." And they were willing, for they cried out, "His blood be on us, and on our children." And it was! For from that day till this the blood of the crucified Son of God has stained every page of Jewish history, not in its *cleansing* but in its *condemning* power.

Daniel Webster, a great American lawyer, orator and statesman, was asked on one occasion, "Mr. Webster, what is the greatest thought that ever entered into your mind?" and the reply of this great man was: "The thought of my personal responsibility to God." Surely, there can come into the mind of finite beings no thought so great as that of our personal responsibility to the Infinite. I bring this question to you because it is one thrilling with personal interest: it is an intensely personal question. It was so to the Roman governor. How eagerly Pilate sought to escape the responsibility of answering his own question! He sent Jesus away to Herod, and thought in so doing he had placed the responsibility upon other shoulders. But we know that Pilate was compelled by force of circumstances to answer this question of his own lips. It is so with us to-day. This question comes to us all. The goadings of conscience, the strivings of the Spirit of God and our own soul-longing all prompt this solemn inquiry. This question confronts us in the midst of busy business life. It comes to us in the silence of the midnight watches. It is a question we cannot escape when we are strong and rugged in health; a question that is present while we are languishing on beds of sickness. It is a question of our individual disposal of Jesus. No priest can answer it for his people, no preacher can answer it for

his congregation, no friend for friend. This question is a personal one.

We must answer this question first of all in **VIEW OF THE CLAIMS OF JESUS**. He is on his trial to-day. In the judgment hall of the individual life and conscience the verdict is being given. The enemies of lust, of passion, of selfishness and of sin all cry, "Away with him! crucify him! crucify him!" The Pilate of conviction bids us acknowledge his claim, and bow before his sceptre of love. (Have you considered the claims of Christ? All authority in heaven and on earth is given unto him. He is peerless in the annals of time. Compare him with the great men of the present and past generations, and as the Alpine heights tower above the plains beneath, so does Jesus tower above them all. Let the redeemed of heaven pass before us in imagination—those who have washed their robes and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb—those who have never sinned—and Jesus is the loveliest, the fairest, the grandest of them all—the One before whom men and angels bow as they acknowledge him to be Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Christ is the Son of God, the Son of Man, the Prince of Peace, the Saviour of the world, the King of Kings, the Ruler of earth and heaven, the highest interpretation of the possibilities of humanity, the Salt of the earth, the Light of the world, the dawn of the light from beyond the grave, the fairest among ten thousand, the Lily of the Valley, the Rose of Sharon. He is the Truth—all truth converges in him; he is the Light—all light radiates from him; he is the Friend of the friendless, the world's Example, the Judge of all men, the Leader, the Hope, the final Advocate of man.

Because of what Jesus is, he claims your life, your love, your service. What then will you do with him ?)

The question in the second place must be answered in the LIGHT OF OUR OWN NEED. If there be any who need not Christ in time, and who can do without him in eternity, this question is not for them. There are many things, valuable in many respects, which we can do without in this life. We can get on without great education, for most of us have to do so. We can live without great wealth, for most of us do not possess that. We can be happy without attaining to great and exalted positions in the world, for most of us have not reached these heights. But we cannot do without Christ. "I am come," says the Saviour, "that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." "He that hath the Son hath the life; he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life." The vagaries of infidelity, the ignorance of scepticism, the false speculations of philosophy and science, have endeavored to mortgage the claims of Jesus and satisfy the longing soul—but they have failed. Could we see an eagle held captive in some cage and could read the instinct of that king of birds, we would read there the longing for freedom, the desire to burst the bars of its captivity, and to soar again into the blue heavens above. So, as we look upon man in the captive cage of sin, we read too the longing to be freed from captivity, and to soar heavenward and Godward—for "he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness." This is a question of the present age. We know that great political leaders and social reformers are presenting their remedies for the world's ills. They are suggesting schemes for the

uplifting of humanity. But the supreme need of the world is Christ. He alone is the answer to all the perplexing questions of this life, the solution of all our problems, the remedy for all our distress, the only power by which the world can be uplifted. The truth which reverberated through Judea's hills centuries ago alone can make men free to-day. "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we may be saved." "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus." He has "opened up the new and the living way." He alone is "the Way, the Truth and the Life." No man cometh unto the Father but by him. There was a famous violinist, Ole Bull by name, who had a friend named John Errickson. This man did not care for music, and could not be constrained to listen to the playing. One day the musician took his instrument and went down to the friend's place of business. And as he handled his instrument and explained its construction, and talked over tones and semi-tones, he took the bow in his hand and began to draw it across the strings. Soon the room was filled with a burst of melody. Workmen left their work, and gathered together to listen to the great player. By-and-bye the music ceased, and the men went back to their work. As the tears streamed from the eyes of Errickson, he turned to the musician and said, "Play on, play on, I never knew what was missing in my life before." So it is with each one of us. As we look into our own hearts, we will realise that the One whom we need more than all else is the blessed Christ. Our lives will never be attuned to the melodies of heaven until we receive him.

I desire you to notice that the answer to this question has settled the destiny of nations, and transformed the lives of individuals. The Jews are a people without a country, a nation without a home. They are a distinct race. We can only understand their history and their peculiar experiences in the light of the teaching of God's Word. Their rejection of Christ explains why they so often have been "a hiss and a by-word among the nations." They answered this question by turning from him. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." We can look to the islands of the seas where years ago cannibalism reigned, and these places are centres of commercial interest, and of power. Why? Simply because the missionary has brought to them this question, "What will you do with Jesus?" and they have answered it—to some extent at least—by accepting his life and following his teaching. Civilisation has followed the messenger of the cross. The nations to-day which we look upon as mighty and powerful are the nations which most recognise Christ and his teaching. The nations which in past years have lost their power are the nations which have dethroned Christ, found no place for him in their affairs. This is equally true of the individual life. Some years ago, I had staying in my home in America a missionary from the South Sea Islands, the grandson of the first European missionary to those places. His uncle and cousin had been devoured by the cannibals. He himself had been captured, but, through being tabooed by the chief, his life was spared. He showed to me a number of plaits of hair, each plait representing hair taken from the scalp of some native in their tribal fights. He showed me two pictures—one



the photograph of a cannibal chief, dressed in the rude garb of a savage; the other was the photograph of a native preacher with the Bible in his hand. These two pictures were likenesses of the same person—the one the cannibal, the other the preacher of the gospel. What transformed this man's life? The answer to this question. To him Christ was presented, and, receiving him, his heart was purified, his life beautified, his thought ennobled. A sculptor had a friend whose work caused him to be stooped and round-shouldered. He was very anxious to see him rid of this deformity, so with his greatest skill he fashioned a beautiful image and placed it on a pedestal in the friend's room. It was put in such a position that when the man looked upon it he would have to straighten himself up and stand erect. By constantly doing this as he gazed upon that lovely form he lost his deformity. Even so is it with men deformed and mis-shapen by sin. As they learn to look at the matchless, the sinless Son of God, his life is reproduced in them, and, fashioned into his divine likeness, they are made whole.

I would impress upon you that there can be but three answers to the question of this text. There are many who give to it the answer which REJECTS Christ. This was the answer of the fickle multitude at Pilate's judgment hall. Some days before, as Jesus came from Bethany to Jerusalem, they went forth to meet him. They took off their garments, and spread them in the way. They broke off the palm branches, and strewed them. They waved them in the air, and with glad acclaim they shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the name

of the Lord!" And now, urged on by their leaders, these same voices are raised in anger, as they cry, "Away with him! crucify him! crucify him!" It is said that Carlyle on one occasion was being entertained in the home of a wealthy lady with a number of literary friends. The conversation turned to Jesus, and the treatment he had received from the Jews. The hostess turned to Mr. Carlyle with the question, "Do you not think, Sir, that if Jesus were to come again he would receive better treatment than he did when he was on earth before?" "No, Madam," responded Carlyle, "I do not. If Christ were to come and make his home with the wealthy, and choose as his friends those of high and exalted position, I can imagine that I might receive from you an invitation, 'Come and meet Jesus.' But, if he were to seek the outcast and fallen; if he were to be the Friend of the oppressed, and downtrodden, as he was upon earth, we would say, 'Take him to Newgate, and hang him.'" So there are many to-day who are giving to this question the answer of rejection. They are crying, "We will not have this man to reign over us."

The second answer to this question is the answer that NEGLECTS Christ. This was the answer of Pilate. Thoroughly convinced of the Saviour's innocence, realising that he ought to have been set free, yet because he would keep favor with the people and retain his position among them, he neglects to be true to Christ, neglects to be faithful to his position as judge. There are many who would not go so far as to say, "I reject Christ," and yet who are neglecting him. They are "halting between two opinions," waiting for

the more convenient season when they will call for him, almost persuaded to be Christians. Let me ask, Is this your treatment of the Saviour? Are you neglecting him while you attend to the thing not nearly so important?

Again, to this question we may give a third answer—the answer which ACCEPTS Christ. This is the answer of faith. There were those at that judgment hall who stood and watched Jesus upon his trial, who heard this question from the lips of the Roman governor, who were prepared to answer, when the great testing time came, by laying down their lives for his sake. The answer which accepts Christ is the answer that looks to him in loving trust; the answer that leads us to turn away from sin; the answer that leads us with gratitude to confess him before men as the matchless Son of God; the answer that leads us down through the waters of baptism, that we may put him on in his own appointed way; the answer that leads us in the daily service and sacrifice which glorify our Lord; the answer that leads us in the life that is pleasing to him; the answer which one day will lead us into his own blessed presence, “when the mists have rolled away.”

This inquiry is one which comes to every Christian. “What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?” Shall I sell him for thirty pieces of silver, as Judas did? Shall I betray him with a false kiss of friendship in the presence of his enemy? Shall I deny him with oaths and curses, as Peter did, while I warm myself at the fire the world is willing to kindle? Or shall I crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame by a godless, inconsistent, hypocritical life? Or shall I, as a Christian, once again crown him as Lord of all?

It is a question, too, for the unconverted. What will you do with Jesus? Will you despise his love, will you scorn his mercy, will you resist his pleading, will you reject his salvation? or, here and now, will you receive him, and the salvation he so graciously bestows?

And now, I want you to try and picture that scene at the judgment hall. We draw near in the early morning hour. In the distance we look upon a great crowd of people. The noise of their voices is borne to us on the morning air. We ask some passer-by, "What means this eager anxious throng, which moves with busy haste along?" and the answer comes, "Why, they are taking Jesus of Nazareth before the Roman governor." We draw near, and we see the governor in his robes of office, sitting upon the judgment throne. His voice is raised in the inquiry, "Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" We see that these people are called upon to make a choice—a choice between Barabbas and Jesus. We ask, "Who is Barabbas?" and in imagination we see him standing there. We look upon a face upon which is the awful imprint of sin and passion. We look upon hands that are stained with the life-blood of his fellow-men. We look upon one who was in prison because of sedition, robbery and murder, upon a life self-centred and sensual, upon one whose life had been a blasting. Then we ask, "Who is Jesus?" and we look upon One whose eyes even now are luminous with love; upon a face whose seal is holiness; upon hands which so often had been stretched out in ministry and helpfulness; upon feet so often weary by their journeyings in and out among needy people. We look upon a life whose grandest

commentary is in the simple words, "He went about doing good." We look upon One whose life was unselfish, and immaculate; upon One whose life was a blessing. Again we hear the question, "Whom will ye that I release unto you? Jesus, or Barabbas?" And the multitude, urged on by priests and elders, cry in their bitter prejudice, "Release unto us Barabbas." Once more the question reaches our ears, "What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" And again a thousand voices are raised in the mad cry, "Away with him! crucify him! crucify him!" I would ask you, now, If you had been one of the number at that judgment hall, and had been asked these questions, how would you have answered? And you say, "I would have raised my voice for Jesus; I would have said, 'Release unto us Jesus. Away with Barabbas, for he is worthy of death!'" Just as truly are Jesus and Barabbas before you now—the Barabbas of this world, with its sin, its fascination, its pleasure, its ambition; on the other hand Christ, the Son of God, who has the highest claim upon your devotion. You have to make a choice between Barabbas and Jesus. Which one will you choose?

I believe that God to-night would ask you this question. I believe it is the question that would come to you from the angels of the divine presence. I believe it is the question, too, which your Saviour himself would speak to your heart. It is the question that loved ones who have gone before, that friends who are near to you now, would ask you to answer. It is the question that even the devils of hell would place before you. Other questions are for time: this is for eternity.

Now, you are to decide what place Jesus is to occupy in your life. It is a question of what you will do with Jesus. By-and-bye the time will come when the question will be, "What will Jesus do with you?" That will be the great test question of the judgment. Its answer will depend upon your answer now.

" Oh, what will you do with Jesus ?

The call comes low and sweet ;

And tenderly he bids you

Your burdens lay at his feet.

O soul so sad and weary,

That sweet voice speaks to thee ;

Then what will you do with Jesus ?

Oh, what shall the answer be ?

" Oh, think of the King of glory,

From heaven to earth come down—

His life so pure and holy,

His death, his cross, his crown ;

Of his divine compassion,

His sacrifice for thee !

Then what will you do with Jesus ?

Oh, what shall the answer be ?"

## The Perfect Life.

**M**AN is distinguished from all other created life by a wonderful capacity for growth and development. There are no "dead lines" beyond which he is unable to pass. Progression or retrogression are his unvarying characteristics. "One of the greatest distances between animalism and man is seen in the unbridged gulf of progress. The animal remains where it was, but the man has been progressing in every department of life from the very first. There is between them all the breadth of history." Physically, Intellectually, morally and spiritually he has made continual advance. "Man is so great that he is perpetually striving after a loftier ideal; nothing that has limits can satisfy him." "The mark of our high calling is a receding goal—the higher we go the higher we want to go." It is in the realm of the spiritual, however, that human progress has been most marked. "Not that we have already attained, either are already perfect, but we follow after it that we may apprehend that for which we also were apprehended by Christ Jesus."

All the agencies and instrumentalities of the kingdom of God operate for a two-fold purpose. 1. The conversion of the sinner—translating men "from the kingdom of

darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son." 2. The edifying or building up of the saints. They are the appointed means to aid our progress in the divine life. In Eph. 4: 11-15, the apostle presents very clearly the purpose for which Christ gave the various officers of the Christian ministry. "For the *perfecting* of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a *perfect* man, unto the measure of the stature of the *fulness* of Christ." The exhortation of Hebrews 6: 1 is: "Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection." The context of this appeal reveals the fact that these disciples were not measuring up to their possibilities in the Christian life. For when by reason of the time they should have been *teachers*, there was need that someone teach them over again the first principle of the oracles of God. They could only partake of infants' food. "To be a child is one thing; to sink back from the intelligence of manhood to childish imbecility is another." This, these Hebrew Christians had done. In the Christian community of to-day there is too large a proportion of babes to the grown-up members of the family.

"We are to leave the first principles as the scholar leaves the letters of the alphabet, leaving them only to use them, leaving them that he may bring out all their powers, and employ them in startling combinations, as the instrument for acquiring or diffusing thought. We are to leave them as the plant leaves the root, when it towers into a majestic tree, leaving it only that it may the more depend upon it, and day by day drawing from



it those fresh supplies of vital sap which it pours into the fresh leaves, fresh boughs, ever fresh and beautiful formations of that life which refreshes the hungry with its clusters and the weary with its shade. We are to leave them as the builder leaves his foundation that he may carry up the building stone above stone, storey above storey, tower above tower, from the dusky basement to the sunlit pinnacle, always leaving the foundation, yet always on it, and on it with the most massive pressure and the most complete dependence when most he leaves it." We are to leave the child simplicity of the Christian faith that we may attain to that ripeness of spiritual character which is possible for every believer. "Only the man who grows on, body and mind and soul toward perfection can realise the divine idea for him, or worthily bear the name of disciple of the man Christ Jesus."

The value of a foundation is in the building erected thereon; apart from the superstructure it is comparatively valueless. Likewise the importance of the "Word of the beginning"—the "first principles" of the gospel—is in the fact that through them we are introduced into that life that has the power of almost unlimited growth. They are the conditions of *naturalisation* in the kingdom, but are not the standard of its highest attainment as citizens. To stop at *first principles*, and not go on unto perfection, is to continue in the child period of the Christian life and to miss the purpose and blessing for which the foundation has been laid.

The apostle warned and taught that he "might present every man *perfect* in Christ Jesus." We are to attain unto the *perfect* man. The Great Teacher's

injunction is, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is *perfect*." Perfection is a relative term. "A thing is perfect when it precisely and fully meets what is reasonably required and expected of it." The machine is perfect which, to the extent of its power, does the work for which it was constructed. In like manner the Christian attains unto perfection when his life measures up to the standard which is in Christ Jesus—when he performs all that is reasonably required and expected of him. Campbell writes: "There is a true, a real perfectibility of human character and of human nature through the soul-redeeming mediation and holy spiritual influence of the Great Philanthropist—the Hero—the Author and Perfecter of the Christian faith. And there is a transforming power—a spiritual, a divine energy—adequate to this end in the gospel of Christ as now dispensed by the holy Guest of the Christian temple." "This perfection is to the measure of our spiritual capacity, a perfect conformity to the perfect image of the spiritual beauty and loveliness of the divine Father himself." We have a splendid heritage! In this life we may never realise the full value of the estate to which we are heirs. It is our *privilege* to "press toward the mark for the prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus." May it be our highest joy! The *perfect life* is our possibility. Let it be our attainment! We will notice four things concerning this life:—

1. Christ must be its Author. "By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were

created by him and for him : and he is before all things, and by him all things consist " (Col. 1 : 16, 17). This language refers to Christ's part in the creation of the universe. If this world speaks of his creative power, even more eloquently must the life of the Christian speak of that fact as manifested anew to man. Jesus is "the *Author* and Finisher of our faith." We are a "new creation in Christ Jesus." He is the *Alpha* of the perfect life. "In Christ Jesus have I begotten you through the gospel." Passing along the street one day, a preacher was accosted by a drunken man with the remark—"You converted me, Sir." "Yes," was the reply, "I must have ; it doesn't look much like the work of my Master." The stream can rise no higher than its source. No more can the life of the Christian. If the origin of that life is mere esteem for a preacher, or simple conformity to custom, it will manifest but little growth ; it will be of the earth—earthy. "He that hath the Son hath the life ; he that hath not the Son of God shall not see life." The new life is acquired by intelligent faith in Christ. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." An old man said : "There be three rules for trout-fishing, and 'tis no good trying if you don't mind them. The first is, keep *yourself* out of sight ; and the second is, keep yourself farther out of sight ; and the third is, keep yourself farther still out of sight. Then you'll do it." Splendid rules for catching men, too ! Dr. Duff visited Carey when the latter was on his death-bed, and during the visit spoke of the wonderful work the great missionary had done. When the visitor rose to leave, Carey said to him, "Dr. Duff, when I am gone do not speak of Carey and

his work, but speak of Carey's Saviour." On the Mount of Transfiguration the apostles lifted up their eyes and saw no man but *Jesus only*. All our efforts to extend the kingdom of God will fail except as we exalt the matchless character and spotless life of Jesus, and attract men to him. The perfect life must *begin* in the Son of God. It can have no other origin.

2. *This life is sustained in Christ.* The Psalmist says of God, "Thou openest thy hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing." Paul stated to the Athenians: "In him we live, and move, and have our being." The Scriptures emphasise the fact of *every man's dependence* upon God. "He satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness." The Christian life is a dependent life. "Your life is hid with Christ in God." Here is our security and sustenance. "I am the Vine; ye are the branches. He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me ye can do nothing." "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that was begotten of God [Christ] *keepeth* him, and that wicked one toucheth him not." Paul says, "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."

" Kept by his wondrous power,  
 So strong—so free!  
 Each year, each day, each hour,  
 Thus kept are we.  
 Protected by his love,  
 Awake—asleep;  
 Through darkness and through light  
 He still will keep."

"The idea of perfection is to be cherished in a man's soul, and that idea is to be sustained by constant communion with the great model of human perfection, Christ Jesus. It can only be maintained and strengthened by unceasing fidelity to Christ. Ours is a life, as Christians, that not only *begins*, but must *continue* in the Lord."

"He is a path, if any be misled,  
 He is a robe, if any naked be ;  
 If any chance to hunger, he is bread ;  
 If any be a bondaman, he is free ;  
 If any be but weak, how strong is he !  
 To dead men life he is, to sick men health ;  
 To blind men sight, and to the needy wealth ;  
 A pleasure without loss, a treasure without stealth."

3. *Christ is the inspiration of this life.* The great apostle wrote: "For me to *live* is Christ." "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but *Christ liveth* in me." "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." "I count everything but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." These and kindred passages make clear to us Paul's consciousness of the Saviour's nearness to himself, his sense of the Christ-power over his own life. Was there a problem to solve?—then Jesus was the solution. Was there weakness in himself?—then Jesus was the strength. Every difficulty was surmounted, every obstacle overcome, every burden lightened, and every mission performed, by the inspiration of that presence that dwelt in him. In the closing verses of the 8th of Romans the apostle stands as it were on some high mountain

peak, and as his eye sweeps the horizon he sees all his enemies encompassing him—death, life, angels, principalities, powers, things present, things to come, height, depth, or any other creation. Then with a shout of victory he cries: "I am persuaded that none of these things shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus." One writer very beautifully expresses this thought of Christ's power in the life of the believer: "For me to live is Christ—not a set of rules, but a life principle within me; not the conditioning of my days by time-table maxims and rules, but the ever present Christ, stretching to the farthest territory of my being, and by his presence there ordering all my life within the bounds of his own sacred will."

When Frederick Arnold was writing the life of F. W. Robertson, he went to Brighton to talk with Robertson's friends, to find incidents for his biography. Among other places he went to a bookseller's shop, and learned that the proprietor had been a constant attendant upon Robertson's ministry, and had in his parlor a picture of the great preacher. The bookseller said to Mr. Arnold, "Do you see that picture? Whenever I am tempted to do a mean thing I run back here and look at it. Then I cannot do the mean thing. Whenever I feel afraid of some difficulty or some obstacle, I come and look into those eyes, and I go out strong for my struggle." If the picture of a great preacher had so much influence, how much more should the vision of Christ strengthen us to overcome temptation, and inspire us to follow in his steps!

4. *Christ will be the product of the perfect life.* By means of the bioscope the actions of men are reproduced for

our amusement or edification. The church is the divine bioscope through which Christ is again presented to the world. It is the business of the Christian to reproduce Christ. We are the sensitised paper on which Jesus is to be photographed. He is the mirror which glasses God's image before us, "and beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." The Sanhedrin "took knowledge of Peter and John that they had been with Jesus." Their association with the Son of God was manifested in their lives. They were reproducing Christ. In the life of the Christian, Christ must live again on earth. The natives of Burmah said of Judson, "There goes Jesus Christ's man." The world should say the same of us to-day. It is said that when Stanley went in search of Livingstone he was a man of the world, with little thought of God and Christ. He was not in the missionary's presence long before he was worshipping Livingstone's God, reading Livingstone's Bible and serving Livingstone's Saviour. A vision of the Christ came to him in the life of the missionary explorer.

A young man was asked by whose preaching he had been converted, and replied, "By no person's preaching—by my mother's practising." Everything must reproduce its kind. If we are "born of God," our lives will present God-like characteristics. "If Christ be in you," actions and words will reveal his presence. The perfect life is developed by imitation of Christ. "True manhood does not consist in the development of a fine physique, or of a brilliant mentality, or in the pursuit of heroic ambitions. It lies in the nobleness of soul at

peace with God, seeking in all things to please him, and to possess and exhibit the mind of Christ." One of the old legends tells of the visit of a goddess to ancient Thebes. No one saw her, but everyone knew of her presence by the blessings she left behind. If she paused before a lightning-blackened tree, it would be covered with beautiful vines. If she sat on a decayed log, the decay would be covered with lovely moss. If she trod on the shores of the sea, violets would spring up in her tracks. This is only a legend, but it illustrates the influence of the life that brings forth the fruits of the Spirit—the life of which Christ is the product.

We must emphasise the fact that the life is pre-eminently important. "There were two artists, close friends, one of whom excelled in landscape painting, and the other in depicting the human figure. The former had painted a picture in which wood and rock and sky were combined in the artist's best manner. But the picture remained unsold—no one cared to buy it. It lacked something. The artist's friend came and said, 'Let me take your painting.' A few days later he brought it back. He had added a lovely human figure to the matchless landscape. Soon the picture was sold. It had lacked the interest of life." Our religion may have a similar effect. We may have doctrine, ordinance, creed and polity all in their true perspective, but if these lack the interest of life our plea for the restoration of primitive Christianity will be robbed of its power. Let us have the landscape, but not without the life.

To the world the Bible is a sealed book. Our lives are the open volume "known and read of all men." Let them read there that we have been made "partakers



of the divine nature" and are growing daily into his glorious likeness. Jesus was buried in the waters of the Jordan, but he did not tarry on the banks of that historic stream. He passed through the temptation in the wilderness, the toil of his ministry, the agony of Gethsemane, the shame of Calvary, the darkness of the tomb, until, *perfected* through suffering, he entered into the glory of the ascension. We, too, have passed through the sacred ordinance of baptism. Let us not tarry beside the waters! Let us press forward until we "attain unto the perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." And the time will come when "we shall be *like* him, for we shall see him as he is."