



Traternally
L. D. Lloyd

**THE
WORD OF RECONCILIATION
AND ITS APPLICATION
BY
CHRIST'S
AMBASSADORS.**

J. D. FLOYD.

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1912

PREFACE.

My apology for adding another book to the long list already before the public is that I believe such a one as here presented is needed. I have been actively engaged in preaching for thirty years, much of the time in new fields, where the plea for primitive faith and practice had not been named. I have deeply felt the need of a book that gives in an orderly manner the way of salvation to sinner and saint alike, that is neither too profound nor too voluminous for the masses. In the preparation of this book I have tried to meet this want. I have read carefully what many others have said on the various subjects discussed—and that, too, with profit—but the teachings here presented are the conclusions of my own mind after a prayerful study of the Bible. I request that those who criticize do it from the standpoint of the purpose I had in view in writing the book.

Trusting that it may help some to a better understanding of the holy oracles, and that some may be led to a “closer walk with God,” this little book is committed to the consideration of the public.

Shelbyville, Tenn.

J. D. FLOYD.

INTRODUCTION.

Brother J. D. Floyd, the author of this volume, has for almost a half century been preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ, and has become one of the most influential preachers of primitive, apostolic Christianity in Middle Tennessee. He was reared in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, but early in life was led to investigate for himself the word of God, which thoroughly convinced him that he should give up the humanly devised way and walk in the way that was given through those holy men who “spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit.” He has spent his whole life in one community, making frequent evangelistic tours into various parts of Tennessee and into other States, and is loved and honored by all who know him. He has the happy faculty of taking little incidents in life and drawing from them some of the most beautiful and striking lessons.

If God has delivered a message that insures man's safety for time and eternity, it certainly can be comprehended and understood by man. That such a message has been delivered, there is no doubt in the mind of the author of this volume. It was his cherished purpose to prepare a plain, simple treatise on the way of salvation that could be easily under

stood, and that he has succeeded will be conceded by every reader. The first edition was sold out several years ago, and repeated calls have been made for a new edition, which now goes out to bless the world. The book deserves a wide circulation, for it will certainly be instrumental in leading those who peruse its pages into the way everlasting.

J. W. SHEPHERD.

Nashville, Tenn., February 14, 1912.

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THE WORD OF RECONCILIATION

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

The Divine and Human Cooperate in Salvation.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” (Eph. 2 8.)

Man was lost; God graciously purposed to save him. All antecedent dispensations were only preparatory to that perfected system that is “by grace through faith.” Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea. He grew to manhood; and when about thirty years of age, he entered into his public ministry. He “went about doing good,” and by his miracles demonstrated that he was divine and that “God was with him.” Early in his ministry he made choice of twelve disciples to be his apostles, to whom he revealed himself and made known “the mysteries of the kingdom.” He died, was buried, and rose again the third day. To his apostles “he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of

them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: and, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.” (Acts 1:3-9.) Thus from the presence of his chosen ambassadors he was taken up into heaven and made “both Lord and Christ.”

On the first Pentecost after these things occurred the Holy Spirit came and qualified the apostles, the chosen ambassadors, who at once began to make known “the word of reconciliation” to a lost and ruined world. To ascertain what that “word of reconciliation” is, how understood, and how applied is the object of this book. Preparatory to this, some other questions should be briefly considered.

Salvation from sin is the result of the cooperation of human and divine agencies, and without this cooperation no soul is saved. This truth is taught by many scriptures, and by none more clearly, when correctly interpreted, than the passage at the head of this chapter. "By grace" indicates the divine part; "through faith," the human part. Whatever is and was necessary to devise, perfect, and apply a plan of salvation adapted to man's needs is covered by the expression "by grace;" all that is required in order that man may appropriate and enjoy the salvation provided, by the expression "through faith." There is a similarity between God's works in the natural and spiritual realms. God perpetuates natural life, but not without human cooperation. He gives the food element; man prepares and feeds upon it. He gives the air; man takes it into his lungs. He gives the water; man drinks it. So in the matter of salvation. God provides the means; man appropriates them. He prepares the way; man walks in it. Until it can be demonstrated that one can have physical life without food, air, and water, no one should hope for spiritual life without the divine part. Likewise, until these natural elements of themselves will prolong life, none should expect spiritual life without walking in the divine way.

The salvation "that is in Christ" is taught in types in the Old Testament. All these teach divine and human cooperation. Space will allow the con-

sideration of only one. The children of Israel were in bondage in Egypt. Many and grievous burdens were placed upon them. God heard their cry, saw their affliction, knew their sorrow, and determined to deliver them. (Ex. 3:7.) To do this he sent Moses to lead them out. Him he endowed with all power necessary to secure the consent of Pharaoh for them to leave his dominions. Under this divinely-called and divinely-qualified leader they “forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king.” Marching, not the near route (by the way of the Philistines), but by a circuitous route (by the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea), they at last camped on its west shore. On their right was an impassable mountain; on their left, a tongue of the sea; in their front, the main body of water, eight or ten miles wide; while in their rear was the broad valley through which they had come. Pharaoh, regretting his action in letting them go, having pursued them with a great army, was pressing upon them through this valley. Seeing nothing but disaster awaiting them, in their terror they chided Moses for having led them out into the wilderness to perish. In reply Moses said: “Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more forever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto

the children of Israel, that they go forward.” (Ex. 14:13-15.) In obedience to God's command, Moses stretched his rod out over the sea, and the Lord caused the sea to go back by an east wind and made the sea dry land. Thus a way of escape was provided. What they could not do the Lord did for them; what they could do they were required to do. Hence the command: “Go forward.” If God ever gave a nonessential command, this was not one. Disobedience here meant capture and return to bondage; obedience meant safety and freedom from oppression. They did not “halt . . . between two opinions,” but obeyed at once, and, passing between the congealed walls of the sea, reached the opposite side and were saved. The Egyptians essayed to follow; but divine power not intervening in their behalf, they were lost. The Israelites were saved not as a result of the divine work or of the human work alone, but from a proper combination of both. God could as easily have carried this mighty host bodily over the sea as to open the channel, but by doing so he would have set aside human agency. Paul (1 Cor. 10:1) makes this typical of man's deliverance from sin. Type and antitype must always agree. Hence as there were both divine and human parts in the type, so there must be in the antitype—the salvation of sinners.

The scheme of human redemption had its origin in God's love for man, and divine power was brought to bear in perfecting that scheme.

Grace first contrived the way
To save rebellious man,
And all the steps that grace display
Which drew the wondrous plan.

The grace of God sent Jesus to be the great sin offering for the world. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16.) This grace sent the Holy Spirit to be the great revealer of this scheme, to convince “the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8), and to be an abiding Comforter with God's children (John 14:16). This grace provided a church, or kingdom, in which is forgiveness, redemption through the blood of Christ (Col. 1:13, 14), and in which man can be trained and disciplined for a heavenly state. Finally, this grace gives us the “gospel of the grace of God,” which is “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” (Rom. 1:16.) There is often much anxiety about the divine part in salvation. This should not be. What was necessary for God to do he has done; whatever is necessary for him to do he will do at the proper time. The thing for man to do is to study carefully God's will to learn his part, and then faithfully and earnestly do that part, and all will be well with him. What the human part is will be developed in subsequent chapters of this book.

CHAPTER II

Importance of Knowing How to Read the Scriptures.

A number of years ago, when I was a practical surveyor, a friend came to my house early one morning to get me to survey a small tract of land he had recently bought. As soon as I could get ready we started for the place. The man was full of talk about his trade; was glad he had found a place for sale in the range of his means; was tired of moving every year, as he had been doing; and finally said he was glad he had secured a home in that community, as his wife now would be close enough to attend her church, a privilege she had not had since they had been married. Upon this I suggested that he could also attend.

“Yes,” he replied, “that is so; but, you know I never go to church much; but, little as you may think, I read the Bible a great deal.”

I replied: “I am glad to hear that; but do you know how to read it?”

He answered: “O, yes! I can read very well.”

Seeing he misunderstood my question, I asked: “For what purpose are you reading?”

With much earnestness, he replied: “I am read-

ing to learn how to be saved—how I may become a Christian.”

“ How are you getting along?” was the next question.

“ O. very well! I began at the first of Genesis, and am well along in the Old Testament.”

By this time I had become deeply interested in his condition. I had passed through the same experience. From my early youth I had desired, above everything else, to be a Christian, and, under the instruction of my religious teachers, had searched the Old Testament, and especially the Psalms of David, for the way; but my search was vain. I did not then understand the reason why. Perceiving his difficulty and hoping to be of some service to him, as we rode along over the hills and across the valleys, I preached him a sermon on the proper division of the word. When I was through, he said: “I never heard it in that way before. I am going to read to see if what you have said is true.” He did read, and afterwards he became an earnest, faithful Christian.

God has spoken to man. In the time past he spoke to the fathers by the prophets; in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son. All that he has spoken that was for the good of man in general is found in the Bible. What he spoke to the fathers by the prophets is recorded in the Old Testament; what he speaks to us by his Son is on record in the New Testament. As “what things

soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law,” so what is said in the Old Testament is said to those who lived in that age of the world; and, likewise, what is said by God through his Son is said to those who live in this age. The Old Testament is inspired. It is as much the word of God as the New Testament, for God spoke it. In it there are many lessons of divine providence and divine government, many lessons showing how God condemns the wrong and approves the right, and many lessons teaching the impotency of human wisdom and the fallibility of human nature. A knowledge of it is necessary to an understanding of the New Testament; but it does not contain in plain, literal language the specific way of salvation for man in the gospel age of the world. This is to be found in the things “God hath spoken to us by his Son” in the New Testament. The Old Testament contains what God said in a preparatory age and to a people he was using to prepare for the glorious scheme of redemption through Christ. The three dispensations—patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian—have been aptly compared to starlight, moonlight, and sunlight. The belated traveler, when there is nothing better, appreciates even the dim light of the stars; but when the full-faced moon emerges above the horizon, he no longer looks for the shimmering stars; and then when the sun, the full-orbed “king of day,” appears, interest in these lesser lights is lost. The patriarch

appreciated the dim light of his age, for it was all he had; so it was with the Israelite; but why should those living in the age of the glorious Sun of Righteousness seek the dim lights of the past? This those do who turn away from the New Testament and seek for the way of salvation in the Old Testament. We have a general interest in what God spoke to the fathers by the prophets, but a special interest in what he has spoken to us by his Son. In Heb. 2:2, 3 it is said: "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?" "The word spoken by angels" refers to what is in the Old Testament; the word "spoken by the Lord" refers to what is in the New Testament. Danger to us lies in neglecting the latter. The same truth is taught in Heb. 10:28, 29: "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" The New Testament is made up of what Jesus spoke and did and of what the apostles spoke and did by his authority. It contains twenty-seven books. These

naturally resolve themselves into four divisions. The first four—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John— constitute the first division; Acts of Apostles, the second; the twenty-one letters, beginning with Romans and ending with Jude, the third; the book of Revelation, the fourth. The four books that constitute the first division are books of testimony. They are really the depositions of the four writers, witnessing to the works of Christ that prove his divinity. They tell about his miraculous birth, his wonderful life, the miracles he performed, his gracious teachings, his shameful arrest, his mock trial, his illegal condemnation, his tragic death on the cross, his quiet burial, his triumphant resurrection, and his glorious ascension to heaven. They also record “the word of reconciliation” that he committed to his ambassadors.

In order to salvation there must be faith; in order to faith there must be testimony. No testimony, no faith, is a truism. These books give the testimony upon which we predicate our faith in Christ. “Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those

things, wherein thou hast been instructed.” (Luke 1:1-4.) “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.)

Acts of Apostles, which constitutes the second division of the New Testament, is a book of conversions. It contains the acts (not all of them) of the apostles in applying “the word of reconciliation” that Jesus had committed to them.

Two propositions which are incontestably true throw much light on the purpose of this book:

1. In Acts of Apostles, and in that alone, are recorded discourses preached by inspired men to unconverted men and women, the object of which preaching was to teach them how to be saved.

2. In Acts of Apostles, and in that alone, are recorded cases of conversion under the ministry of inspired men.

These propositions refer to the time after Jesus had died for the sins of the world, after the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile had been broken down, and after a “word of reconciliation” was given that embraced the whole world. These propositions being true, one should not begin at Genesis and read through the Old Testament to learn the divine plan of saving sinners.

The twenty-one letters which constitute the third

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division were addressed to Christians, either churches or individual Christians, and are properly books of church order or discipline. There is no relation into which it is lawful for a Christian to enter but what he can here find all needed instruction. He will here learn that he is to deny himself of all “ungodliness and worldly lusts,” and is to “live soberly, righteously, and godly;” that in order to lay hold on everlasting life he must “fight the good fight of faith;” that he must crucify “the flesh with the affections and lusts,” that he must add to his faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity; that the assembling together must not be forsaken; and that he must “keep the ordinances” as they have been delivered. As it is not right to “take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs,” so the instruction given in this division to Christians should not be taken and given to alien sinners; neither should the instruction given in the second division to alien sinners be turned over to saved men and women.

The book of Revelation, which constitutes the fourth division, is a book of prophetic symbols and gives in highly figurative style the fortunes and destiny of the church, an account of the great judgment, the separation of the righteous from the wicked, and a description of the eternal home of each class.

CHAPTER III.**“The Word of Reconciliation.”**

“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.” (2 Cor. 5:18-20.)

The “us” in verse 19, to whom was committed “the word of reconciliation,” refers to the apostles of Christ, who in verse 20 are called “ambassadors.” The word “reconcile” means “to bring back, or restore to agreement, concord, or favor.” An ambassador is an officer of rank sent by one government to transact business with the government to which he is sent. As an ambassador, he receives his instructions from the government sending him. His duty is limited by these instructions. The apostles, as ambassadors, were sent from the court of heaven to the court of man. Reconciliation presupposes alienation. Persons who have always been on terms of amity and friendship are never

reconciled; it is only those who have become estranged. Alienation presupposes wrongdoing. Where no wrong is done, friends, in the very nature of things, never become enemies. The wrongdoing may be by one or both parties. With men one may be in the wrong in the beginning, but generally both get wrong in the end. In man's alienation from God, man was wholly in the wrong. Man is the guilty party; God, the innocent party. Wrongdoing on God's part is inconceivable. Where two parties are at variance—one, wholly innocent; the other, wholly guilty—it is the province of the innocent party to propose the terms of reconciliation. For the guilty one to do so would be the height of presumption. It is possible for persons to be so separated in their relationship that they cannot approach each other. In this case a mediator is necessary. The office of a mediator is to remove the difficulties so the alienated ones can be brought together. To him also are committed by the innocent party the terms, or "word of reconciliation." In man's alienation from God, man is the guilty party; God, the innocent party. In his primeval state, man was pure and had sweet communion with God. In an evil hour he sinned, "partook of that fruit whose mortal taste brought death into the world with our woe," and thus became separated from God, became alienated in his mind "by wicked works." (Col. 1:21.) This separation was of such a nature as to require a mediator. In all the uni

verse of God there was but one Being—Jesus Christ, the immaculate Son of God—possessing the qualifications for a mediator. “There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” (1 Tim. 2:5.) God, as the innocent party, proposed the terms upon which man could return, and be restored to, communion with him. These terms he committed to Christ, and Christ gave them to his apostles. “For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me.” (John 17:8.) “And hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” (2 Cor. 15:19.) Where is this “word of reconciliation” to be found? What is it when found? No more important questions were ever offered for solution to the human mind. Man, an alien from God, if not reconciled, is doomed to pass through the gloom and shadows of this world, with no star of hope to cheer his pathway, and to drop at last into the darkness of eternal night; but, on the other hand, if reconciled and he fully appreciates that blessed fact, this life to him is a continual feast, even the waters of death lose much of their chill, and the gates of heaven at last will swing wide open to admit him to everlasting joys. As this “word of reconciliation” was committed to the apostles, in our search for it we should not go behind them. Neither should we come this side of Paul's second letter to the church at Corinth; for when he wrote, it had already been committed to them. Where, then, between the call

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the apostles and the writing of this language is anything committed to them that can properly be considered a “word of reconciliation “in which the whole world is interested? It is not found in the first commission, for that was restricted to the Jews. -”These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, 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.” (Matt. 10:5, 6.) It, then, must have been after Jesus arose from the dead, and is found in the great commission given by Jesus to his apostles just before his ascension to heaven, the different records of which are here given: “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, 10, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” (Matt 28:18-20.) “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.” (Mark 16:15, 16.) “And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusa-

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lem.” (Luke 24:46, 47.) “Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you... Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.” (John 20:21-23.) Here is “the word of reconciliation,” world-wide in its amplitude. The end of this “word of reconciliation” is remission of sins; and when a man's sins are remitted, he ceases to be an alien.

Putting all these records together, it is found that “the word of reconciliation” committed to the apostles as Christ's ambassadors contains teaching, or preaching; faith, repentance, baptism, and salvation from sin. This is made plain by the following diagram:

Matthew	Teaching			Baptism	
Mark	Preaching	Faith		Baptism	Salvation
Luke	Preaching		Repentance		Salvation
John	Preaching				Salvation
All combined	Teaching	Faith	Repentance	Baptism	Salvation

CHAPTER IV.

Qualifications of the Ambassadors.

At the time Jesus committed to his ambassadors “the word of reconciliation” the human family was divided into the two great classes, Jews and Gentiles. These were all alienated from God. After having described the fearful corruption of the Gentiles and then of the Jews, the apostle says: “What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin.” (Rom. 3:9.) “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” (Rom. 3:23.) All of these, then, were “alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Eph. 4:18); and, besides this, they were divided up into various languages. Something of the difficulty of the work committed to the apostles can be seen. The scope of this chapter shall be: Did they possess the requisite qualifications?

1. The greater part of the human family belong to what are called “the common walks of life.” The wisdom of Jesus is displayed in that in selecting the apostles he took them mainly from this class. (1) Being of the common people, they could more

easily approach that class than if they had been otherwise. (2) Being unlearned men, when they were enabled to speak to every man in his own tongue wherein he was born, their inspiration became evident.

2. The personal ministry of Jesus lasted between three and four years. For about three years, except the time they spent in preaching the “gospel of the kingdom” among cities of Israel, they were in his immediate company. They were witnesses of his numerous miracles. They saw him give sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf; they saw him cool the raging fever and steady the palsied frame; they saw him cleanse the loathsome leper and set the captive demoniac free; they saw him by his word calm the boisterous sea and raise the sleeping dead; they heard his wondrous teaching and hung with rapture on his gracious words; they heard him speak his many parables illustrating the kingdom he had come to establish, and then had the exalted privilege of hearing their hidden meaning explained; they witnessed his illegal trial and shameful crucifixion; they witnessed the darkened heavens, the trembling earth, and the opening graves; they heard his dying exclamation and saw his limp form taken from the cross; they saw the empty tomb, looked upon him with their eyes, and handled him with their hands after his resurrection for forty days, even eating and drinking with him. It was during this time that he committed to them “the

word of reconciliation.” The purpose of all this so far as personal knowledge was concerned, was that they should be fully qualified for the work he had intrusted to them. “And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach.” (Mark 3:14.) “Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.” (Acts 1:21, 22.)

3. Human memory is treacherous. The most important things may for a time pass from the mind. Jesus, during their personal association, had fully taught them the doctrine and principles of his kingdom; but they were liable to forget them. To help them he promised when he went away to send them an infallible guide. “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” (John 14:16, 17.) “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” (John 14:26.) “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from

the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.” (John 15:26.) “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.” (John 16:13.) He also promised that they should be “endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49), and that they should receive power after the Holy Ghost came upon them (Acts 1:8). These promises were to the twelve. Paul, as “one born out of due time,” also received the power here promised. He “was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles.” (2 Cor. 11:5.) He had an “abundance of the revelations.” (2 Cor. 12:7.) “Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.” (2 Cor. 12:12.) So completely was he under divine guidance that he could say: “If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.” (1 Cor. 14:37.)

Were these prom

ises of divine enduement fulfilled? On the day of Pentecost, in the city of Jerusalem, where Jesus had told them to wait for the promised power, the apostles were all together at one place. “And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven

tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts 2:2-4.) The promise was here literally fulfilled; and, though unlearned Galileans, they were so fully brought under divine power that each would speak to men, representing the various languages of the earth, in his own tongue wherein he was born.

4. The fact of their divine enduement was frequently claimed afterwards. “Now we [apostles] have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” (1 Cor. 2:12, 13.) In Eph. 3:3-5 Paul speaks of the revelation of the mystery “which in other ages was not made known, . . . as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.” It was “with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven” that the apostles “preached the gospel.” (1 Pet. 1:12.)

Thus the ambassadors were fully qualified and engaged in the ministry of reconciliation with all the authority the God of heaven himself could invest them. Being thus authorized, their work was binding upon man then. It is so now. They have had no successors in office. They are still God's am-

bassadors, and he through them is still praying us to be reconciled to God. In the regeneration—the new order of things—after Jesus was seated upon the throne of his glory, they were to “sit upon twelve thrones, judging [teaching, guiding] the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Matt. 19:28.) They are still upon their thrones, and will be as long as Jesus is upon his. They are the divinely-appointed teachers in spiritual matters today. “The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.” (2 Tim. 2:2.) “Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.” (Phil. 4:9.)

CHAPTER V.**Beginning at Jerusalem.**

In order to understand fully the work of ambassadors, either humanly or divinely sent, we must find the time when and place where they entered upon their duties. The feast of Pentecost, designated in the Old Testament “the feast of weeks,” was one of the three great annual feasts of the Jews. All males among the Jews were required to be at Jerusalem at each one of these feasts. The day of Pentecost came fifty days after the Passover feast. Jesus was crucified at the feast of the Passover. Fifty days after this, being the first Pentecost after his crucifixion, in the city of Jerusalem, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the apostles, thus fulfilling the promise of Jesus that they should be endued with power from on high, as found in the preceding chapter. This was indeed a notable day. It would be hard to overestimate the importance of its events to a lost world. Lew Wallace, in that fascinating book, “Ben Hur,” gives a graphic description of the journey of the three wise men, starting from different points, and each, without the knowledge of the others, making his way many leagues across the trackless desert to the place from.

which, in company, they went to see the infant that was to be the “great King.” This, though grand, is not to be compared to the events which, moving on converging lines, came together on this Pentecost, that all things might be ready for the work of Christ's ambassadors to fallen humanity. The antecedent ages were preparatory. For four thousand years, through patriarchal and Jewish dispensations, through patriarchs and Jews, through prophets and priests, through altars and sacrifices, through types and shadows, God had been preparing the world for the work that was inaugurated on this day. Two great problems—the insufficiency of law to redeem man and man's inability to redeem himself—had been solved; the former, by the Jewish nation; the latter, by the Gentile world, who had been left to themselves. The Jews, because of their rebellion, had lost their nationality and had been dispersed among all nations. Though rebellious and wicked, they held to their idea of one God. Through their dispersion they carried to the heathen nations a knowledge of this one true God. These heathen nations, weary and worn because of their failure to find a basis of hope in human wisdom and philosophy, were in a condition to receive the message of hope and peace in the gospel. The Jews also, tired of oppression, were anxiously awaiting the promised one they thought would release them from their burdens. Devout men from every nation, in a spirit of obedience to their law, had journeyed to the holy

city that they might keep the feasts. On this day Jews by thousands were abiding in the city. In obedience to the command of Jesus, the apostles had returned from the mount of ascension to Jerusalem, there to await the “promise of the Father,” and on this day were all together “with one accord in one place.” A few days before this, Jesus, having finished his work on earth, had ascended to the throne of God; and there, in the presence of God and myriads of redeemed souls, angels, archangels, and the hierarchies of heaven, was placed upon his head—the head that had worn the crown of thorns—the crown of universal dominion, and in his nail-pierced hands the scepter of universal authority. On this day, in fulfillment of the promise he had made of another Comforter, he sent the Holy Spirit who, coming upon the apostles, sat upon them as cloven tongues of fire and enabled them to speak to every man in the language wherein he was born. (Acts 2:1-4.) Never in the world's history was there such combination of events as on this day Joel, a prophet of God, eight hundred years before had prophesied that there should be an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and that there should be deliverance in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem. (Joel 2:32.) Isaiah, the Messianic prophet, seven hundred and sixty years before had prophesied of this day: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be

exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” (Isa. 2:2, 3.) About seven days before this Jesus had said to his apostles: “Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.” (Luke 24:46-49.) Jesus had also said: “For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.... Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses [or ambassadors] unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” (Acts 1:5-8.) It being the right time (“the last days”—Acts 2:17); the apostles being at the right place (Jerusalem—Acts 1:12); they being in the right condition (“endued with power from on high”—Luke 24:49); and the right people being present (“And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of

every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language “—Acts 2. 5, 6)— this certainly was an auspicious time for the beginning of a divine embassy that will not end until the angel of the Apocalypse, with one foot upon the earth and the other upon the sea, declares that there shall be time no longer.

On this day and at this place not only began the ministry of reconciliation under the ambassadors, but the Holy Spirit came down and took up his abode with the people made ready through the ministry of John and Jesus, and the church stood forth a living organization prepared for its work in the salvation of man. Dr. William Smith, in his “Bible Dictionary,” says: “This day was the birthday of the Christian church.” Orchard, in his “History of the Baptists,” in speaking of the church composed of those who “gladly received his word” on this day, says: “This Christian assembly, as it was the first, so it is the mother church in the Christian dispensation.” Lechler, a distinguished Lutheran professor, says: “The fact that the day of Pentecost is the birthday of the Christian church has always been recognized.”

Reserving for the next chapter a fuller investigation of the work of ambassadors on this day, attention is here called to the fact that as remission of sins was preached on this day it was to be “preached

among all nations.” (Luke 24:46, 47.) An eminent preacher has correctly said the term “all nations” here and the other records of “the word of reconciliation” include all subjects of gospel address then living, that have lived until the present, are living now, and will live until man's probationary state ends. This being so, no man is authorized to preach “repentance and remission of sins,” only as it was preached there. The man who preaches different imperils his own salvation. “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.” (Gal. 1:8, 9.)

CHAPTER VI.

**The First Application of the Word of
Reconciliation.” (Read Acts 2.)**

As found in the preceding chapter, the apostles began their work as ambassadors for Christ in the city of Jerusalem on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus. It was an auspicious time to begin the work. The Jews at this time were scattered among all the nations of the earth. They had been in this dispersed condition long enough to acquire the language of the people whither they had been scattered. Notwithstanding they had become citizens of these various nations, they, in great numbers, attended the annual feasts at Jerusalem.

In order to understand fully the work of the ambassadors it is necessary to keep before our minds the order of events. Acts 1 closes with an account of the selection of one to take the place of Judas in the apostleship in these words: “And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.” (Verse 26.) Chapter 2 begins: “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they [that is, the apostles] were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a

rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. . . . And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Verses 1-4.) This was the fulfillment of the promise: “Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.” (Acts 1:5.) The narrative then goes on: “And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.” (Acts 2:5, 6.) It was the apostles that were together in one place. They were baptized with the Holy Ghost. The people were not there, being scattered throughout the city at the time. Hearing of this remarkable occurrence, they came where the apostles were. They were Jews, that class of whom it was said: “It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you.” (Acts 13:46.) They were “devout men.” A devout man is not necessarily a saved man. In Antioch (Acts 13:50) “the Jews stirred up the devout . . . women,” raised a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and cast them out of the city; at Athens (Acts 17:17) Paul disputed with the “devout persons.” These “devout . . . women” and “devout persons” were not saved. The “devout men” dwelling at Jerusalem were simply Jews devoted to their religion. They were unsaved men

when assembled that day, because Peter charged them with having crucified Jesus with “wicked hands” (Acts 2:23) and exhorted them: “Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” (Verse 40.) Through curiosity they were led to where the apostles were. Their first impressions were wholly erroneous, for they thought the apostles were drunk. Peter began his discourse by removing the false impression that was on the minds of his hearers. This is always necessary. It is no small part of the preacher's work to get erroneous ideas out of the minds of the people. It frequently requires more time to clear away the briars, thorns, and noxious weeds than it does to plant the seed in the prepared soil. As long as these people thought the apostles were drunk they were not in condition to receive the good seed of the kingdom. Peter shows how they could not be drunk; but, on the contrary, all they saw and heard was a fulfillment of an Old Testament prophecy concerning the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which was to take place in “the last days” in the city of Jerusalem (Joel 2:28-32); and then, after earnestly inviting their attention to the words he was about to speak, he told the wonderful words of Jesus—how that God had approved him by miracles, signs, and wonders; how with wicked hands they had crucified and slain him; how God had raised him from the dead; and how the prophecies had been fulfilled in him—closing his address with these words: “Therefore let all the house of

Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus . . . both Lord and Christ.” (Acts 2:36.) “Now when they [the people] heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Verse 37.) When the people came together, they were in doubt, saying one to another: “What meaneth this?” Now they are believers. The earnestness with which they asked, “What shall we do?” is proof of this. Had they not believed what they had heard, they would not have been affected by it; neither would they have sought guidance from the apostles. The question, “What shall we do?” clearly shows they believed there was something for them to do, and that they had the ability to do what was required. The fact that the apostle, guided by the Spirit, told them - what to do shows there was something for them to do, and that they could do what was required. Being now believers, verse 38 gives the answer—an answer, too, that God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit approved: “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.” (Verse 41.) These were saved from their sins, reconciled to God. Upon what condition? Having heard the gospel and become believers in obedience to the

command of God through the apostle Peter, they repented of their sins and were baptized.

In “the word of reconciliation” committed to the ambassadors, as shown in Chapter. III. of this book, there were preaching, hearing, faith, repentance, and baptism; so in this, the first case of reconciliation after the ambassadors entered upon the work, there were preaching, hearing, faith, repentance, and baptism. As this was the beginning of the preaching of repentance and remission of sins in the name of Christ, the inspired historian has given this case more in detail than any subsequent cases of reconciliation. Every two years in our State (Tennessee) there is an election for Governor. Each of the two leading parties selects its most available man as a candidate. As a rule, these gentlemen have a joint discussion at various places throughout the State; and, as a rule, the opening speeches are published in full in the various party organs, but all subsequent ones are published only in abridged form. To interpret the full speech in the light of the abridged one would be unjust, fairness requiring that the abridged speech be interpreted in the light of the full one. So in this case. The abridged accounts of conversions in subsequent chapters of Acts should be interpreted in the light of this account. To fail to do this is to “handle the word of God deceitfully.”

CHAPTER VII.**The Extraordinary in the Work of the
Ambassadors.**

There was intense excitement immediately following the events of the last chapter. Instead of returning to their various homes, as was the custom of the visiting Jews, the new converts—those reconciled to God—remained in the city of Jerusalem. Joyously they engaged in all the acts of service of the new institution. In loving fellowship with their brethren, they had all things common to the extent that those who had distributed of their goods to those who had not. They continued “daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people.” (Acts 2:46, 47.) They were amazed at the many wonders and signs which were done by the apostles. During this time Peter and John, two of the ambassadors, on their way into the temple at the hour of prayer (being, according to our usage, 3 P.M.), were accosted by a beggar, who asked alms of them. This beggar had been lame from his mother's womb, was over forty years of age, and was well known to the people. To him

Peter said: “Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.” (Acts 3:6.) Immediately his ankle bones received strength, and he began to leap and praise God in the temple, all the people seeing him. This wonderful miracle attracted attention and afforded Peter an opportunity of preaching the gospel to the people. This discourse is the second one put on record after the ambassadors began their work. As a result of this discourse it is recorded: “Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.” (Acts 4:4.)

In this history is brought out an important fact that must be observed in order to understand the work of the ambassadors—that is, in their ministry there were the ordinary and the extraordinary. The ordinary was the preaching of the gospel by the ambassadors and its reception and obedience by the people; the extraordinary was the miraculous manifestations that frequently attended their work. On the day of Pentecost there was an outpouring of the Holy Spirit; at Solomon's portico this lame man was healed; in Samaria “unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed” (Acts 8:7); an angel came to Philip, the preacher, and sent him in the way to meet the Ethiopian nobleman (Acts 8:26); on the way to Damascus, Saul, the perse-

cutor, saw a great light above the brightness of the noonday sun (Acts 9:3); at Lydda, Aeneas was cured of the palsy (Acts 9:34); at Joppa, Dorcas, the dressmaker, was raised from the dead (Acts 9:40); at Caesarea an angel appeared unto Cornelius (Acts 10:3), and four days later there was an outpouring of the Holy Spirit (verse 44); while at Philippi there was a great earthquake that unsettled the foundations of the prison and loosed the bands of the prisoners (Acts 16:26). Not being able to discriminate between these and the things which were ordinary keeps many persons confused upon the subject of conversion. With many the idea seems to be that they must see a light, hear a voice, or meet something remarkable before they can have assurance of salvation. I was once called to see a man on his deathbed who had passed his threescore and ten years, who had never been religious, and who told me flatly he would never take a step toward being religious until God by some visible sign let him know he wanted him. Poor man! An unfortunate victim of false teaching! That the converting power was not in the miracles is evident from this fact: the miracles were wrought upon one thing or class, while the conversions were from another class. On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles; it was the multitude who gladly received the word and were baptized. At Solomon's porch the lame man was the subject of the miraculous power; those who heard

the word preached on that occasion believed. Aeneas was cured of a palsy, while “all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord.” Dorcas was raised to life, and “it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord.”

For what purpose were miracles performed?

1. Those that Jesus performed testified of his divine character. “No man,” said Nicodemus, “can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.” (John 3:2.) Jesus himself said: “The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.” (John 10:25.) The beloved disciple said of the miracles of Jesus: “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.)

2. The miracles wrought by the apostles confirmed their words, bore evidence to the divine character of their mission. “So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they [the apostles] went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.” (Mark 16:19, 20.) “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation: which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord,

and was confirmed unto us by them [the apostles] that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?" (Heb. 2:3, 4.) In the case under consideration the healing of the lame man was above the power of man; all recognized this fact; and as the power put forth by the apostle was extraordinary, the people were prepared to receive the extraordinary statement that the apostle made—that God had raised from the dead the Prince of life, whom they had killed (Acts 3:15); and hence the result given in Acts 4:4, "Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand," naturally followed.

3. The purpose of these miracles can be seen by taking another view of the question. Miracles were necessary in bringing into existence the natural universe, but are not necessary to its perpetuation. A miracle brought the earth, on which we live, into existence and placed it in its position, but it is kept there by a well-understood natural law. The different species of animals were brought into existence by a miracle, but each species is perpetuated by a natural law—the law of reproduction. The same is true of all manner of vegetable life. It required a miracle to create the first oak tree, but the species has been perpetuated until the present time by the natural law that seed shall bring

forth fruit of its kind. So of the religious systems God has given to man. Miracles were used—and, therefore, necessary—in their inception, but not to their perpetuation. In the inauguration of the Mosaic dispensation there were a number of striking miracles, but that it could be perpetuated without them is shown by the fact that it existed for about four hundred years when no miracles were wrought. The same is true of the gospel dispensation. Miracles were wrought in its inception, but it has been perpetuated through ages without them. The word of God is the seed. (Luke 8:11.) Like the seed of the oak, it has within it a germinal principle by which the church—kingdom of God—has been perpetuated until now. That after filling their place in the childhood age of the church miracles were to cease is made clear by Paul: “Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.” (1 Cor. 13:8-11.)

The church has been established, the perfect will of God has been revealed, and miracles have ceased, the claims of the so-called modern “wonder-workers” to the contrary notwithstanding.

CHAPTER VIII.**The Converting Power is in the Gospel.**

The power to reveal and confirm the word was in the extraordinary manifestations of the Spirit, but his power to convert was, and is, in the words he spoke through the inspired men. This is evident from all the cases of conversion under the ministry of the ambassadors as recorded in Acts of Apostles. This fact sometimes crops out incidentally. A case in point is found in chapter 5. A council, composed of the high priest and his kindred, being of the sect of the Sadducees, had commanded the apostles not to preach any more in the name of Christ. (Acts 4:17, 18.) To this charge Peter and John had said unto them: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." (Verses 19, 20.) Obeying God rather than man, the apostles continued to preach and do signs and wonders in the name of Christ. The whole city was stirred to its very depths. Fear came upon the church, and multitudes of men and women were added to the Lord. The fame of their work spread to surrounding cities, and multitudes from these came to Jerusalem. The

high priest and all that were with him, seeing they had been thwarted in their efforts to stop the spread of this new religion, became indignant and laid their hands upon the apostles and put them into the common prison. (Acts 5: 18.) “Man's extremity is God's opportunity.” From a human standpoint the apostles were powerless, but not so from the divine standpoint. This time an angel is the divine messenger. Angels are interested in man's salvation. “There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.” (Luke 15:10.) They “do his [God's] commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.” (Ps. 103:20.) Multitudes of unsaved people are in the temple. This angel desired their salvation. He understood what was necessary. Instead of going to the people he went to the prison and, opening the doors, brought the apostles out and said: “Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.” (Acts 5:20.) “The words of this life” are the words that give all spiritual life here and life eternal hereafter. They are the words that the apostles had been preaching from Pentecost and that had resulted in the salvation of thousands. Why preach “*all* the words of this life? “Because a partial gospel will not save. “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by *every* word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” (Matt 4:4.)

Incidentally this history teaches that the saving power is not in the extraordinary, but in the ordi-

nary—the words preached by the apostles. This is sustained by other passages. James, in writing to the twelve tribes scattered abroad, said: “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.” (James 1:21.) Paul, in the synagogue at Antioch, speaking to the Jews, said: “Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.” (Acts 13:26.) To the Ephesians he said: “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.” (Eph. 1:13.) To the brethren at Rome he said: “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” (Rom. 1:16.) Writing to the church of God at Corinth, he said: “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.” (1 Cor. 15:1, 2.)

A careful analysis of Acts 2, where the ambassadors for Christ first made known the terms of reconciliation, will not only remove the misconception here considered, but also another one that is equally pernicious in its influence—that is, that the Holy Spirit converts by moving silently without means

on the sinner's heart. In the entire record there is not a single statement that would lead one to surmise that any were turned to the Lord by its silent influence or wonder-working power, but there is much to show that the words spoken and heard brought about the great result. In verse 4 it is said the apostles, after they were "filled with the Holy Ghost, . . . began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Verse 6 says when the multitude came together they "were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language." Verses 7, 8 say: "They were all amazed, and marveled, saying, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? and how hear we every man in our own tongue?" Verse 11 says: "We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God." Verse 14 says: "Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words." Verse 22 says: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words." Verses 36-38 say: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ,

. . . and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” Verses 40, 41 say: “And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.” There in short space about thirteen times it is said in some way words were spoken or heard. The apostles spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance, and it was in this way that the Spirit led so many into the kingdom of God that day. Notwithstanding the extraordinary manifestations of the Spirit on this occasion, those who were charged with crucifying Jesus with wicked hands were by the divine power in the gospel preached and heard. turned “from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.”

It is evident that in every case of conversion, or reconciliation, under the ministry of Christ's ambassadors, the saving power was in the gospel preached, and not in the attendant miraculous manifestations nor the silent movings of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER IX.

Conversion.

Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.” (Acts 3:19.)

The above quotation is found in the second recorded discourse of the apostle Peter. In the first half of the first century of our era the ambassadors of Jesus Christ inaugurated the most wonderful revolution in human affairs the world has ever seen. At that time the Roman Empire, the last universal human government, was in the zenith of its power. The greater part of the habitable globe was subject to its authority. Its eagles, symbols of its mighty conquests, floated everywhere. Its boundaries extended from the Euphrates, on the east, to the Atlantic Ocean, on the west. It was three thousand miles in length and two thousand miles in width. While boasting of its learning and culture, its civilization was of low order. Its condition is concisely described by the apostle Paul in his Roman letter: Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient

to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.” (Rom. 1:29-31.) That they were without natural affection is shown by the fact that slaves, and even parents, when they had become helpless through age, were put to death. This fearful state of depravity was the result of an idolatrous, superstitious religion that was deeply imbedded in the hearts of the people. Polytheism prevailed. Deities innumerable were worshiped; heroes of antiquity, kings, emperors, founders of nations and cities had been exalted to the supreme height of gods; the sun, the moon, the various luminaries of the heavens were adored; rivers, mountains, trees, vegetables, animals, and even the human passions, were deified; men in priestly attire were everywhere; in every market were animals that were sold to the superstitious worshipers; on every hilltop and in every valley were altars, from which the smoke of these sacrifices ascended to the heavens. Such was the condition of the Gentile world when the ambassadors began their work. The condition of the Jews was not much better. They were divided into warring sects; and, by the addition of human tradition, their system of religion, though divinely given, had become effete. So far had they departed from the way of righteousness that Paul said of them: “They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” (Rom. 3:12.)

With these unpropitious surroundings, the ambassadors for Christ—twelve unlettered men, unaided by any of those external circumstances regarded as essential to success—began their appeal to the world. They presented the simple story of the gospel for belief; a few simple rites for observance; and a life of purity, self-denial, and sacrifice to be lived; with no promise of earthly reward and no immunity from human sorrow and suffering. The conflict seemed to be a hopeless one; but three thousand persons accepted this new life at the first appeal; a few days later, five thousand; then, great multitudes. From Jerusalem the revolution spread to Judea, to Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the world. Within thirty years the whole of the Roman Empire was permeated by the principles enunciated by these ambassadors. An entire change was wrought upon the face of the world. Idolatrous sacrifices remained unsold in the markets, and everywhere heathen altars were tumbling into ruins. Man's fierce nature was subdued, and he was started on the upward course to a more noble destiny.

As I now write the Sun is on his annual visit to the South. Fields are brown, and the forests have a leaden hue. When his visit is ended, he will return, bringing with him warmth and genial showers, and soon the fields and forests will put on their coats of green. Each individual stalk of grass does its part in producing this universal change by devel-

oping its own blades of green; so each bud upon the trees and shrubs, by bursting forth into its own leaves. So in this great change in the moral aspect of the world. It was the result of a transformation in each individual man or woman. This change, or transformation, in the New Testament is called “conversion,” the theme of the remainder of this chapter. This is an important theme. Conversion is necessary to an entrance into the kingdom of God. “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 18:3.) “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit [the same process as conversion], he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” (John 3:5.) There are many blessings in the kingdom of God for man, but he must pass through that process called “conversion” in order to reach them. That we may understand the question it is well to note some distinctions.

1. Conversion is one thing; pardon, or remission of sins, is another. Conversion is a change, or transformation, that takes place with man on earth; pardon of sins is what God does for him in heaven. Conversion is the change in man that makes him the character God has promised to pardon; pardon is God's act in removing the penalty from him. The one follows the other, as effect follows cause. “Repent, . . . and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.” (Acts 3:19.)

2. Conversion and change of heart are not equiva-

lent. The one embraces the turning of the heart, the affections, to the Lord; the other covers the whole ground of man's deliverance from the power of darkness and translation into the kingdom of God. (Col. 1:13.)

3. Conversion is a turning—a turning from the service of sin to the service of God. Paul was commissioned to go to the Gentiles “to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.” (Acts 26:18.) Of those to whom the apostle went it is said: “For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.” (1 Thess. 1:9.) After many hundreds of the Gentiles had been brought into the church, while Paul and his companions were on their way to the council at Jerusalem, “they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles.” (Acts 15:3.) During the council, James, who seemed to be presiding, alluding to the same thing, said: “My sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God.” (Acts 15:19.) As additional proof that conversion is a turning, the fact is cited that in every place in the Common Version where the words “convert” or “be converted” occur the Revised New Testament has the words “turn” or “turn again.”

4. Man being away from God, it is the purpose of the gospel to turn him back to God; hence in every

way he is from God he must be turned to God. He is away from God as respects his heart (“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked”—Jer. 17:9); he must, therefore, be turned in heart, or, as some would have it, have his heart changed. He is away from God as respects his life (by wicked works he is alienated—Col. 1:21); he must, then, be turned in life. He is represented as being “in the world,” in the “kingdom of darkness;” he must, then, be turned in state or brought into a new relationship, into that one body where both Jews and Gentiles are to be reconciled to God. (Eph. 2:16.)

Conversion, then, in its completeness, embraces a change, or turning, in heart; a change, or turning, in life; and a change in relationship. In the change of heart the understanding must be enlightened and there must be a complete transfer of affections from sin and sinful things to God and his service. The change in life must be so radical that one ceases “to do evil” and learns “to do well;” that he puts violence from his hand and turns “from his evil way.” The change in state separates man from the world and brings him into the kingdom of God, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, with all the blessings and privileges of a citizen thereof. In “the word of reconciliation” committed to the ambassadors and its application by them it was found that man was required to believe in Christ, to repent of his sins, and to be baptized. These, when complied

with, prepare him for fellowship with the redeemed. It is through faith that the heart is turned to the Lord. “And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.” Acts 15:9.) In repentance the life, or conduct, is turned away from sin and unto God. Here an important question arises: When a man believes and his heart is set right, and when he has repented and his life is corrected, is all that is required in conversion completed, or is there a turning act beyond these? The Scriptures must answer the question. Speaking of those who came to Antioch preaching Jesus to the Grecians, it is said: “And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.” (Acts 11:21.) Here is a turning act beyond, and in addition to, faith. Paul before King Agrippa, said that he showed to them of Damascus, and Jerusalem, and Judea, and the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God. The word “and” always carries the idea of addition to; therefore here is a turning act beyond, and in addition to, repentance. Putting both passages together, it is found that there is a turning act beyond and in addition to, both faith and repentance. What is that turning act? This question the Scriptures must also answer: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” (Mark 16:15, 16.) Here Jesus puts baptism beyond, and in addition to, faith. When believers asked, “Men

and brethren, what shall we do?" the Holy Spirit, through Peter, said: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." (Acts 2:38.) Baptism is here beyond, and in addition to, repentance. It matters not which comes first, faith or repentance. Both these passages being true, baptism, as a turning act, is in addition to both of them. Where, then, as a turning act, is baptism's place? It is the dividing line between the world and the church of the living God. It is initiatory; it inducts him who is turned in heart and life into the family of God. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Rom. 6:3.) "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Gal. 3:27.) Being now in Christ, which is the same as being in his body, the church (Col. 1:18), he is a new creature. "Old things are passed away; . . . all things are become new." (2 Cor. 5:17.) Conversion, then, is a process, beginning with man in the world, under condemnation, and ending with him in the kingdom of God, with sins forgiven, and in the fellowship of all the saved.

CHAPTER X.**“The Word of Reconciliation” Reaches Samaria.**

That portion of the land of Canaan called “Samaria” when the children of Israel came to take up their abode there fell to the lot of the ten tribes that afterwards constituted the kingdom of Israel. Here they lived as a part of Israel under the judges and the three kings—Saul, David, and Solomon—for about four hundred and seventy years. When Rehoboam, who succeeded Solomon, rashly took the advice of the young men not to lighten the burdens of the people, but rather to increase them, they revolted and set up a kingdom of their own, with Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, as king. Here they lived under various kings, most of them very wicked, for about two hundred and thirty-five years. At the end of this time, when Hoshea was king, “the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years.” The siege was successful. Samaria was subdued, and the ten tribes were carried away captive into Assyria. Samaria was a desirable country in which to live, being a land that flowed “with milk and honey.” It being now depopulated, the king of Assyria sent men from a number of different

provinces of his own country and colonized them there. These colonists, being idolaters, made images and worshiped the gods that they had worshiped in their former homes. They had not been there long until they got into trouble. While the children of Israel had been carried off because of their unfaithfulness, still these were trespassers in a land God had given to his peculiar people; hence it is said: "The Lord sent lions among them, which slew some of them." These people believed there were "gods many;" that each country had a God that looked after the well-being of that specific country. They thought the trouble they were in came as a result of not knowing "the manner of the God of the land." Hearing of the trouble, the king of Assyria sent some of the priests he had carried away captive, that they might teach them "the manner of the God of the land." These priests taught them, at least partially, the law of Moses, and they began to worship according to its requirements, yet continued to serve "their graven images." This history is found in 2 Kings 17.

Here was the beginning of a mongrel religion and a mongrel people that existed in large numbers seven hundred years afterwards, when Jesus was in the flesh. Remarkable to relate, a small remnant still live there, who every year slay and eat the paschal lamb on Mount Gerizim, so McGarvey tells us in "Lands of the Bible." While they observed many of the rites of the Jews, they were a separate

people; in fact, they and the Jews had no dealings with each other. When Jesus sent the twelve on their first mission, he said, "Into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not;" as well as, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles;" but after his death and resurrection and after committing to them a "word of reconciliation" world-wide in its amplitude, he said: "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8.) Here the human family is divided into three classes —Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles. "The word of reconciliation" was to be carried to all in the order here given. The work began in Jerusalem on the great Pentecost. A year later the life-giving message reached Samaria by the mouth of Philip. The history of the conversion of the Samaritans, which is a very interesting one, is found in Acts 8. Philip was not one of the apostles to whom was committed "the word of reconciliation;" but he was a preacher who, in common with others, had gifts of the Spirit that were "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." (Eph. 4:12.) This class of preachers, no doubt, were so guided by the Spirit that they taught only the truth; yet they learned what to preach from the apostles. (2 Tim. 2:2.) This extension of "the word of reconciliation" to Samaria speaking according to modern parlance, was the first real missionary work of the church. It was not

the result of “organized effort,” but rather of a disorganizing effort on the part of the unbelieving Jews at Jerusalem. These early missionaries were not sent by the church, but went as a result of the persecution that brought about the death of Stephen; and, being imbued with the spirit of the Master, wherever they went they preached the word.

Preaching the gospel is not an official work, belonging to a select class. It is the prerogative of every one who has heard to say: “Come.” (Rev. 22:17.) McGarvey, in his commentary, speaking of the scattering of disciples, says: “The result was the rapid spread of the gospel into the cities of Judea, and even unto Samaria. Thus the apparent ruin of the single church in Jerusalem resulted in the springing up of many churches throughout the province, proving for the thousandth time in the world's history how impotent is the hand of man when fighting against God. As the blows from the blacksmith's hammer on the heated iron scatter the scintillations in every direction, so the effort of the wicked Jews to crush the church of Christ only scattered its light more widely abroad.” Guided by a divine providence, Philip went down to Samaria, which is about forty miles northwest from Jerusalem, and “preached Christ unto them.” As already stated, he was not an apostle; but he carried with him the same “word of reconciliation” that had been preached at Jerusalem. The Samaritans at this time were under the influence of a de-

ceiver named “Simon,” who gave out “that himself was some great one.” He had so bewitched them with sorceries that they had come to regard him as the “great power of God.” To a people thus bewitched and bewildered Philip began to preach Christ.” As in the case of the apostles, God worked with him and “confirmed the word.” “For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.” (Acts 8:7.) “And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. (Verse 6.) As a result of this, they turned away from the sorcerer. “But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” (Verse 12.) How plain and simple this narrative, and how easy to be understood when preconceived ideas are not in the way!

Attention has heretofore been called to the fact that the writer of Acts does not give all the cases of reconciliation with the same minuteness. Here it is expressly stated that Christ was preached, that the people believed, and that they were baptized. That they repented is a necessary inference, as they ceased to have regard for the deceiver, Simon, and repentance always precedes baptism.

CHAPTER XI.**Simon, the Sorcerer.**

Luke, the inspired historian, in reporting the work of the evangelist Philip in Samaria, does not give the number or names of those who accepted “the word of reconciliation,” simply saying: “When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” For some reason, though, he saw fit to make one exception and give the name of one man— Simon, the sorcerer. As he was separated from the others, it is well, before following the messengers of the divine embassy to other points, to tarry a little longer in Samaria in order to look into this case a little more closely. While not holding him up as a model man, I have no doubt of his conversion. It will not do to conclude that his conversion was not genuine because he had been a great sinner. Sin is sin and a sinner is a sinner, and the mercy of God reaches to all alike that turn away from their sins. Saul of Tarsus was a persecutor, a blasphemer, a murderer --yea, the “chief of sinners”—yet he “obtained mercy.” But Simon sinned afterwards; yes, and so do the very best of

men. Solomon says: "There is no man that sinneth not." (1 Kings 8:46.) John says: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1 John 1:8.) Jesus, in giving a model prayer for his disciples, taught them to pray: "Forgive us our sins." (Luke 11:4.) The modern doctrine of reaching a state of sinless perfection while in the flesh has no warrant in the Scriptures. All Christians, even the very best, have need to pray daily: "Forgive us our sins."

No one doubts the conversion of the men and women mentioned in Acts 8:12. When it is said "they believed," all unite in saying their faith was genuine. Of Simon it is said: "Then Simon himself believed also; and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done." (Verse 13.) It is sometimes claimed that he never really believed; that he only feigned to believe. If this is so, then Philip, an inspired man, was deceived; for he never would have knowingly baptized a pretended believer. Furthermore, if he was not a believer, Luke, the inspired penman, was deceived also, as he gives no intimation that Simon's faith was not as genuine as that of the other Samaritans. This fact has great force when it is remembered that Luke wrote this history thirty years after this occurrence and also after the weakness of Simon's character had been fully developed. After speaking of the faith of the other Samaritans, it is said:

“Simon himself believed also.” Worcester gives “in like manner” as the leading definition of “also.” Hence as the faith of the others was genuine, so was that of Simon. His faith being genuine, his baptism was also genuine; and the words of Jesus, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,” being true, he was saved—was “reconciled to God.” Granting everything that is claimed for this case, those who discount the importance of baptism gain nothing; for the defect was in the motive, and not in the things done. Had he done sincerely what he did in pretense, he would have been all right. This case of conversion is in perfect accord with “the word of reconciliation” committed to the ambassadors and the other cases heretofore examined. It is expressly stated that he believed and that he was baptized; and the necessary inference is that he repented, as he ceased to practice his sorcery; and repentance is an absolute prerequisite to baptism.

The subsequent history of Simon is very interesting, as it throws light upon a much-misunderstood teaching of the Scriptures. An important law of God is here developed that is not mentioned before in the recorded work of the ambassadors. Perhaps for this reason this account is given in detail. In that day to every man was “given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal.” (1 Cor. 12:7, R. V.) This refers to the extraordinary, or miraculous, gifts of the Spirit that were imparted by the laying on of hands. These gifts served, as

McGarvey says, as a temporary provision until the facts, doctrine, commandments, and promises of the new covenant were committed to writing by inspired men, when the prophecies, tongues, and miraculous knowledge of inspired teachers gave place to the written record. While others think otherwise, to me it is clear that it was exclusively the work of the apostles to impart these gifts by the laying on of hands. To say the least, Philip did not possess this power, or that immediately following would not have been necessary. “Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.” (Acts 8:14-17.)

It is well to remark here that mental bias and striking traits will crop out after one's conversion. The man who was covetous will manifest that spirit, the man soon angry will have fits of passion, the one who was accustomed to exaggerate will occasionally stretch the cloth, while the man who was looked up to will manifest the desire for prominence after he has come into the church. Simon, previous to his conversion, had given out that he “was some great one.” “To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest.” Seeing that

by the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, Simon's old nature for a time asserted itself. Here there seemed to be a chance to still occupy a place of prominence; hence he offered them money, saying: "Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost." (Verse 19.) This was a sin of a grievous character. Peter tells him because of this: "Thy heart is not right in the sight of God." "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts." Simon had had an evil thought; therefore his heart was "not right in the sight of God." Peter further says: "Thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." He then gives in these words the divine law of remission for persons in his condition: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of shine heart may be forgiven thee." (Verse 22.) Peter does not tell him to repent of the sins of a long, bad life or to pray for forgiveness of his lifelong iniquities, but for something that had occurred there and then. He was to pray for the forgiveness of a "thought," and that thought was that "the gift of God may be purchased with money." (Verse 20.) The last heard of Simon leaves him in a favorable light. "Pray ye," he said to Peter, "to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me." (Verse 24.) Here, under inspiration, is developed the law of remission to the erring children of God.

A man once said to the writer: "If I believed as you do, I would hire me a preacher and require him to go with me wherever I went; and when I committed a sin, I would have him to baptize me right there and then." Such silly talk as this grows out of a failure to distinguish between characters addressed in the Scriptures. Alien sinners who had heard the gospel and had believed were commanded by an inspired man to "repent, and be baptized." To the sinner in the church a divinely-imbued man said: "Repent, and pray." This was God's order then; it is God's order now. All organized bodies have a way by which those who have not been members are initiated and a different way by which unfaithful members are restored. So it is in the church of God.

CHAPTER XII.**The Christian's Creed.**

A man's faith carried out in practical life makes him what he is. "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." (Prov. 23:7.) Faith in the principles of the Republican party carried out in practice makes one a Republican; so of the Democratic party. A man who believes in Joe Smith and acts out that faith becomes a Mormon; so of Mohammed or the founder of any other form of religion. Those who believe in Jesus Christ and conform to the requirements of that faith become Christians. What a man believes is his creed. Creeds are the foundations upon which rest all parties or organizations in politics or religion. The creed of the Republican party is the foundation of that party; so of the Democratic party. The creed of the Presbyterian Church is the foundation upon which that church rests; so of every other church. Creeds are both unifying and segregating; they unify those who accept them and segregate those who do not. Personify the creed, and if it be Calvinistic, it will say: "Come, all ye religionists that believe in the five points of Calvinism—in the sovereignty of God, in particular election and predestination, in original

sin, in effectual calling, and in the final perseverance of the saints; come and stand upon me, and then you will be a unit, be one fellowship. But ye religionists that are Arminian, stand aside; you can have no fellowship, cannot be one, with those who stand upon me.” The creed, if Arminian, would say to those who believe in the universality of the atonement, man's free agency, etc.: “Come and stand upon me, and you will be one body and one communion; but ye Calvinists cannot be in fellowship with those who have rallied to my standard.”

Thus it is seen how creeds both unify and segregate. Christians have a creed. It is simple enough for all accountable persons to understand and broad enough for all who desire salvation through Christ to stand upon. In the early days of Christianity all who accepted it became “of one heart and of one soul.” Being many, they were still “one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.” They constituted the church—the “called out”—hence were separated from the world.

In following the apostles and inspired teachers in their application of “the word of reconciliation” we have reached Acts 8, and have considered the conversion of the Samaritans, including Simon, the sorcerer. We shall tarry a little longer here in order to consider another case in which the Christian's creed is clearly set forth. The Jews had dispersed themselves among all nations. One of these had reached Ethiopia, a part of Africa, south of Egypt.

He displayed the usual “money sense” of that people, and, because of his skill in business, had been elevated to the place of treasurer to the queen. His steadfastness in the religion of his fathers is shown in that he went to Jerusalem to worship. Through with the ceremonies pertaining to this worship, he started in his chariot for his far-off home. His fidelity commended him to God, and God set about to save him. How he did this is told in Acts 8:26-39. By reading these verses it will be seen that in this man's conversion an angel had something to do, the Holy Spirit had something to do, a preacher had something to do, and the man himself had something to do. Finding out what each of them did, we have the whole history before us. Through Philip's preaching the Samaritans had been reconciled to God. By the visit of the apostles and the laying on of their hands, spiritual gifts had been imparted, by which they could edify themselves. Philip's mission being accomplished, he was ready for another field. At this juncture the angel of the Lord came to him and directed him to go south toward the road that leads from Jerusalem to Gaza. This was the angel's part, and belonged to the miraculous that was common then. Philip's journey was so timed that he reached this great highway just as this Ethiopian treasurer was passing. Strange for an officer of State, he was reading the Scriptures—and reading, too, a striking prophecy about the Christ. “Then the Spirit said unto

Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.” (Acts 8:29.) This work of the Spirit, like the angel's, was miraculous, and both were for the purpose of bringing the preacher and the man to be saved together. This is all they did. Being now together, the preacher began at the scripture the traveler was reading and preached unto him Jesus. In preaching Jesus, Philip preached the birth, the life, the signs and miracles, the death for our sins, the burial, the resurrection, and the coronation in heaven of Jesus, and the conditions of salvation through him. This is one thing the preacher did. “And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what cloth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all shine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.” (Verses 36-39.) Here it is found that the preacher baptized the man in addition to preaching to him. The man himself believed (verse 37); he was baptized (verse 38); and by necessary inference we conclude that he repented, as repentance is always antecedent to baptism. Philip's answer to the

eunuch's question, "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" "If thou believest with all shine heart, thou mayest," shows that man must believe something—must have a creed. The eunuch's answer, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," tells what that creed is. The truth that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," is the very core, the essence, of the religion of Christ. It is the great central truth of the Bible around which clusters every other truth. For a man to say, "I believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," is as much as to say: "I believe all of the Old Testament and the New Testament." It is the foundation upon which the church of Christ was built and upon which it rests to-day.

About the middle of the personal ministry of Jesus he said to his disciples: "Whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matt. 16:15, 16.) Jesus approbated this confession and said: "Upon this rock [the truth here confessed] I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Verse 18.) The proclamation of this truth was the burden of the preaching of the apostles. Wherever they went—among Jews, Samaritans, or Gentiles—they held up this proposition and called upon the people to accept it. It is the truth he believed in order to salvation. "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.) It is the truth to be confessed that God may dwell with us. “Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.” (1 John 4:15.) This is the great truth inscribed on the banner of the heralds of the cross, that has conquered and is conquering the idolatrous nations of the earth and is rescuing man from his debased condition and restoring to him his Godlike image. It is the Christian's creed that united the early Christians in loving, tender fellowship in “one body,” where they were “of one heart and of one soul;” it is the Christian's creed that contains all religion, all faith, all duty, all comfort, all consolation, and all hope of rest and joy in heaven.

CHAPTER XIII.**“The Word of Reconciliation” Reaches the
Gentiles. (Read Acts 10.)**

“Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.” (John 10:16.)

Eight years after Peter had presented “the word of reconciliation” to the Jews on the day of Pentecost and seven years after he had confirmed its extension to the Samaritans by imparting spiritual gifts to them, and having passed through all quarters,” he was abiding many days at Joppa, a seacoast town, nearly forty miles west of Jerusalem. His home was with another Simon, a tanner by trade. Houses were constructed different then from the way they are built now, the roofs being flat. These flat roofs were splendid places for retirement for rest or prayer. One day at the sixth hour Peter had gone upon the house top to pray. He became hungry; and while a meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance and in a vision saw heaven opened and a great sheet knit at the four corners let down to the earth. In this sheet were all manner of beasts, unclean and clean according to

the law of Moses. A voice came to him saying, "Kill, and eat;" but Peter replied: "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." The voice came again, saying: "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven." While Peter was doubting what the vision meant, three strangers arrived at his lodging and asked whether Simon Peter lodged there. While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them." (Acts 10:19, 20.) He arose at once, went down to the men, and said: "Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come? And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by a holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee." (Verses 21, 22.) Cornelius lived at Caesarea, a city near the east shore of the Mediterranean Sea, about seventy miles northwest from Jerusalem and thirty miles north of Joppa, where Peter was lodging. He was a Gentile, yet not an idolater; for by contact with the Jews he had learned of the true God, whom he worshiped. He was a soldier, being captain of a company of one hundred men. He was a just man, an almsgiving man, prayed to God always, and had

trained his family in the same way; but, after all, in the Gospel sense, he was not saved; for he was to hear words from Peter whereby he and all his house should be saved. (Acts 11:14.) By the direction of an angel he had sent the three messengers before alluded to for Peter.

It may be well to stop here and inquire why it is that “the word of reconciliation” was kept from the Gentiles so long after its offer to the Jews. Christ died for all. It was his purpose to reconcile both [Jews and Gentiles] unto God in one body.” (Eph. 2:16) Why, then, delay so long? The Jews were very exclusive, and were deeply prejudiced. This prejudice had been intensified by their loss of nationality and subjection to the Roman Government. Moral forces work slowly, and takes time to effect moral changes. Persons are born babes into the kingdom of God, and must grow to be men and women in Christ. Prejudice, erroneous ideas, and false teachings must be removed by the implantation of true principles. Time is required to do this. With the prejudice of the Jews, with their limited spiritual growth, to have at once admitted the Gentiles would have created schism in the body that would have greatly hindered its growth in its formative period. The eight intervening years gave time for the disciples and churches to grow out of their exclusiveness, to be broadened and developed spiritually, so that when there was divine approbation for bringing them in

there would be no further objection. Besides this, God, in his wisdom, had seen fit to commit the work of bearing his name to the Gentiles to a special instrument. Him had he called to the apostleship, and for five or six years had been schooling him for the great work he was to do. Saul of Tarsus was now ready to become a mighty factor in the extension of the borders of the kingdom of God.

We now return to Joppa. Peter lodged the strangers for the night, and the next day started with them for Caesarea. Realizing the importance of his mission and to be prepared for any emergency, he took with him six Jewish brethren. The next day they reached Caesarea. The four days between the angel's visit and the coming of Peter no doubt were days of deep anxiety on the part of Cornelius. He had long been feeling out for God, had been earnestly seeking for light on the great problem of man's salvation. His prayers for light were now to be answered. He had so timed the journey of the messengers that when they, with the apostle, arrived, he had a good audience, composed of his kinsmen and near friends, gathered together.

When Peter arrived, following a natural impulse, Cornelius fell down to worship him. This Peter forbade his doing, and then let him know that he had been converted from his exclusiveness; that God had shown him how he should not call any man "common or unclean" (Acts 10:28.) Cornelius then rehearsed the matter of the vision, and

concluded thus: “Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.” (Verse 33.) No preacher ever had a better audience to whom to preach than Peter had there. To be ready “to hear all things that are commanded” of God is a proper condition to hear preaching with profit.

Jesus had given to Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven, with power to bind and loose. (Matt. 16:19.) Peter had used the keys in opening the door of the kingdom to the Jews on Pentecost; he is now to use them in admitting the Gentiles. As he did at Pentecost, so Peter here told the wonderful story of Jesus—his life and miracles, his cruel death and triumphant resurrection, and his exaltation as “King of kings and Lord of lords.” The result of this preaching can be summed up in few words.

1. They believed. Alluding to this occurrence afterwards, Peter 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 15:7.)

2. They repented. “Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.” (Acts 11:18.)

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

Thus by an ambassador for Christ “the word of

was made known to the Gentiles. They complied with its conditions, and were inducted into the kingdom of God, with all its rights, privileges, and blessings.

In this case of conversion, as in most other cases under the ministry of the apostles, there was an intermingling of the ordinary and the extraordinary. A failure to discriminate between these always brings confusion. The ordinary were common in all cases; the extraordinary were as diverse as the number of conversions. In this case there were three distinct miracles—the vision of the great sheet, the visit of the angel to Cornelius, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The object of the first two miracles was to get the preacher and the ones to be saved together. Up to this time the apostles did not understand that “every creature” in “the word of reconciliation” included the Gentiles. By the vision of the sheet Peter was convinced that God was “o respecter of persons,” and that, therefore, it was right to preach to the Gentiles. As Peter alone saw the vision, he alone was convinced by it. By another miracle the Jewish brethren were to be convinced. Cornelius was praying to know the way of salvation. The angel visited him to tell him where to find a man that would tell him “what he ought to do.” These two miracles, the vision of the sheet and the angel's visit, were the means of getting the preacher and the seeker together—the one, willing to preach; the other, will-

ing to hear. The six Jewish brethren who went with Peter objected to the reception of the Gentiles; but the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which was miraculous, was the means of removing these objections, and, when rehearsed by Peter and confirmed by these brethren, was the means of removing the objections of the other Jewish brethren. (Acts 11:17, 18.) It also bore witness to the Gentiles that they were entitled to the privileges of the gospel. (Acts 15:8.)

There are but two cases of the baptism of the Holy Ghost on record. One was at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, when Peter used the keys and admitted Jews into the kingdom of God; the other was eight years afterwards, when he again used the keys to admit the Gentiles. As "God is no respecter of persons," the fitness of this can be seen. On the day of Pentecost those who had been disciples for three and one-half years were the subjects of it. It was to endue them with power so they could go to the world as qualified ambassadors for Christ. At the house of Cornelius unsaved persons were the subjects, and its purpose was, as above shown, to prepare the way for their reception into the church. To have them saved by it is to have them saved without faith and without purified hearts. The outpouring took place as Peter "began to speak." (Acts 11:15.) Their faith came as a result of hearing what Peter preached. (Acts 15:7.) Their hearts were purified as a result of

their faith. (Verse 9.) A theory that forces such absurd conclusions cannot be true.

NOTE ON BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST.

1. *Baptism of the Holy Ghosts in History and in the Creeds.*—The doctrine that the baptism of the Holy Ghost is the *essential* baptism, and that by it the sinner is saved, is of modern origin. A few years ago I was led to make a thorough examination of the question. My line led me to investigate it in the light of church history and the creeds. While the works to which I had access claimed to give a description of the church in each century, from the first down to the present, in doctrine, in practice, in growth and formation of the various sects, greatly to my surprise, I found no allusion to the baptism of the Holy Ghost until I reached the seventeenth century, in the days of George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, commonly called “Quakers.” Among what are called “orthodox Protestant denominations” I found no allusion to it until about the beginning of the nineteenth century. By some the remarkable manifestations attending the great revivals at that time were attributed to it. If the baptism of the Holy Ghost is the essential thing, why this silence?

2. *Baptism of the Holy Ghost in the Creeds.*—The period of time from Luther on down has been fruitful in the formation of new denominations, most of

which have formulated confessions of faith. The Bible is a large book and contains much matter. Some of it is regarded as essential; some, not. The founders of the denominations culled from the Bible the things considered essential. These they placed together in a “confession of faith,” which is supposed to circumscribe the faith of the members. What they are supposed to believe on the various subjects—regeneration, justification, adoption, sanctification, etc.—is set forth therein. I have examined a number of them—such as the “Westminster Confession of Faith,” the Baptist confession, the Cumberland Presbyterian confession, and the Methodist “Discipline”—and in none of them is the baptism of the Holy Ghost alluded to, except in the “Discipline,” where it is mentioned in the ceremony connected with the administration of water baptism, and is prayed to accompany it. There is really no place for it, as the work now claimed it does is attributed to other means. “The grace of faith, whereby sinners are united to Christ, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the word.” (Cumberland Presbyterian “Confession of Faith,” Chapter XIV., Section 1.) The creeds that quote in footnotes the scriptures that are supposed to sustain the doctrine taught quote all of the following passages in their article on water baptism: Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16; John 3:5;

Acts 2:38, 41; 8:36-38; 10:47; 16:15, 33; Rom 6:3, 4; Gal. 3:27; Tit. 3:5. If these passages refer to water baptism (and they do), where is the baptism of the Holy Ghost as saving work taught?

CHAPTER XIV.**“The Word of Reconciliation” Reaches Europe.
(Read Acts 16.)**

Man is powerless to save himself; therefore if he is ever saved, God must save him. This he will do by his power—not by the power by which he gives animal life, not by the power by which he keeps the earth and the starry hosts in their places, not by the power by which he keeps the oceans in their bounds, not by the power by which he gives vegetable life; but by that power he has ordained for that purpose. What is that power? This question the Scriptures must answer: “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.” (James 1:21.) “Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among your feareth God, to you isthe word of this salvation sent.” (Acts 13:26.) “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.” (Eph. 1:13.) “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” (Rom. 1:16.) “More

over, 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.” (1 Cor. 15:1, 2.) These passages make it clear that God's power to save is in his word, the gospel of Christ.

Going on a train from Shelbyville, Tenn., to Nashville, Tenn., I passed through the magnificent new depot at Nashville to the north side and took my place on a street car that was crowded to its utmost capacity with men and women who wanted to go into the city. No engine or team of any kind was attached. Where, then, was the power by which that immense amount of human freight was to be transported? It was in a wire suspended over the car; but that power, in order to move the car, had to be brought in contact with the machinery of the car. When time was up, the motorman made the connection, the electric power came down the arm, and the car moved up the street like a thing of life. So in the gospel there is power to save, but it must reach the heart and understanding.

In the parable of the sower (Matt. 13; Mark 4; Luke 8) the word of God is the seed, the heart is the soil, and it is those who understand and keep the word that bear fruit. The divine order is: Hearing; understanding with the heart; conversion, or turning; forgiveness, or salvation. (Acts 28:27.) Hence in all the divine record there is not a single

case where a person was saved by the gospel where it was not heard and understood. While the growth of the church and the spread of the religion of Christ is the marvel of the age, yet it was twenty years before the gospel, with its ever-widening circle, reached that grand division now called "Europe." The first fruits there were in Philippi, the chief city of Macedonia. God saw there were two families—one, a merchant woman and her house; the other, a man who was keeping the city prison and his family—who were in condition to be saved, and he set about to save them. If God ever saves sinners directly without the gospel, here was a suitable place to do so. The New Testament was not then written. All of it that was then known was in the minds of the apostles and those who had learned it from them or others. Instead of going directly to them, he went to work with Paul, to whom "the word of reconciliation" had been committed, to bring him and those to be saved together. He was two hundred miles away; and, with the means of travel then available, much time would be required to do this. Miraculously and providentially, Paul, with his companions, was directed in this long journey until he reached the city of Philippi. (Acts 16:6-12.) There he was a stranger in a strange land. As a rule, in commercial cities there were Jewish synagogues, where the Jews would assemble for worship on the Sabbath. When Paul was in any of these cities, he would go to these

synagogues, and thus a better means of reaching the people would be afforded. Philippi was a military and agricultural city, and, therefore, had no synagogue. It was customary in cities of this sort for the Jews, if any were there, to have some retired place where they would meet for prayer on the Sabbath. There the place of prayer was at the riverside. Paul had been in the city a few days; and when the Sabbath came, he went to this place of prayer. There he met Lydia, the merchant woman. (Verses 13, 14.) The history of the conversion of herself and house is given in few words. Paul sat down and spoke to the woman; Lydia heard him; the Lord opened her heart; she attended to the things spoken by Paul; she and her house were baptized (this is one of the things she attended to; therefore Paul spoke of baptism). Lipscomb, in his "Commentary on Acts of the Apostles," says of Lydia's conversion: "She heard the gospel as preached by Paul, and through that the Lord opened her heart to receive the teachings; so she attended to, or gave heed to, the things that she heard. There was nothing mysterious or singular about this. Men open one another's hearts by presenting to them the truth, enlightening their minds, and changing their affections from one person or thing to another. This God did for Lydia by words spoken by Paul." There need be no trouble about that matter, anyway. If the Lord opens the heart directly without means, that is his work, and he will

attend to it at the right time and place. The thing for man to do is to hear the gospel, attend to the things it requires, and trust God for his part of the work.

Passing from this, we come to another conversion in this same city. Because Paul had cast a spirit of divination out of a woman, he and Silas were brought before the rulers, who, after laying many stripes upon them, put them in prison, charging the jailer to keep them securely. In order to do this, the jailer put them in the inner prison and made their feet fast in the stocks. Though smarting with lacerated backs, at the hour of midnight Paul and Silas sung praises to God. Suddenly there was an earthquake that unsettled the foundation of the prison, opened the doors, and loosed the bands of the prisoners. The jailer, awaking out of his sleep and seeing the prison doors open, was about to kill himself, when Paul restrained him, "saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here." Then the jailer called for a light, sprang in, came trembling, fell down before Paul and Silas, and said: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Verses 28-30.) This question shows that the jailer believed there was something for him to do, and that he had the capacity and was willing to do what was required. It also indicates that in salvation man is both active and passive--active in doing what God requires, passive in receiving the salvation that he gives.

To understand fully an answer to a question it is necessary to know the attitude of the questioner. What, then, was the attitude of the jailer to the gospel? He was an unbeliever. While he believed that the apostles, from divine attestation that night, could point out the way of salvation, so far as any history we have is concerned, he had never heard the gospel, and, therefore, had not believed in Christ. To the question, "What must I do to be saved?" coming from an unbeliever, the apostles answered: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." (Verse 31.) Then as "faith cometh by hearing," in order that he might have the testimony upon which to predicate his belief, "they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house." The jailer became a believer, and his faith led right on in the line of obedience to the gospel. "And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway." (Verse 33.) In perfect harmony with "the word of reconciliation" committed to the apostles and all the cases of reconciliation heretofore examined, there were preaching, faith, repentance (the jailer washed the stripes of the prisoners, thus undoing, as far as was in his power, the wrong he had done), and baptism.

CHAPTER XV.**A Resume.**

The book of Acts of the Apostles gives a partial history of the work of the ambassadors for Christ and other inspired teachers in presenting “the word of reconciliation” for a period of about thirty years. The accounts of conversions during this time are not alike full, some being abridged statements. As stated in a previous chapter, fairness requires that the abridged accounts should be interpreted in the light of the full accounts, and not the full in the light of THE abridged. A correct rule of interpretation is that where a condition of salvation is clearly expressed in one case it must be understood in all others, whether expressed or not. Salvation in no case must be predicated on fewer conditions than are found in any given case. As all cases are not reported alike full, salvation may be predicated upon a greater number of conditions than are expressed in a particular case, but never on less.

The eight cases of conversion given most in detail are the Pentecostians (Acts 2), the Samaritans (Acts 8), the eunuch (Acts 8), Saul (Acts 9), Cornelius (Acts 10), Lydia (Acts 16), the jailer (Acts 16), and the Corinthians (Acts 18). Six of these

have been somewhat fully examined in previous chapters. Of Saul of Tarsus, after giving a history of his persecuting the Christians, of his journey to Damascus, and of the wonderful vision he had on the way, it is said Ananias came unto him, and, finding him penitent and prayerful, said: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16.) He "arose, and was baptized." (Acts 9:18.)

A year after Paul's imprisonment at Philippi, in his journeys he reached the city of Corinth. Here he continued "a year and six months, teaching the word of God." It is said of him that he "reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks;" that he "preached the gospel" unto them; and that he "testified . . . that Jesus was Christ." The result of all this, as related by Luke, was: "Many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." (Acts 18:8.)

As this closes my examination of the cases of conversion under the ministry of the ambassadors, I shall sum up the facts developed in the following diagram (the reader will please turn back to Chapter III. and compare it with the diagram on "the word of reconciliation "):

Pentecostians (Acts 2)	Preaching	Faith	Repentance	Baptism
Samaritans (Acts 8)	Preaching	Faith		Baptism
Eunuch (Acts 8)	Preaching	Faith		Baptism
Saul (Acts 9)	Preaching			Baptism
Cornelius (Acts 10)	Preaching	Faith	Repentance	Baptism
Lydia (Acts 16)	Preaching			Baptism
Jailer (Acts 16)	Preaching	Faith		Baptism
Corinthians (Acts 18)	Preaching	Faith		Baptism

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In these eight cases of conversion, preaching is expressly mentioned in every case; baptism, in every case; faith, in all but two; and repentance, in only two. Where absent in name, faith and repentance are necessarily inferred.

A few observations are in place just here.

1. In all recorded work of the apostles, notwithstanding there were thousands of persons converted, the question, “What must I do to be saved?” or its equivalent, “What must we do?” occurs but

three times. No doubt the question was propounded to the apostles often. Why are there only three records? The writer of Acts did not propose to give a full account of the apostles' work, but only a sufficient amount to furnish instruction for the teachers and learners of the word of God in subsequent ages. Compliance with "the word of reconciliation" brings one into the kingdom and fellowship of Jesus Christ. There are but three possible conditions for one to be in outside of the kingdom. One may be an unbeliever, a believer who has done nothing more than believe, or a believer who has repented of his sins, but has not been baptized. These three states are represented by the questioners in the three cases recorded. The jailer (Acts 16) is a representative of the unbelieving class; the Pentecostians (Acts 2), of those who have believed; while Saul of Tarsus represents those who have believed and repented. As every possible condition is represented in these records, to have added more would have been to "reconciliation" darken counsel with a multiplicity of words."

2. Conversion is a process, and, therefore, not instantaneous. The purpose of conversion is to bring man back to God in every respect he is away from God. Man is separated from God in the condition of his heart, his manner of life, and his relationship. In faith the heart turns to God; in repentance, the life; and through baptism he enters the church of God. One step prepares the way for

another. A purified heart prepares the way for a purified life, and a purified heart and life prepare the way for citizenship in the kingdom of God.

The figures used to illustrate conversion are: (a) Naturalization. In conversion one loses citizenship in one kingdom (the world) and gains it in another (the kingdom of God). “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.” (Col. 1:13.) In the change of citizenship there are certain necessary steps. To become a citizen of our government the foreigner must hear of this country, must believe in it strong enough to be willing to leave his own country and come to this one. Coming here, he must file his application to become a citizen, remain the prescribed number of years, and then before a proper officer subscribe to the oath of allegiance. This done, and not before, he becomes a citizen, with all its rights and privileges. The similarity between this and becoming a citizen of the kingdom of God is apparent. One must hear of Christ, must believe in him, and must become sufficiently tired of the thralldom of sin to resolve to give it up, to obey him in all he requires, and, upon a confession of faith, to be baptized. Baptism in the one case corresponds to the oath of allegiance in the other. (b) Marriage. When one becomes a Christian, he is represented as being espoused, or married, to Christ. Certain steps are necessary to marriage—the acquaintance, the association, the se-

curing of the affections, the engagement, and, finally, the marriage ceremony. The consummating act in becoming husband and wife is the marriage ceremony. So the consummating act in conversion, in being married to Christ, is baptism. The marriage ceremony is the result, not the cause, of the love between the man and the woman; so baptism is the result, not the cause, of one's love for Christ. "If a man love me, he will keep my words." (John 14:23.) Going through the form of a marriage ceremony where no mutual love exists is mockery; so also would it be to submit to the form of baptism where no love for Christ exists.

CHAPTER XVI.**With Whom Did the Apostles Labor?**

In previous chapters a partial view of the work of the ambassadors for Christ for about twenty years in presenting “the word of reconciliation” to the world has been taken. It has been found that man was alienated from God, that this alienation resulted from man's wrongdoing, and that the purpose of the ministry of reconciliation was to break down this alienation and bring them together in a state of amity and friendship.

When two things are separated, a force must be exerted upon one or both in order to bring them together. This is true alike of material substances and moral conditions. Material substances, separated, can only be brought together by physical force; where the separation is in moral conditions, moral force alone can bring them together. The separation between God and man is of a moral nature; therefore the exercise of moral force must bring them together. There must be persuasion. Either God must be persuaded to come to the sinner or the sinner must be persuaded to come to God. Paul asked the question: “Do I now persuade men, or God?” The answer to this question will deter

mine the rightfulness or wrongfulness of different methods of religious work. One method is to labor with man to bring him to God; the other, with God to bring him to the sinner. This last is not a misrepresentation, as all who are familiar with the mourner's-bench system, once so universal, must know. Some of the most vivid memories of my younger days are the recollections of revival meetings conducted after this method. With fervid oratory and deathbed scenes the passions of the people were aroused, so that many would prostrate themselves at what was called the "altar." The heartrending cries and pleadings of the mourners; the impassioned songs, prayers, shouts, and ejaculations of the workers, made a scene never to be forgotten. "Lord, come and save these poor mourners." "Lord, thou hast promised to save those who are tired of sin. Thou knowest these mourners want to be saved; now make thyself a great name in the salvation of many souls to-night." These and similar petitions show conclusively that the whole purpose of the work was to persuade God and bring him to the sinner. My first efforts to become religious were under this system, and I speak from personal experience about it.

The Scriptures clearly teach that God in every age of the world has always stood in an attitude of love and compassion toward man. When man would turn from his sins, he always found God ready to forgive. To the Jews he said: "Let the

wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” (Isa. 55:7.) “Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?” (Ezek. 18:23.) “For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.” (Verse 32.) “As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” (Ezek. 33:11.)

The same line of thought runs through the New Testament. A few passages are here given: “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Matt. 11:28.) “The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” (Rev. 22:17.) “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” (2 Pet. 3:9.)

Man must be reconciled to God, and not God to man. “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his

life.” (Rom. 5:10.) “And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.” (2 Cor. 5:18-20.) “And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.” (Eph. 2:16.)

God is not hard and implacable, as that once popular, but now effete, system would seem to teach; but he is loving, tender, and compassionate. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16.) “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.” (1 John 4:9.) “We love him, because he first loved us.” (Verse 19.) “Or 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.)

Everything consistent with man's volitional nature that infinite wisdom and infinite love could do to save man has been done. From what has been revealed of God's willingness to save it is icon-

ceivable that the combined entreaties of all the righteous people on earth could make him more willing to save than he has shown himself. The ambassadors always labored with man and persuaded man. "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." (2 Cor. 5:11.) On the day of Pentecost, after teaching the multitude, Peter exhorted them, "saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation." (Acts 2:40.) At Solomon's porch he said to the people: "Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." (Acts 3:19.) The love of God led him to send an angel to tell Cornelius to send for a man who would tell him what he ought to do. (Acts 10:6.) Paul, in his address to the Ephesian elders, says: "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." (Acts 20:26, 27.) "Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." (Verse 31.) To the Colossians he wrote: "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." (Col. 1:28.) When in prison at Rome, to those who came to his lodging he "expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from

morning till evening.” (Acts 28:23.) God loved us, Jesus died for us, the Holy Spirit entreats us; hence man's will alone stands in the way of his salvation.

CHAPTER XVII.**Faith.**

In “the word of reconciliation” committed to the apostles it was found in a former chapter that faith, repentance, and baptism were required; also that in the eight most fully reported cases of conversion the same were found, either expressly mentioned or necessarily inferred. As these are universal elements, it will be helpful to the learner to take a fuller view of them than has been done. “Faith” is eminently a New Testament word, it being found but twice in the Old Testament and over two hundred times in the New Testament. That which in the New Testament is called “faith,” in the Old Testament is generally called “belief or believe.” In a number of places in the New Testament these words are used interchangeably. Of the centurion who asked Jesus to heal his servant he said: “I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.” (Matt. 8:10.) Then to the centurion he said: “Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.” (Verse 13.) Of Abraham, Paul says: “He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.” (Rom. 4:20.) To

the Hebrews he says: "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb. 11:6.) "Believe" is a verb, expressing an action of the mind; "faith" is a noun, giving a name to that action. To go farther than this in making distinctions is to "darken counsel by a multiplicity of words." Faith, as found in "the word of reconciliation" and in all cases of conversion, is simply believing all that is revealed of Jesus Christ and trusting him for all he has promised.

Faith, opinion, and knowledge are not the same. Faith is based upon testimony, opinions are the result of inferences, while knowledge is the result of personal demonstration. I know there is such a city as Washington, the capital of the United States; for I have seen it, have traversed its streets. I believe there is such a city as Paris, France, for I have reliable testimony in the statement of others; but, not having seen it, I could not testify on my own personal knowledge that it exists. I might have an opinion that the moon has living beings upon it, but I do not know it, as I have never been there; neither can I believe it, for I have no testimony on the subject.

The religion of Christ is a religion of faith. "We walk by faith, not by sight." (2 Cor. 5:7.) We are not required to know that Jesus was manifested in the flesh; that he was crucified, raised from the

dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven; but we are required to believe these facts on credible testimony. When Jesus arose from the dead, he did not walk up and down the streets proclaiming his resurrection from the dead, but showed himself to “witnesses chosen before.” (Acts 10:41.) The three thousand in the city of Jerusalem who accepted Christ fifty days after his resurrection became believers upon the testimony of the apostles in the same way that men become believers to-day.

1. While the answer to some extent has been anticipated, the question is now raised: How does faith come? “It is the gift of God,” says one. If so, then a man is not responsible for not having faith; and to damn him for not having faith would be unjust. There was an extraordinary faith possessed by some in the days of miracles that was the gift of God. (1 Cor. 12:9.) Those who possessed this faith even as a grain of mustard seed could say to the sycamine tree, “Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea;” and it would obey. (Luke 17:6.) This faith was always classed with other miraculous gifts of the Spirit that belonged to the childhood age of the church. Paul speaks of “the common faith” (Tit. 1:4), or the faith common to all. As this is the faith by which we are justified, the question, How does faith come? is of practical moment to each one personally. A few days in the company of an ex-

pert, in the harvest time, in putting up self-binders are worth more than a month's study of the "directions" in learning how to put them up. So, then, to find an answer to the question, How does faith come? let us take a few years' tour with the apostles—inspired experts—under whose work many thousands became believers. On the morning of the day of Pentecost a multitude assembled. At this time they were unbelievers. Before the day closed three thousand of them had become believers—had faith. How did it come? Peter preached the gospel to them, concluding his address in these words: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Result: "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They are now believers, and their faith came from hearing the gospel preached by Peter. A few days later a larger crowd is gathered at the temple. The same apostle preaches in substance what he preached before. Result: "Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand." (Acts 4:4.) We spend something like a year at Jerusalem, and then when the disciples are driven away by persecution, we go down to the city of Samaria, with Philip. When we reach there, we find a mongrel people, devotees of a mongrel reli-

gion. They are unbelievers. We hear Philip preach Christ unto them and witness his many miracles. We leave them believers. How did their faith come? “But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” (Acts 8:12.) Seven years after this we are stopping with Peter at Joppa, a seacoast town, when messengers, from Caesarea come and ask him to go to that city, that he might tell a certain military officer words whereby he and his house might be saved. We go with Peter, hear him preach as he did at Pentecost and Solomon's porch. We are witnesses of the fact that Cornelius and his house, the first Gentiles, became believers. How did their faith come? “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 15:7.) Leaving Peter, the apostle to the circumcision, we spend a time with Paul, the apostle to the uncircumcision, to see if they agree in teaching and practice. Four years after our visit with Peter to Cornelius we go with Paul and Barnabas to Iconium, and are eyewitnesses of the fact that a great multitude, both of Jews and of Gentiles, believed. How did their faith come? “And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks be-

lieved.” (Acts 14:1.) Nine years later we go with Paul to the great city of Corinth. We hear him reason “in the synagogue,” hear him testify “that Jesus was Christ,” and hear him preach the gospel. We see many become obedient believers. How did their faith come? “And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.” (Acts 18:8.) Twenty-four years after our sojourn with the apostle Paul at Corinth we are in the city of Ephesus with the old apostle John, while he is writing his gospel. We are anxious at this late period to see whether there has been any change in teaching after this lapse of years. We look over his shoulder while he is writing, and read: “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.) Here we close our journey of forty-five years with the apostles; and after having seen many thousands become believers by hearing the word of God, we are prepared to join Paul in his conclusion on the subject: “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Rom. 10:17.)

2. Will faith alone save? Yes and no—yes, if faith developed in life, faith made perfect by the works God has commanded as an expression of

faith, is meant; no, if reference is had to faith in its inception, before it has been made perfect by works. James (2:24) settles the question: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." In all the range of Bible history there is not a single case where any person or persons were blessed because of faith but what that faith was developed in life. Through faith Abel "obtained witness that he was righteous," but it was a faith that offered the proper sacrifice (Heb. 11:4); through faith Enoch escaped death, but it was a faith that led him to act so as to please God (verse 5); through faith Noah was saved from perishing in the flood, but it was a faith that led him to build an ark as commanded (verse 7); through faith Abraham was justified, but it was a faith that led him, when commanded, to go to a strange country (verse 8) and to offer his son (verse 17); through faith the walls of Jericho fell down, but it was a faith that led Joshua and the hosts of Israel to encompass the city as commanded (verse 30); through faith Rahab perished not with the other people of the city, but it was a faith that led her to protect the spies (verse 31). So it is that man is saved by faith, but it is a faith that obeys God.

3. Faith grows. "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly." (2 Thess. 1:3.) A little, tender shoot bursts the soil. The foot of a babe would destroy its life. That tender plant is

an oak. It gradually grows, until in a century it becomes a mighty tree that withstands the hurricane's force; yet all along it was an oak. Far up in the Northwest, issuing from a small lake, is a stream almost so small that an active man can leap across it. That little stream is the Mississippi River. It starts south on its tortuous course. As tributary after tributary adds its volume of water, it grows larger and larger, so that when it reaches the gulf it has become a mighty stream, capable of bearing on its bosom the fleets and navies of the world; yet all along from source to mouth it is the Mississippi River. So it is when the word of God is received into the heart and credence given to it. It is faith. Man turns away from sin, is buried in baptism, meets with the brethren on the first day of the week, engages in the divinely-ordered worship, studies the word of God, visits the sick, and relieves the needy. All along it is faith; yet from a weak impulse that tremblingly took the first step in obedience it has, by growth, become a mighty, controlling principle that would, as the martyrs of old, endure the flames for the sake of Christ.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Repentance.

Repentance as a condition of salvation is found in “the word of reconciliation” and every case of conversion, either by express mention or necessary inference. Its absolute necessity is amply taught in the Scriptures. On one occasion Jesus was told “of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.” They were supposed to be great sinners because they suffered such things. This led Jesus to say: “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” (Luke 13:3.) Paul on Mars' Hill said: “The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.” (Acts 17:30.) Peter on the day of Pentecost to the convicted Jews said: “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, . . . and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” (Acts 2:38.) To a baptized believer who had sinned he said: “Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of shine heart may be forgiven thee.” (Acts 8:22.)

As “there is no man that sinneth not” and re-

repentance is necessary to forgiveness, the question, What is repentance? is of supreme importance.

1. Repentance is not sorrow for sin. That sorrow is not repentance is shown by Paul's language: "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of." (2 Cor. 7:10.) "Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance." (Verse 9.)

2. Reformation of life is not repentance; it is the fruit of repentance. To the Pharisees and Sadducees who came to his baptism John the Baptist said: "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance." (Matt. 3:8.) The marginal reading is "answerable to amendment of life." Sorrow, repentance, and reformation are closely connected. This relation is plainly indicated by one of the parables of Jesus: "But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterwards he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not." (Matt. 21:28-30.) The mind, or purpose, of the first son was not to obey his father. Becoming sorry for his refusal, he changed his mind, or purpose, and went. The change of will with respect to his father's command in this son's case was his repentance, and his going and doing were the fruits of repentance, or reformation of life. From this scriptural illustration it is made plain

that repentance, in its strict sense, is a change of will, or purpose, on the sinner's part with respect to the commands of God.

The relation of repentance to sorrow is the relation of effect to cause, and the same is true of reformation of life and repentance. The sinner becomes sorry for his sins in violating or neglecting God's laws. He repents—that is, resolves to turn away from sin and to be obedient to God's commands. This purpose, carried out, is the fruit of repentance.

From the examples of conversion it is plainly taught that one can repent in a moment of time, and that one can locate this point of time. Here arises a question that is often a subject of debate: Is faith before or after repentance? As repentance occupies a definite point of time and faith is continuous, I would answer: Both. Faith, in its incipiency, springs up when the word of God is received into the heart and abides until death. As no one can be sorry for having sinned against God and purpose to cease to do so without believing in him, so there must be faith before repentance; and as it goes to the grave with him, there is faith after it. Here I beg leave to suggest that much valuable time is wasted discussing this question. If a man both believes and repents, they come in the right order, in spite of any theory he may have. He cannot get them wrong if he should try ever so hard. The jailer heard the word of God, believed, and repented inside of an hour. If people would cease to

speculate and worry over theories, but do as the jailer did—make a full surrender at once—it would be better for them.

One of the fruits of repentance that needs to be emphasized is restitution. No one can hope for forgiveness until he has, as far as is in his power, righted the wrongs he has done. If one has injured another in property or reputation, it is required that he shall restore, as far as is in his power, what was wrongfully taken. I fear sometimes preachers do not press this point sufficiently. May God help all to realize the heinous, hurtful character of sin and the necessity of a repentance that will lead to a thorough turning away from it.

The following are examples of repentance:

1. The prodigal son. (Luke 15:11-32.) While this parable was given to show God's willingness to forgive, it also illustrates the steps connected with repentance. The prodigal, having wasted his substance in riotous living, reached a state of abject want. It was then "he came to himself." He saw the mistake he had made. He realized that he had forfeited his right as a son, became humble, and was willing to become simply a hired servant. He was sorry for having left his father's house, and resolved to go to his father, confess he had sinned against heaven and him, and ask to be made a servant. He arose and went to his father. The correspondence between this young man's course and that of the sinner, who leaves his Father's house,

indulges in sin until ruin stares him in the face, and then resolves to, and does, seek salvation, is apparent.

2. The mission of Jonah to Nineveh. Jesus said the people of Nineveh “repented at the preaching of Jonah.” (Matt. 12:41.) Nineveh was a great city, with a population of perhaps six hundred thousand. These people had become exceedingly wicked, so much so that God decided to destroy the city. He sent Jonah to cry against it. As Jonah entered the city, he proclaimed: “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.” (Jonah 3:4.) “So the people of Nineveh believed God.” The king came down from his throne and proclaimed a fast; they all put on sackcloth and sat in ashes, cried mightily unto God, put the violence from their hands, and turned every man from his evil way. A careful examination of this history shows the following order: Preaching was done; the people heard and believed, became deeply sorrowful for their wickedness, resolved to turn away from it, and carried out this resolution in that they put the violence from their hands and turned every man from his evil way. Of them Jesus said: “They repented at the preaching of Jonah.”

As a motive to induce repentance, both the goodness and severity of God are presented. A view of the love and mercy of God may lead one to repent, but fear of punishment may lead others to repent. The Ninevites feared punishment, and thus were led

to repent. Repentance, then, is acceptable when superinduced either by the great love of God or from a fear of the terrible consequences of continuing in sin.

CHAPTER XIX.**Baptism.**

The commands in the Bible are either moral or positive. A moral precept enjoins an action or duty that is right in the nature of things and is commanded because it is right; a positive precept enjoins an action which becomes a duty because it is commanded. Moral precepts—such as “Thou shalt not kill,” “Thou shalt not steal,” and “Lie not one to another”—grow out of man's relation to man; positive precepts—such as animal sacrifice, baptism, prayer, and the Lord's Supper—grow out of man's relation to God. A man's love for man and regard for his rights influence him to obey moral precepts; love for God and respect for his authority alone prompt to obey positive precepts. Compliance or noncompliance with moral precepts indicates a man's feelings toward his fellow-man; compliance or noncompliance with positive precepts is a test of man's loyalty to God. Men without faith in God may observe moral duties; not so with positive duties. Faith in God must lead to their observance.

In every dispensation there have been positive precepts—different in character, it is true; yet all

were given as tests of man's faith. The institution of baptism belongs to this class of duties. It grows not out of man's relation to man, but to God. I make no apology for devoting a chapter to the consideration of this subject. An institution that Jesus Christ while in the flesh honored by being obedient to it, that was submitted to by those who were made ready for his kingdom, that was incorporated in "the word of reconciliation" by the risen Christ when sending his ambassadors into the world, that found a place in every case of conversion under an inspired ministry, that has been submitted to by the great and good men and women for the last eighteen hundred years, and that stands at the threshold of every religious body that claims to be Christian (Quakers excepted), is certainly worthy of our most profound, reverent, and prayerful study. While I have read many learned and critical discussions of the question, I am firmly of the opinion that a careful and honest reading of any translation of the New Testament, without the help of any classical or exegetical authority whatever, will enable any person who has sufficient mental development to be accountable to settle for himself the questions: What is baptism? Who should be baptized? And for what purpose?

In order to get the subject clearly before the reader I shall group together (1) the passages that refer to John's baptism, (2) those in "the word of reconciliation" in which baptism is mentioned, (3)

those found in the preaching and writings of the ambassadors.

1. “Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.” (Matt. 3:5, 6.) “Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water.” (Verses 13-16.) “John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.” (Mark 1:4, 5.) “I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.” (Verse 8.) “And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.” (Luke 7:29, 30.) “The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?” (Matt. 21:25.) “And John also was baptizing in AEnon near to Salim, because there was much water there.” (John 3:23.) Other passages refer to

John's baptism, but to quote them would be to only repeat ideas contained in the above. From these the following facts are learned: John's baptism was from heaven; it was part of the counsel of God, those submitting to it justifying God and those not submitting to it rejecting "the counsel of God against themselves;" much water was necessary; baptism took place in a river; Jesus, after his baptism, came up out of the water; connected with repentance, it was for the remission of sins; and those baptized were adults, or of an age sufficient to come and confess their sins.

2. In "the word of reconciliation." "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in [into] the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. 28:19.) "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15, 16.) From these scriptures it is learned that Jesus authorized baptism; that it is transitional, inducting into the ineffable names of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that baptism follows teaching; that believers only are to be baptized; and that it is a condition of salvation from sin.

3. In Acts of Apostles and the Epistles. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38.) "Then they that

gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.” (Verse 41.) “But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” (Acts 8:12.) “Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip.” (Verse 13.) “And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what cloth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all shine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.” (Verses 36-39.) “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” (Acts 22:16.) “And he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.” (Acts 9:18.) “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.” (Acts 10:47, 48.) “And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes;

and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.” (Acts 16:33.) “And many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.” (Acts 18:8.) “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” (Rom. 6:3, 4.) “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.” (Col. 2:12.) “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” (Gal. 3:27.) “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” (1 Cor. 12:13.) “The like figure whereunto even baptism cloth 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 Pet. 3:21.)

By a careful induction of these scriptures the following facts are established: (1) Baptism is a command of Jesus Christ (Acts 10:48); (2) believers are to be baptized (Acts 8:12, 37; 18:8); (3) water is the element (Acts 8:36 ; 10:47); (4) before baptism there was a coming to and a going down into the water, and after baptism a coming up out of the water (Acts 8:36-39); (5) baptism is a burial (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12); (6) it was of sufficient importance to be attended to immediately after per

sons became believers (Acts 16:33); (7) by it those who were prepared for it in heart and life by faith and repentance were inducted into Christ, into his body (1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27); (8) from it the new life of service to God begins (Rom 6:4); (9) and as redemption, remission of sins, or salvation from sin is in Christ, it is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16).

In the form, or ritual, by which persons are inducted into all organized institutions there is a consummating act. That consummating act must be attended to in the way the laws of the order require before one is entitled to the privileges and blessings of the order. It is so of the church of the living God. There is a form by which persons are admitted; that form has its consummating act, and that act is baptism. To enjoy the privileges and blessings of citizenship in the church, the kingdom of God on earth, one must attend to this consummating act in the way the law of the Lord directs.

CHAPTER XX.

The Church.

“For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain [that is, of Jews and Gentiles] one new man, so making peace.” (Eph. 2:14, 15.)

God, in the development of his gracious purpose to redeem man, separated the Jewish people from the balance of the world. This was done not for the good alone of the people thus called out, but for the good of mankind in general. The law contained in ordinances is described as a “middle wall of partition” between them. The prophets clearly show that while the Redeemer, so far as his humanity was concerned, was to be of Jewish descent, his mission was to bless the entire human race. Those things which separated Jews and Gentiles were to be removed, and both were to be brought together on perfect equality in one body, of which Jesus Christ was the Head. When Jesus came, both classes had become alienated from God. The purpose of Jesus was to reconcile both, and this was to

be done in one body. “And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.” (Verse 16.) This one body, in which Jews and Gentiles alike were to be reconciled, is the church. “And gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body.” (Eph. 1:22, 23.) After Jesus took out of the way the middle wall of partition that separated between Jews and Gentiles and established the church, then the two classes were—not Jews and Gentiles, but the saved and unsaved, the church and the world. Jews and Gentiles in the world sustained the same spiritual relationship to God, and so of those in the church. At first the Jews thought the gospel was for them alone. While it took him a long time to see the light of divine truth, Peter, when called to speak words unto Cornelius, the Gentile, perceived that God was no “respector of persons.”

“The word of reconciliation” committed to the ambassadors, when complied with, brought men into the church. Speaking of the earlier work of these ambassadors, Luke says: “And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” (Acts 2:47.) The Revised Version renders the last clause “those that were being saved.” The process, then, by which persons were saved, reconciled, was the process by which they were added to the church. It was so in the days of the apostles; it is so now. There are no saved persons out of the

church; there are no unsaved persons in it. Again, the process by which men are saved and added to the church is the process by which they become Christians. There are no Christians out of church; there are none who are not Christians in it. All the saved are in the church, all the reconciled are in the church, all Christians are in the church. The church is composed of Christians. “And it came to pass, that a whole year they [Paul and Barnabas] assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.” (Acts 11:26.) “Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf [Revised Version, “in this name “]. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?” (1 Pet. 4:16, 17.) The “us” and “Christians” are the same persons, and they compose the house of God. “The house of God” is the church of God. (1 Tim. 3:15.)

The word “church” has two applications in the New Testament—universal and local. In its universal sense it includes all Christians; in its local sense it includes the Christians in one locality who meet together to keep the ordinances. In the following passages the word is used in its universal sense: “Upon this rock I will build my church.” (Matt. 16:18.) “And he is the head of the body,

the church.” (Col. 1:18.) “Christ is the head of the church.” (Eph 5:23.) “The church is subject unto Christ.” (Verse 24.) “Christ also loved the church.” (Verse 25.) “That he might present it to himself a glorious church.” (Verse 27.) “To the general assembly and church of the firstborn.” (Heb. 12:23.) The following are a few of the many places where it is used in a restricted, or local, sense: “They assembled themselves with the church.” (Acts 11:26.) “Ordained them elders in every church.” (Acts 14:23.) “Had gathered the church together.” (Verse 27.) “Greet the church that is in their house.” (Rom. 16:5.) “Unto the church of God which is at Corinth.” (1 Cor. 1:2.)

Jesus Christ is the only Head of the church universal; and hence it is not an “organization,” as that word is used, with a human head. It is not constituted of branch church organizations, but of individuals. Each one of these enters in his own individual capacity; stands related to it individually; and is, therefore, a branch himself. (John 15:5.) The church universal never acts as a whole, but what it does is the result of individual effort. A man secures membership in his individual capacity; and if he ever loses that membership, it will be because he has become unfruitful and God has taken him away. (Verse 2.) As has been shown in the different cases of conversion examined in previous chapters, persons become members by obedience to

the gospel—that is, God adds them through that means. (Acts 2:47; 1 Pet. 4:16, 17.)

The church, in the local sense, when fully developed, has elders, whose duty it is to oversee and guide the church in its work (Acts 20:28), to “take care of the church” (1 Tim. 3:5), and to “watch for . . . souls” (Heb. 13:17). It can act as a whole, as in the cases of the church at Jerusalem joining with the apostles in sending messengers with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch (Acts 15:22) and the church at Philippi in sending to the necessities of Paul while preaching the gospel (Phil. 4:15, 16). Local churches can cooperate in any scriptural work, as in the case of the churches of Macedonia in sending relief to the suffering Christians in Judea. (2 Cor. 8:1-4.) The number of members of the local church may be large or small. The membership at Jerusalem reached into the thousands, while Jesus said: “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Matt. 18:20.) Two or three disciples, with Jesus, constitute a church. To the local church is committed the duty of keeping the ordinances. Paul, in writing to the church at Corinth, said: “Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.” (1 Cor. 11:2.) To do this they must meet together, hence must have a place and time of meeting. (Verse 20.) Locality, and not the “right hand of fellowship” or church let-

ter, gives membership in the local church. A church letter may make one favorably known and a hearty hand grasp may emphasize one's welcome, but a Christian's locality determines with whom he shall worship and cooperate in religious work. The Christian who moves into the bounds of a church has the privilege of associating with that church as fully as though he had become "obedient to the faith" there; and, furthermore, it is his duty to assist that church in all laudable work.

The apostle Paul speaks of the church as a "glorious church." It is, indeed, so. It is "glorious" on account of the blessings it confers. In it persons have redemption through the blood of Christ and forgiveness of sins; in it are reconciliation and a new creature. It is a "glorious church" because in its membership are the best of earth's men and women. It is "glorious" because, of all institutions, it has done the most to break the shackles that bound man to debasing ignorance and corruption and to exalt him to his proper place as a creature bearing God's image. It is "glorious" because of the foundation upon which it is built—the grand, world-redeeming truth that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." It is "glorious" because of its stability. For over eighteen hundred years it has stood as the one indestructible institution. While great kingdoms and empires have risen, flourished in power for a while, and passed away, it has stood as the one impregnable rock against which the

waves of infidelity, sin, and corruption have dashed in vain, and is a mightier force in human affairs today than it has ever been before. It is “glorious” on account of its Head. Nations are accounted glorious that have great and wise heads. The church has for its Head the Lord Jesus Christ, who stands far above the greatest of all earthly kings and emperors—yea, is infinitely greater than all earthly potentates combined. It is “glorious” on account of its future triumphs. The triumphs of the past have been great, but they will be greater in the future, and will continue until “the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ.” Finally, it is a “glorious church” on account of its ultimate destiny. When the ocean has wept herself dry, when the moon and the stars have fallen from their orbits, when the sun has burned himself out, when the earth has dissolved in smoke, when the dead have been raised and the judgment is past, then will Jesus, as the Head of the church, the King over this kingdom, deliver it up to God, the Father, that he may be supreme. Glorious church! Thrice blessed is he who has citizenship in it.

PART II.

CHAPTER XXI.

The School of Christ.

In the first part of this little book the means by which aliens (persons under the power of darkness) are reconciled—delivered from this power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son—has been set forth with some degree of care. The subsequent pages will be devoted to the means and results of spiritual growth and development. Man is so perverted by sin in disposition and habits that he needs to be cultured and disciplined, so that he may be a fit inhabitant of heaven. If it were possible for one to pass the threshold of heaven never having been purified from sin, it would not be heaven to him. Divine wisdom and philanthropy are displayed in the establishment of the church, which can properly be called a “school of Christ.” The purpose of secular schools is to train and develop children into men and women prepared for life's duties. Schools that fail to do this fail in the purpose for which they were established. Children, when babes in understanding, enter these

schools as disciples, or learners. Development of mind and acquisition of knowledge are, of necessity, gradual; but it is expected when the years of school are completed that those that entered as babes will be prepared to engage in life's duties and conflicts. So those who enter the school of Christ become disciples, or learners; and means are furnished by which they are to grow and reach the stature of men and women in Christ—men and women who will be fit associates of the inhabitants of heaven. Furthermore, while this training prepares for citizenship in heaven, it also prepares for the better appropriation of time here. Growth in spiritual stature, as in natural, is gradual. No one expects the marks of mature manhood in the babe. In truth, this is not desirable. If a child should be born with teeth, beard, and other marks of manhood, it would be regarded as a monstrosity, and would be a source of sorrow to its parents. Equally so would it be if the babe, born seemingly all right, should never grow out of its infantile state. Certain conditions are necessary to the healthy growth of the child:

1. It must have proper food—food adapted to its physical condition, food that is easily assimilated. Many children literally starve—not from lack of food nor from a lack of a desire for food, but from a lack of food that the digestive organs will take up and appropriate to the building up of the body.

2. It must have proper exercise. If the bones

and muscles of the child are never exercised, the bones will remain soft and the muscles will remain flabby. It is no bad sign to see a child active and full of life. This activity insures healthy growth.

3. It must have a pure atmosphere. With proper food and exercise, if the child breathes an unhealthy atmosphere, it will never grow strong and robust.

The same is true of the babe in Christ:

1. It must have proper food, proper exercise, and move in a proper atmosphere in order to its spiritual growth. Peter, in writing to Christians, said: "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." (1 Pet. 2:2.) As taught by Jesus in the parable of the sower, the word of God is the spiritual seed from which is developed all spiritual fruit; but in order to this spiritual fruit the word must be heard and understood. (Matt. 13:23.) This emphasizes the importance of the teaching and study of the word; not only this, but of its regular teaching and study. An occasional supply of food, though bountiful and nutritious, does not contribute to healthy growth physically; neither will an occasional hearing or study of the word of God insure healthy spiritual growth. The Christian is matriculated in the school of Christ, and one of his divinely-given names is "disciple," which means a learner—a learner not for a day, a week, or a year, but as long as his school term lasts, which is until death. The more a man studies the word of God, the greater becomes his spiritual

strength. The disciple in Christ's school has a wonderful text-book, unlike any other. The years from youth to green old age may be devoted to its study, and still there will be mines of wisdom and knowledge that will remain unexplored. In the Scriptures there is milk for the babes and there is strong meat for those that are of full age. (Heb. 5:12-14.) Teachers are liable to make two mistakes—one, to try to nourish babes on strong meat; the other, to give milk to them that are of full age. Either mistake is a hindrance to spiritual growth. The wise teacher will avoid both mistakes and study to give each his portion in due season.

2. In order to healthy growth, the babe in Christ must have proper exercise. This he gets in the public worship, his private devotions, and the various acts of Christian service. Every time he meets with the brethren and in true spirit engages in the divinely-appointed worship he is made stronger. Every temptation withstood, every distressed one comforted, every hungry one fed, every afflicted one relieved makes the one who does it stronger. The following incident, whether true or supposed, well illustrates this point: A man whose name was on the church book asked his preacher to take it off, giving as a reason that he thought there was a mistake about his religion, as he never derived any enjoyment from it. The preacher replied: "All right, but we will wait a few days. In the meantime I want you to take a little work off

my hands. In a certain street there is a poor widow, a member of our church, with a sick family. I want you to go and see about her needs and supply them.” He went, saw that want indeed was at the very door, procured the necessary food and medicine, and carried them to her. With tears of gratitude, she thanked him for his kindness, and then said: “We have had no one to pray with us in a long time, and I want you to read a chapter and pray before you leave.” He did so, and left with feelings different from what he had ever before experienced. He sought the preacher, thanked him for having committed that ministry to him, and withdrew his request for the erasing of his name. Many babes in Christ never grow out of their swaddling clothes simply for want of something to do, and many become sickly and die for the same reason. The wise shepherd is the one who leads his flock where there is pasturage for all, the lambs and aged alike; the wise overseer is the one who finds something for every member of the church to do. There should be no idle ones in the vineyard of the Lord; there should be no drones in the Lord's colony.

3. The babe in Christ needs a pure atmosphere. To have this, association has to be guarded. Many a young disciple is led astray by wicked associates. The young man—or old one, for that matter—who is wont to run with the “lewd fellows of the baser sort,” who obeys the gospel and does not withdraw

himself from such association, is sure to fall. As a rule, one is known by the company he keeps. It is much easier for a young person to stand firm in the faith and practice of the gospel in some communities than in others. The young convert needs to move in the atmosphere of sobriety, chasteness, piety, and devotion. This being so, it behooves every servant of Christ to do all he can to create in his community such an atmosphere. In a sense every one is his brother's keeper.

May God help every child of God to deeply feel his responsibility for the kind of moral atmosphere that pervades his community.

CHAPTER XXII.**The Worship.**

Duty grows out of relationship. When a new relationship is entered, new duties follow. The alien who is “reconciled to God in one body” is in a new relationship, and, therefore, has new duties devolving upon him. These duties are public and private, or congregational and individual. Of the first the duty of engaging in the worship in the assembly of the saints is chief. Man, by nature, is a worshipping being. The entire history of the human family shows this. No nation of people, however ignorant and debased, has ever been found but what had some form of religion, some idea of worship. Man needs not revelation to give him this idea, but needs it to teach him what and how to worship. In proof of this attention is called to the fact that no nation by its own wisdom has ever arrived at a knowledge of the one true and living God or discovered a correct form of worship.

Jesus says: “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:24.) All worship is not acceptable. Jesus again says: “Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”

(Mark 7:7.) These were worshiping; but as they were teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, their worship was vain.

Three things are essential to acceptable worship: (1) The right object; (2) the right way; and (3) the right motive, or spirit.

1. God alone is the true object of worship. Adoration of the Virgin Mary or of the saints is vain. When John fell down to worship before the feet of the angel that had shown him the wonders of the celestial city, the angel said: "See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God." (Rev. 22:9.) "Thou shall have no other gods before me," from the decalogue, is universal in its application.

2. In the truth—that is, as God has ordained— is the right way. This is both inclusive and exclusive. It includes every act God has commanded; it excludes every act he has not commanded. A man may burn incense, may build altars and offer thereon the firstlings of the flock, may make the sign of the cross and sprinkle holy water, and may climb Pilate's Stairway on his knees; but all this will not be acceptable worship, because God in the Christian age commands none of them.

Realizing to some extent its importance, the question is now raised: What acts of worship does God require of a Christian assembly? In order to understand fully "the word of reconciliation," we

placed ourselves in the company of the ambassadors for Christ, heard what they taught, and saw what the people did for a period of thirty years. To find an answer to our question, let us pursue a like course. We will first place ourselves with what Orchard calls “the first of Christian assemblies,” composed of those who “gladly received his word” on the first Pentecost after Jesus arose from the dead. There are two lessons in Christianity— one, to the unconverted; the other, to the converted. This is made clear by “the word of reconciliation” as recorded by Matthew (28:19, 20): “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” The writer of Acts seems to have had in view the presentation of the means and process of reconciliation more than the duties of Christians and their development in spiritual growth. For this reason his account of these is exceedingly brief. While he elaborated the first lesson and its results, he briefly states the results of the second lesson in these words: “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” (Acts 2:42.) This is not to be understood simply as the course of this church at the beginning, but describes its practice up to the writing of this book, thirty years afterwards. During this period hundreds of other local churches were formed, all of

which, from the best attainable accounts, conformed to the same system of worship. One item (singing—Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) not mentioned here seems to have been incorporated later. The right way, then, to worship is to continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine—that is, in teaching the word of God; to continue in the fellowship—that is, in a common participation in religious privileges, including the contributions for relief of the poor and for religious work; to continue in the breaking of bread, the Lord's Supper, and prayers. To my mind, those who would make a ritual here, who would always require the same order in these acts of worship, commit an error. Extremes should be avoided. It is wrong to set aside a divine regulation; it is equally wrong to make one where God has not and enforce it as a divine decree.

“The liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free” permits the church to have voluntary meetings for prayer and praise and for the study and teaching of the word of God; but there is a divinely authorized meeting in which the disciples engage in the acts of worship enumerated, the central one being the Lord's Supper. This meeting is upon the first day of the week. “And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow.” (Acts 20:7.) “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon

the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.” (1 Cor. 16:1, 2.) It was of this meeting that the apostle wrote: “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: . . . as ye see the day approaching.” (Heb. 10:25.) A few facts concerning this worship are clearly set forth in 1 Cor. 11 and 14:

1. The Lord's Supper is commemorative, reminding us of the sufferings of Christ. (Chapter 11:24.) Bread and wine are the emblems to be used, and that not to satisfy hunger.

2. The teaching must be in words that the people can understand, and thus be instructed and edified. (Chapter 14:9-19.)

3. Prayers must also be in a known tongue and in words that the people can understand, so that they can join in the petitions. (Chapter 14:16.)

4. So of the singing: it must be with the understanding—that is, so others can understand. “Let all things be done unto edifying” and “Let all things be done decently and in order” are rules laid down by the apostle concerning the worship that should be observed by all worshiping assemblies. It is well to keep in mind at all times that the end to be reached in this worship is the spiritual growth and development of the worshipers. A writer in the *Apostolic Church* for January, 1882, well says: “Not a single thing is required that is of an arbi-

trary character. The exhortations that we should not forsake 'the assembling of ourselves together,' or that we should 'pray without ceasing,' or that we should sing and make melody in our hearts to the Lord, or that we should 'remember the poor' and become cheerful givers and abound in every good work, are all for the one purpose of changing our selfish and carnal natures and filling us with the benevolent and loving spirit of Christ, without which God cannot be pleased with us. None of these things are intended to change or benefit God in the least. For these purposes they are intended for man, and man only. They are absolutely necessary to man's good and man's growth; and if we neglect these things or any part of them, we deprive ourselves of just so much spiritual food and retard our growth accordingly." God has wisely arranged these things. He knows man's wants. Men need the aid one of another, and to bring them into contact and sympathy God has ordained the assembly of the saints on the first day of the week. The acts of worship divinely given are in the highest degree adapted to the Christian's development. Who can on each Lord's day meet with his brethren, those he loves, engage with them in singing spiritual songs, together study the word of God, together bow in humble prayer and thanksgiving, together meet around the table and remember the sufferings and death of the Savior—while each, as the Lord has prospered him, contributes of his substance to

the relief of the poor and the spread of the gospel— and not feel himself made purer in heart, holier in life, and more devout in spirit by it?

5. The right spirit. Worship, in order to be acceptable, must be in the right spirit. It must spring from a deep sense of man's need, of his dependence, of his inferiority and God's superiority; it must be from the heart and in grateful recognition of God's goodness; it must be with a heart filled with love to God and bowed in reverential fear before him; it must be to honor God and secure his favor and blessings. Worship to be seen of men, to advance one's interests with men, or to please men, comes not from the right spirit and brings no blessing. The psalmist had the spirit of worship when he said: "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand." "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth."

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Lord's-day Meetings.

The Christian's spiritual development depends greatly on the way he spends the first day of the week, or the Lord's day. This latter term occurs but once (Rev. 1:10), but the consensus of religious teaching is that it refers to the first day of the week.

1. The Sabbath and the Lord's day are not the same. They are distinct in several particulars: (a) In time. The Sabbath was the seventh, or last, day of the week; the Lord's day is the first day, the day following the Sabbath. (Matt. 28:1.) (b) In commemorative character. The Sabbath was a memorial of God's rest after creation (Ex. 20:11); the Lord's day commemorates the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (Mark 16:9). (c) In the manner of observance. The Sabbath was observed by resting from all work (Ex. 31:15); the Lord's day, by meeting together to worship (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1). (d) In the persons to whom given. The Sabbath was given to the Jews (Ex. 31:16, 17; Neh. 9:14; Ezek. 20:12-20); the Lord's day is for Christians. None but Jews were ever required to keep the Sabbath, none but Jews were

ever reproved for its nonobservance; none but Christians—kings and priests unto God—can observe the Lord's day as a religious institution. (e) In the covenants to which they belong. The Sabbath belonged to the old covenant—that which was written on stones (Ex. 20:8; 34:28; Deut. 4:13); the Lord's day, to the new covenant. The Sabbath belonged to the covenant that was done away (2 Cor. 3:7); the Lord's day, to the one that remains (verse 11). In our country the Lord's day is both a civil and a religious institution. We observe it as a civil institution by resting from our secular labors, as the law of the land requires; we observe it as a religious institution by assembling together as Christians, as the law of the Lord requires, and engaging in the divinely-given order of worship, an important part of which is the Lord's Supper. The unconverted can observe the Lord's day as a civil institution by refraining from labor on that day; but not being worshipers of God, they cannot observe it as a religious institution. A Christian observes it as a civil ordinance by resting from secular affairs, but he does not observe it as a religious ordinance unless he assembles for worship. The Christian who ceases to labor on the Lord's day, but does not assemble for worship, shows greater respect for civil authority than for divine authority.

2. It would be hard to overestimate the Lord's day meetings as a means of growth in spirituality. As shown in a previous chapter, the church is a

school, and its members are in process of development for heavenly citizenship. There is nothing arbitrary in the Christian religion. Every ordinance, every institution, every precept, is given with man's spiritual needs and culture in view. The helpfulness of the Lord's-day meetings depends to a great extent on the way they are conducted. One receives a better spiritual impulse from a meeting conducted orderly, and where everything is done "heartily, as to the Lord," than where everything is done in a slipshod, dull, droning way. In Paul's day many were weak, sickly, and asleep because of the abuse of the Lord's Supper. (1 Cor. 11:30.) I am satisfied that many are in the same condition to-day because of the formal, cold, and lifeless manner of conducting the Lord's-day worship. Having had good opportunities for observation and having given much thought to the question, I beg leave to offer some suggestions that I trust will be helpful to those churches that depend upon themselves for edification: (a) The study of the Scriptures. The study and teaching of the Scriptures is a part of the work of the church when assembled. There are different methods of teaching. It can be done by speaking, as Paul did at Troas (Acts 20), or by asking and answering questions. God has not tied us to either method exclusively. As God has made no law on the subject, man should not presume to do so. Both methods are useful, and the circumstances should determine largely which method to

use. As a rule, the best results can be attained by employing both in the same meeting. Especially is this so if a leader is present who can speak to edification. The church is “the pillar and ground of the truth;” it is the light bearer to hold up the light of the gospel to the world. The apostles were required to “teach all nations.” (Matt. 28:19.) The things they taught are to be taught by “faithful men.” (2 Tim. 2:2.) Hence all who are in range, whether converted or unconverted, should be taught. Experience has demonstrated that, as a rule, the class method is the most efficient method of teaching a promiscuous crowd. This being so, classes should be formed according to advancement and put in charge of competent teachers. The lesson should be well studied beforehand, and the recitation should be conducted in a serious and thoughtful manner—and in a way, too, to impress the scriptural truths upon all. The time of recitation should not be so long as to weary the class, neither should it be so short as not to thoroughly impress scriptural truth. The one who leads the worship for the day should know beforehand, so he can prepare himself. The Jews were not allowed to bring unbeaten oil to be used in the tabernacle; no more should the leader go before the congregation without preparation, with undigested thoughts. These talks should be of such nature as to be food for the hungry soul. The teacher should remember that Jesus said, “Feed my sheep;” not: “Beat my sheep.” (b)

The prayers. At each service it would be more edifying to have a number of short, fervent prayers than one long one. On one occasion the disciples of Jesus said to him: "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." It is right, therefore, to study prayer, that one may pray with the understanding. The leader should pray in a voice loud and distinct enough for all to hear and understand. Some have the bad habit, when kneeling in prayer, of turning their faces from the audience or putting them down behind the seat and mumbling out their words in such an indistinct way that no one can understand, and, therefore, cannot intelligently say "Amen" to the prayer. Giving thanks for blessings received; confession of sin; and a petition for help, strength, and all needed blessings for the future, should be the burden of our prayers. (c) The song service. J. M. Kidwill, of blessed memory, used to say that the singing is the pulse of the congregation; that it indicates the spiritual condition, whether warm or cold. To say the least, the singing has much to do in making the hour of worship one of spiritual uplifting. The command to do a thing carries with it the obligation to learn how to do that thing. The command to be teachers obligates to learn how to teach; the command to pray, to learn how to pray; and so of the command to sing. The ability to do any of these things is not natural; it must be acquired. It is useless to object to choirs and special singers

when we ourselves make no effort to learn. One may be helped by hearing others sing, but not nearly so much as he would by heartily engaging in it himself. (d) The contribution. The religion of Christ is a system of philanthropy. It had its origin in the greatest gift the world has ever beheld—God's gift of his Son to redeem man. “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.” (2 Cor. 8:9.) The spirit of sacrifice is the spirit of the gospel. To give to the needy is twice blessed: it is a blessing to the one who receive and also to him who gives. Jesus teaches that it is even “more blessed to give than to receive.” The spirit of Christianity is the opposite of selfishness. The contribution in the Lord's day worship is for the good of others and cultivates in us an unselfish spirit. The culture we receive from it will be better by giving even small sums as we are able than by giving larger amounts only occasionally. Whatever the amount, the giving should not be done grudgingly, but cheerfully and of a ready mind.

3. The primary result of the Lord's-day meetings conducted as herein pointed out is the spiritual growth of the worshipers; the secondary result is to reach out and lead others to seek the salvation of their souls and the holy fellowship of the saints.

CHAPTER XXIV.**Growth in Christian Life.**

The statement was made in the preceding chapter that Christian duties are of two classes—congregational and individual. While this position, generally speaking, is true, there is a very close interlinking of these duties. They are really complementary of each other. A little over half a century ago the Fiji Islands were inhabited by cannibal tribes. God-fearing men carried the word of God there and began teaching it. Schools were established, in which children and others were trained in the rudiments of learning. Churches were also established. These and the schools were complementary of each other. The churches helped in building up schools; and, in turn, the schools opened the way for the enlargement of the churches. Through the joint work of these the people have been lifted to a plane of civilization heretofore thought to be impossible. So it is with the public and individual duties of the Christian. Faithful discharge of the public duties helps him in the individual ones. On the other hand, the Christian that is most faithful in the observance of the individual duties, as a rule, is the one who is most efficient in

the public duties—and the one, too, who is most benefitted by them. The effort to civilize the Fiji Islanders with the churches without the mental culture of the schools, or with this without the other, would have been equally vain. So it is in the development of Christian life. The one who attends to his public duties, but neglects the individual ones, or the one who is blameless in the individual duties, but negligent of the public ones, will never develop a full-rounded Christian character.

With these preliminaries, this chapter will be devoted to the consideration of the apostle's ladder, upon which those who enter the service of Christ must reach the everlasting kingdom. "And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your 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 Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. 1:5-11.) No one can

succeed in any useful calling without energy, perseverance, and diligence; much less can there be success in the Christian's calling without these. There are so many temptations to sin, man is so perverted in thought and life, and the culture required to prepare for heaven is so great that in the brief span of life here it will require his utmost endeavors to reach that state. The laggard can never do it. The word "faith" here covers the whole ground of obedience to the gospel. As your faith has led you into the kingdom of God here, add to that faith these Christian graces, and you will have an entrance into the everlasting kingdom, seems to be the apostle's idea.

One end of this ladder rests in the threshold of the earthly kingdom; the other end reaches into the everlasting kingdom. It has seven successive rungs —virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity. The Revised Version gives this rendering, "In your faith supply virtue," and so on. This being correct, the rungs of the ladder are reached successively. Reaching the first (virtue), the way is prepared for the next (knowledge), and so on until the last is reached. This clearly shows that the Christian life is a matter of growth. It would be as reasonable to expect a person who has been prostrate with fever for a month to have full physical strength the moment the fever is broken as to expect a child of God to

manifest the highest traits of Christian character the moment the power of sin in his life is broken.

1. Virtue. Words in a living language in process of time frequently change in meaning. "Virtue" now means "moral goodness," or "freedom from the sin of impurity;" when the King James Version was made, it meant "courage," or "boldness." Such is its meaning in the scripture quoted. Courage is essential to success in the Christian conflict— courage to resist and oppose the wrong, courage to stand by and support the right. The emissaries of Satan are everywhere. It is their delight to lead astray the children of God. Only those of nerve and courage can resist their blandishments. To those who have perverted tastes the intoxicating cup will be offered; to others, the pleasures of the dance; to others, "the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life;" and to others, the fascination of wealth. It requires courage on the part of him who has been in the habit of drinking to refrain when in the company of those who drink. The same is true of any other evil habit. So essential is courage to success in the Christian life that the apostle made it the first rung in his ladder to heaven.

2. Knowledge. Having courage, the disciple is prepared to take another step: add knowledge—not knowledge of the world, but of divine things, the word of God. Without this knowledge no one can reach the highest sphere of Christian perfection. The word of God is the spiritual seed from which

is developed, in its beginning, spiritual life. It is from it that subsequent growth is maintained. In the days of spiritual gifts the “word of knowledge” was given. Not so to-day. It can only be obtained by prayerful, thoughtful study of the Bible. It is the great repository wherein is the knowledge essential to Christian growth. It should be read, studied, and meditated upon every day.

3. Temperance. The disciple, being instructed in the word of God, can now go a step higher. “Temperance,” in its broadest acceptation, means self-control, moderation—moderation in eating, moderation in labor, moderation in speech, moderation in everything lawful. Some maintain that it is right to take the intoxicating cup occasionally, because we are commanded to be “temperate in all things.” This is a misapplication of the term. Bible temperance is the moderate use of that which is lawful and beneficial and total abstinence from that which is unlawful and injurious. This excludes the use of intoxicants even moderately. The only person who is secure from the terrible ruin that follows in the wake of drunkenness is the one who never drinks at all. It is time for all Christians to open their eyes to the fearful ruin being wrought by the drink habit and to go to work to create a public sentiment that will secure the youth of our country from temptation.

4. Patience. Trials are incident to this life. They are a part of the heritage of the Christian. It is

not God's purpose to lift man above the storm cloud, but to give him a safe anchorage, so he can hold on until its fury is spent. As he must meet trials and tribulations, the Christian will need to advance in spiritual culture until he has developed that degree of patience that will enable him to bear all these with an even mind, feeling that nothing can harm him if he follows that which is good.

5. Godliness. The next point to be reached in this upward ascent is godliness, which is simply piety and reverential fear. Without these no Christian life is what it should be. Man is prone to swing from one extreme to the other. From the extreme Puritanism of a former age he has gone to the extreme of lightness and levity that characterizes much of the worship and life of to-day. To approach God as though he were an equal or to flippantly speak of divine things is reprehensible in the extreme. Pharisaical deportment is wrong; but if a deeper reverence prevailed in the worship and conduct of Christians to-day than does prevail, it would be much better for the cause of Christ.

6. Brotherly kindness. The children of God sustain a very close relationship to each other. They are members of one body; they constitute one family. As members of the same family are expected to cherish love one for another, so must Christians. This love is not simply a sentiment, but a sentiment that manifests itself in actions. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his

life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” (1 John 3:16.) “Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.” (Verse 18.) This love of the brethren will lead each to have a due regard for the feelings of his brother, to protect him in life and property and defend him in reputation.

7. Charity—love, universal love, love for God and man. This is the last rung in the ladder, the crowning trait in the Christian character, the capstone in the Christian edifice. This Godlike attribute is only reached after a course of development in courage, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, and brotherly kindness. The one who has reached this height is prepared to have ministered unto him an abundant entrance “into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

CHAPTER XXV.

To Every Man His Work.

One of the lessons that every disciple needs to have indelibly impressed on his mind at the very outset is that the Christian life is one of activity. Every figure in the Bible descriptive of it indicates that. When that life is compared to a race, those in it “run;” when compared to a contest for the mastery, the contestants “strive;” when the figure is that of a soldier, he is represented as “fighting;” and when the church is compared to a vineyard, its members are laborers in that vineyard. People have sung so much about the “old Ship of Zion” and how she has “landed many thousands” that they conclude that all they have to do is to walk across the gang plank, take a seat in the cabin, and be carried right up without effort into the heavenly harbor. Some compare the church to a passenger car, and all one has to do is to buy his ticket, get aboard, and be whirled up to everlasting bliss. If the church is comparable to any kind of transportation, it is more like a hand car, upon which every passenger must take hold of the lever and bend his back to the work of propulsion. The church started over eighteen hundred years ago on its journey,

freighted with the richest of blessings for mankind. It has scattered these blessings with lavish hand along its course, and is in the world to-day with its store of blessings undiminished. It has not reached us without an effort. It has passed through many and serious conflicts, and is here to-day because of the devotion, trials, and sacrifices of godly men and women who have lived through all the past ages. It blesses man to-day, and will continue to do so only as its members give their time, means, and energies to its upbuilding.

Jesus, in his personal teachings, illustrated many features of the kingdom by parables. While the leading thought in the parable of the laborers in the vineyard (Matt. 20:1-16) is that the reward for work in the kingdom is out of proportion to the service rendered, it also teaches that God calls men into his kingdom not to loiter around in idleness, but to work, to work earnestly and faithfully. The laborers who were hired into the vineyard at the eleventh hour "wrought but one hour," and those who went in at the first hour bore "the burden and heat of the day." None were idle. Work is the order in every department of life. There is no standing still. Man is either advancing or retrograding. He grows to physical manhood through a struggle with forces that would retard his growth. The same is true in a spiritual sense. There are opposing forces on every hand. All along there are battles to be fought and victories to be achieved,

and it is only he that endures to the end that shall finally be saved.

There is every encouragement to faithfulness in Christian work. "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." (Heb. 6:10.) The apostle concludes his argument proving the resurrection of the dead in these encouraging words: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. 15:58.)

Diversity of Work.—Jesus (Mark 13:34-37) compares the church to "a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work." On his return this master of the house will hold each servant responsible for the work committed to him, and not for that which he committed to another. If the business prospers in the master's absence, it will be because each servant is faithful in the sphere in which he was placed. The church is compared to the human body. "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." (Rom. 12:4, 5.) Each member of the human body fills its own place. The hand does not do the work of the foot, neither does the foot do the work of the

hand; the eye does not perform the office of the ear, neither does the ear perform the office of the eye. A symmetrical body is one with all its parts perfect, and the one that fulfills its mission is the one that every member performs its part. So it is with the church. There is a variety of work to be done; hence persons of different gifts are requisite to its completeness. The talent of each member should be developed, and each should be encouraged to work in his sphere. To develop the talent of the church does not mean to make public speakers out of all its members. There is other work to be done that is just as essential to the upbuilding of the church as public speaking. The idea that speaking is a holier and more important work than other ministries has led to the craze for women in the pulpit. The gifted, but eccentric, Walter Scott visited a church that had adopted the custom of having every brother make a talk in the Lord's-day worship. He saw that such a course was not edifying, and remonstrated with them. In defense they pleaded the fact that the church was compared to the human body. In his broad Scotch accent he replied: "What would you think of a body that was all mouth?" While it is true that there are many who by practice could acceptably lead the public worship, there are many who could not; and it is an injustice to them and the church to require it of them. While they, then, cannot do this, there is other work equally important that they can do.

Whatever is a man's work, he should do it "heartily, as to the Lord," feeling that his success in the Christian life and upbuilding of the church depends on it.

A Hindrance to Growth.—Because they cannot do great things, many fail to do anything. They have never learned the lesson that even great things are an aggregation of little things. The ocean is made up of drops; the earth, of particles of sand; the cities, of separate houses; while a nation is made up of individuals. We should not despise "the day of small things." God was not in the wind that rent the mountains, nor the earthquake, nor the fire, but in "a still small voice." (1 Kings 19:11, 12.) Up in the Northeast is an immense cataract. The water of a great river pours over a high precipice. Tourists from far and near visit it annually and view with awe the mighty exhibition of power. It is, indeed, an immense flow of water, and is a mighty exhibition of the power and majesty of Him who created all things. Yet right around us there is a flow of liquid particles that if gathered together would equal in volume the flow of this immense cataract, and it is far more wonderful and beneficial in its effects; but of this we take no notice, because it "cometh not with observation." When the Sun comes back from his southern journey and with his vertical rays warms the earth, tiny streams of sap begin to flow through the pores of plants and trees and soon change the face of the earth. They flow

up the feeble stems of grass, and the earth is green; they flow up the stems of wheat, and the golden grain is ready for the harvest; they flow up the stalks of corn, and the pendant ears are matured; they flow up the stems of the orchard trees, and the luscious fruit hangs forth; they flow up the trunks of the forest trees, and the leafy boughs afford their cooling shade; they flow up the stalks of the tulip, the pink, the rose, and soon the beautiful flowers, "the alphabet of angels," exhale their fragrance. Thus in a short time a greater and more wonderful effect is produced than the great Niagara is capable of; yet we scarcely give it a thought, because it is so quietly done.

There is a great gathering of religious workers. Badges are seen everywhere, the streets resound with the melody of song, large assemblies listen to fine orations, and enthusiasm bubbles over. A great evangelist comes along, a great meeting is held, scores confess Christ, and we think that Satan will surely be dethroned; but soon things settle down as they were before. These all may have some effect, but the cause of Christ is advanced chiefly by humble, unobtrusive workers, whose names scarcely ever reach beyond their own horizon. The silent influence of pious, godly men and women is doing more to enlarge the borders of Christ's kingdom today than the great institutions and gatherings that make so much noise in the world.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Growth of the Kingdom.

“And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.” (Mark 4:26-28.) “Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.” (Matt. 13:31-33.)

The different features of the kingdom of heaven are illustrated by the different parables of Jesus. As a rule, each parable illustrates one particular feature, and to press it beyond this is to misuse the parable. The three parables quoted at the beginning of this chapter are closely related, in that they

illustrate features that are closely allied. The first shows its gradual development; the smallness in its beginning and its subsequent enlargement are illustrated by the second; while the third illustrates the growth by the influences going out from individual life and work.

1. As soon as man became a sinner, God graciously promised him a Redeemer (Gen. 3:15) and ordained remedial agencies adapted to his condition. These continued through the patriarchal and Jewish dispensations down to the coming of Christ. The seed of the kingdom was sown when this promise was made, and was in process of germination and growth until the full corn in the ear—the kingdom, with Jesus as King; the body of Christ, with him as Head, in which the Holy Spirit took up his abode—stood forth on the day of Pentecost.

2. The church began with one hundred and twenty disciples. This, indeed, was small, like a grain of mustard seed, when compared with the great number of mankind at that time. It was a drop in the ocean, a grain of sand on the seashore. Small in its beginning, like the mustard seed, it became a great tree; small, like the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, it became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. (Dan. 2:35.) This parable was prophetic, and is in process of fulfillment today. With no carnal weapons, but simply with the power there is in the simple story of the cross, within thirty years from its establishment, in spite

of the most bitter opposition, it spread throughout the Roman Empire.

3. From Jerusalem as a center the kingdom spread in every direction. It spread like leaven diffuses itself in the meal. When leaven—or “yeast,” to use a modern term—is put in meal, it first affects the particles that lie next to it; these become leavened, when they, in turn, leaven others; and thus the process goes on until the whole is affected. So it is with the kingdom. One man hears the word and is saved by it—becomes a Christian; through his teaching and influence his family is led to obedience, then a neighbor, then through the combined influence of these the community is leavened, and through this community other communities are reached; and thus the influence spreads like the leaven when put in the meal or like the waves when a stone is cast into a lake.

This influence of one in bringing another to Christ is illustrated in the case of Andrew. After finding Christ, he went and found his brother, Simon, and brought him to Jesus. (John 1:41, 42.) It is also illustrated in the case of Timothy, whose unfeigned faith dwelt in his grandmother, Lois, and in his mother, Eunice. (2 Tim. 1:5.) This leaven-like spread of the gospel from community to community is seen in the extension of the kingdom from Jerusalem. Temporarily abiding there were devout Jews from many nations. On, and subsequent to, the day of Pentecost a number of these were con-

versed. If not before, when the disciples were scattered by persecution at the time of the death of Stephen, they returned to their homes. Among the number were proselytes and Jews from Rome. Paul afterwards wrote a letter to the church at Rome, which was evidently formed by these. There were men also from Asia, Cappadocia, Pontus, and Galatia. Twenty-five years afterwards Peter wrote a letter to the elect ones in these provinces.

Under this head it is in place to consider this truth: God uses man in carrying on his work with man. This is not because of a lack of power or resources on God's part; but if God has tied himself to this method, it is not becoming in man to say: "Why doest thou?" In an important sense God has made each man his brother's keeper; in an important sense Christians are "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world." They are "laborers together with God;" they are to "lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees," and to make straight paths for their feet, "lest that which is lame be turned out of the way." Each man is responsible to God for the talent—which means ability and opportunity—that has been committed to him. The servant to whom was given one talent was to use that talent in increasing his master's goods as much as the one to whom were given ten talents. In the great conflict God is waging against the powers of Satan there is no neutral ground. When God led the army of Israel under Deborah,

the prophetess, and Barak, the judge, against the army of Jabin, king of Canaan—when the fight was for Israel's freedom—one city, Meroz, thought to save itself the sufferings and ravages of war by remaining neutral. In obedience to the bitter curse of the angel of the Lord for not coming up “to the help of the Lord against the mighty,” it was so utterly destroyed that its place soon ceased to be known. (Judy. 5:23.) Jesus said: “He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.” (Luke 11:23.) “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” (Matt. 6:24.) In secular or political affairs men can be neutral. They may ally themselves with neither party as they will, may render aid to neither side as they choose. Not so in the conflict for human redemption. Here there is no neutral ground. Every one is building up or pulling down.

God has ordained that the kingdom shall be spread by man influencing man, like the leaven affects the particles of meal. The entire history of the New Testament period shows this. There is not a recorded case of conversion where human agency was not used. It was called into requisition in those cases where the circumstances seemed to demand otherwise. Philip had to leave a successful work and make a long journey, that the Ethi-

opian traveler might be led “out of darkness into light;” when, in the presence of the risen Savior, Saul, the persecutor, asked the question, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” he was told to go to Damascus, there to have the answer from a man; notwithstanding an angel came and spoke to Cornelius, he must send a four-days’ journey for a man to tell him “what he ought to do;” and when God saw that in Philippi there were those who would serve him, he guided the steps of Paul to that place, that he might speak unto them “the word of the Lord.” The kingdom of heaven is, indeed, like leaven that is put in three measures of meal until the whole is leavened.

Jesus requires that wherever the gospel is preached, the good deed of the woman in pouring a box of precious ointment on his head shall be told as a memorial of her. (Mark 14:9.) Justifying myself by this and to further illustrate the leaven-like spread of the kingdom, I give the short history that follows:

About 1831 Henry Dean, a comparatively young man then, who lived on the headwaters of Flat Creek, near the southern border of Bedford County, Tenn., having become a Christian only, called together a few humble persons of like faith and began to worship as a simple church of Christ. They were weak in number, but strong in faith. They were surrounded by opposition, with no supporting brotherhood near; but, trusting in the power of

truth, they began the seemingly unequal contest. A small amount of leaven was deposited in a large amount of meal. The leaven began to work. One neighbor after another, one family after another, was reached until the leaven of simple Christianity pervaded the whole community. The church thus started has had a continuous existence, dominates the community, and is stronger in all the elements that constitute a church to-day than at any period of its existence. There are few better country churches than New Hermon. But the work did not stop there. Seekers after truth came over from Lynchburg, a few miles away, and were leavened. They, in turn, leavened their community; and a church that has a good record was established and exists there to-day. The leavening influence went on, conjointly with influences from another direction, and Richmond had a church of Christ. The leaven reached out in another direction, and there are churches to-day at Chestnut Ridge and Stony Point. Business interests carried some of the members to Fayetteville. In conjunction with those from another locality, the leavening work commenced, and the church there is the result. The leaven reached out north, and a church came together at Flat Creek that has not failed to meet for worship on a single Lord's day for a third of a century. Not to be tedious, those who are old enough and have watched the course of events can see that influences starting from this original center have

contributed wholly or in part to the establishment of churches at Shelbyville, Singleton, County Line, Tullahoma, Winchester, and perhaps other places not here enumerated. But this work stops not in this circle; it reaches to other States. I have personal knowledge of at least three churches in Alabama that came into existence in part through disciples who went out from here. Corinth, in Howard County, Ark., with its splendid record of half a century and its six or seven daughters in surrounding regions, owes its existence mainly to a humble blacksmith who went out from this original church into that country when it was a wilderness. A number of faithful disciples worshiping at Allen, Okla., can trace their spiritual lineage back to this original center. In addition to all this, the writer personally knows, or knew, fourteen preachers, representing six different States, twelve of whom are living and actively engaged in the ministry of the word, who are what they are to-day, to a great extent, as a result of the work begun in a humble way in 1831 by Henry Dean and his few associates.

This is written as a memorial of a good work and to encourage others not to be weary in well-doing, being assured that in due season they will reap if they faint not. (Gal. 6:9.)

CHAPTER XXVII.**The Relation of the Christian to the World.**

In the days of the apostles there were two classes —”servants of sin” and “servants of righteousness,” the world and the church. These two classes exist to-day, and will continue until man's probation is ended. This is shown by the parable of the wheat and tares. (Matt. 13:24-30.) A man sowed good seed in his field; and while he slept, an enemy sowed tares. These came up with the good seed; and when the servants saw both growing together, they wanted to root up the tares. This the master would not allow, saying that in gathering the tares they would root up the wheat, but directed that both be allowed to grow together until the harvest, when the separation would be made. In the New Testament Scriptures the word “world” means the globe upon which we live, and sometimes it means the unbelieving part of mankind. Jesus, in explaining the parable, says that the field in which the wheat and tares were growing is the world, using the term in the first sense (verse 38), and that the harvest is the end of this world; that then the reapers (angels) will gather the wheat and tares (righteous and wicked) together, and the separation will

be made. While the parable primarily sets forth the work of the angels, it also shows that the “servants of sin” and the “servants of righteousness” will be here in the world together, and that no violent means should be used to get rid of the wicked.

The relation of the Christian to the world (unbelievers) is a nice problem in Christian casuistry. Extreme ground either way is dangerous. Jesus, in praying for his apostles, said: “I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil.” (John 17:15.) They had a work to do in the world and for the world. A hermit-like, monkish life is just as contrary to the spirit of Christianity as a life of riot with the ungodly. The great gulf stream flows through the ocean. Its waters do not become incorporated with the surrounding waters, yet they temper them with their warmth. So it should be with Christians passing through the world: they should not become amalgamated with it, but should scatter blessings as they go.

1. The alien and the citizen of the kingdom are on the same plane in some respects: (a) As physical beings, they have the same wants, are subject to the same physical laws. Both require food to give strength, water to allay thirst, clothing to protect the body, pure air to breathe, and houses to protect from the weather. To secure these, labor and money (or its equivalent) are necessary. (b) The law of labor is binding on both classes, is universal

in its application. The law under which Adam was placed immediately after the fall—"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground" (Gen. 3:19)—is binding on all his posterity. This law of labor applies to both alien and citizen, because the well-being of both alike demands the fruits of labor. This law of labor to the Christian is repeated in various forms in the New Testament: "Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord." (Rom. 12:11.) "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." (Eph. 4:28.) "And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing." (1 Thess. 4:11, 12.) "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread." (2 Thess. 3:10-12.) From this universal law it follows that Christians, of necessity, are related to the world in business affairs. Business transactions will bring them in contact. While it may be true that in business affairs Christians

should give preference to Christians, yet they are permitted to have business relations with those that are without, but must deal honestly toward them. (1 Thess. 4:12.) (c) While it is the Christian's duty to work and he is permitted to have business relations with the world, there are restrictions thrown around him in his choice of avocations. "Let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good" (Eph. 4:28), is the divine law. There are many kinds of business legalized by the laws of State that the Christian cannot engage in. He is restricted in choice to those which are good. There are kinds of business that are helpful to the community; the Christian can engage in these. There are kinds that are hurtful; he cannot engage in such. He can cultivate a farm, run a mill, build houses, run a cotton or wool factory; be a blacksmith, merchant, physician, dentist, teacher; or engage in many other intellectual or industrial pursuits, because they are "good." He cannot make or sell intoxicating liquors; he cannot keep a gambling house, a house of prostitution, a race track for gambling purposes, or anything of like nature. Though authorized by State law, they debauch and corrupt the community. These are Satan's most efficient agencies in destroying the bodies and souls of men, and the Christian who engages in any of these is a coworker with him in seeking man's ruin. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye

separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.” (2 Cor. 6:17.)

2. The Christian is socially related to the world. (a) Hermits and anchores make a mistake. Instead of stealing away to some mountain cove or secluded spot to live lives of religious contemplation, Christians should go where the busy throngs of men and women are to be found and engage actively in the religious work of helping them in the struggle of life and making them better. One burdened heart relieved, one tear of sorrow wiped away, one mourning soul comforted, one naked one clothed, one hungry child fed, or one darkened mind led into the light, is far more pleasing to God than a thousand groans and prayers issuing from a monastic cell. “Ye are the salt of the earth; . . . ye are the light of the world.” Salt in the barrel will not preserve the meat on the platform. They must be brought in contact, and the salt must to some extent impart its properties to the meat. So the Christian hid away in some lonely dell will save no one. He must come in close contact with those to be saved, and must impart, in a sense, his properties to them. When salt loses its saltness, becomes of like nature with the corruptible matter to be saved, it is worthless. So the Christian, in order to have a saving influence over the world, must come in contact with it; yet if he loses his distinctive nature and becomes like the world, then his power for good is gone. He who would save

the world must not walk with the world in “lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revelings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.” “The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.” (2 Tim. 2:24-26.) (b) This social relationship allows the Christian to mingle with the unbelievers in their feasts, but forbids his doing anything while there that would be a recognition of wrongdoing. (1 Cor. 10:27, 28.) There are general principles laid down in the Scriptures that will enable the Christian to determine just how far he may go in the social affairs of life. Jesus taught, “By their fruits ye shall know them;” Paul, that the things that are not of good report are to be avoided. Are such things as the promiscuous dance, card parties, and other amusements of like nature, of good report? If not, Paul's rule excludes them. Are those who engage in them made more devotional? Are their spiritual ideas enlarged? Are they more helpful in religious work? Are they the better prepared to be helpful to the sick and suffering? Does the light of Christianity shine out from their lives more brilliantly from such participation? If not, the rule Jesus gives forbids the Christian's engaging in them.

There is much foolishness in the world about recreation and pastime. The demands on the Christian are too great to fritter away life's precious moments in idle amusements for recreation and pastime. Life passes away so rapidly that death will be at the door before our work is half done and before we are half prepared for the society of the holy throng around the throne of God. May God help all Christians to be "blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation," shining among them "as lights in the world."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Lessons from a Successful Christian Life.

“Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.” (Phil. 3:17.)

Man is an imitative being, and all to-day are what they are, to a great extent, from the example of others. The constitution of the human mind is such that one, as a rule, learns more readily from example than from precept. Nine out of ten in a class of pupils will get a clear understanding of the principles of an arithmetical rule by seeing problems demonstrated on the blackboard where one will from the rule given. To the mass of the people historical and biographical works are more interesting than theoretical works; the masses, too, learn principles from those more readily than from these. God created the human mind and knows its characteristics and has adapted his revelation to these characteristics. For this reason much the larger part of the Bible is history and biography. As said above, men are what they are, to a great extent, through the example of others. One need not come in personal contact to be influenced by another; this can be done by hearing of or reading one's life.

While many have been led to perform deeds of daring by the example of cool courage of heroes present, many more have perhaps been led to do so through the example of renowned heroes whom they have never seen; many have been led into lives of sin and debauchery, or of purity, integrity, and uprightness, by personal contact with associates; while many others have led lives of good or evil from reading of the deeds of men whom they have never met. Men are made better by reading such works as the "Life of Elder John Smith;" they are made worse by reading books that relate the deeds of murderers and thieves. Parents ought to be very careful about the literature they allow in the hands of their children.

The religion of Christ is taught by precept and example. The theory of Christianity is taught in the precepts of the Bible and illustrated by practical examples. Take out of the Bible every precept, and leave its history and biography, and Christianity could still be learned; the kind of life God approves would still stand out clearly. It was not egotism in Paul when he said to the brethren: "Be followers together of me." He knew his own life and man's proneness to take some one for an example. Of all the heroes of faith in the New Testament I know of no one from whose life more helpful lessons of instruction can be drawn than Paul. He was of pure Jewish stock; was a native of Tarsus, a city of Cilicia; and was designed by his par-

ents for the position of Jewish rabbi. At an early age he was placed in the school of Gamaliel, the most renowned teacher among the Jews at Jerusalem. Here he was brought up in the most perfect manner of the law. His traits, natural and acquired, fitted him to be a leader among men. The first account we have of him, he, though a young man, was a leader in the persecution of the disciples. When the blood of Stephen, the first martyr, was shed, Paul was consenting unto his death, and held the clothes of those who slew him; he made havoc of the church; entering into every house and dragging out men and women, he committed them to prison; he was exceedingly mad against the disciples, and breathed out slaughter against them. It was while on a mission of murder that he was arrested in his mad career, and was influenced to accept the gospel as a divine revelation. From being one of the most relentless opposers of the religion of Christ, he at once became its most active propagator. The very traits of character that made him a power in opposition made him a power in support of the gospel. His work lasted for more than thirty years. He was more "abundant in labors" than any of the apostles, made more and longer preaching tours, preached to more people and under more various circumstances, was the means of the conversion of more people than any of the others, and has been the most potent instrument in shaping human affairs of any man who has lived in this era.

A Christian life so varied and so successful is worthy of emulation. A few points out of the many will here be presented:

1. Paul was a positive man; he had the courage of his convictions, and he always made his practice correspond to his theory. You always knew where he stood; he was never on the fence waiting to see which was the popular side before he got down. When he tells us that he thought he “ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth,” in the very next sentence he says: “Which thing I also did.” When convinced that Jesus was the long-looked-for Messiah, he “conferred not with flesh and blood,” but straightway preached Jesus—that he was the Christ. He did not go back to Jerusalem to ask his people what he should do, but obeyed at once, and began to preach the faith which he had tried to destroy. Men of positive convictions, like Paul, are the ones who “turn the world upside down” and leave their impress upon society.

2. He is a model in activity and singleness of purpose. Singleness of purpose is essential to succeed in any department of life. Very few are so wonderfully endowed as to be able to make a success of more than one vocation at a time. The “jack at all trades” is, as a rule, “good at none.” The average man must confine himself to one calling, and must bring to bear all his energies to succeed in that. Paul describes his course in these words: “Breth-

ren, I count not myself to have apprehended [or made a success]: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 3:13, 14.) With him everything must bend to the supreme purpose of making a success of the Christian life. He here compares his course to that of a contestant in the Isthmian games. Those who ran for the prize there never loitered, never idled by the way, but, with faces square to the front, stretched every nerve and muscle to its utmost tension to gain the prize. So did Paul in the Christian race.

3. He is an example in fidelity to the word of God. To the Ephesian elders he said: “Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.” (Acts 20:26, 27.) Let all, then, in humility of mind and in the spirit of the Master, in pursuance of this example, faithfully preach and teach all things that “pertain unto life and godliness.”

4. Paul is an example in enduring trials and persecutions. “Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place; and labor, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it.” (1 Cor. 4:11, 12.) When undergoing afflictions, such as few

have ever been called upon to endure, he could say: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." (2 Cor. 4:17.)

5. Paul is an example in willingness to suffer loss for Christ. "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." (Phil. 3:8.) Too many are not willing to follow Christ if it requires the sacrifice of property, ease, or friends. Jesus gave up all the glories and riches of heaven and became so poor that he had not where to lay his head, that man might become rich in a spiritual inheritance. So man should, if necessary, give up all things for the Master's cause.

6. Paul is an example in that, while living the Christian life, he guarded his influence. There is no telling the power of influence; it is far-reaching. Cast a pebble into the middle of a pond, and at first a wave starts out that can be encompassed by the hand; but it will gradually grow larger and larger, until it breaks on the extreme shore. So men, by their everyday actions in life, are putting in operation influences for good or evil that will reach to the farther-off shores of eternity. Fifty years ago in a certain community there lived a man of means, of some noble traits, but a scoffer at religion. He was genial in disposition, and was very hospitable. He was very fond of the company of young people,

and his leisure and wealth enabled him to afford many means of enjoyment. Scarcely a week passed without a gathering of the young people at his house, and it was then—

On with the dance!
Let joy be unconfined;
No sleep till morn,
when youth and pleasure meet
To chase the glowing hours with flying feet.

Drinks of all kinds were supplied, and no limit was set to any one's indulgence. This course, pursued for a number of years, put in operation influences that developed one of the most godless communities the country has ever seen. That man passed away many years ago, better influences have been at work, and the moral aspect has greatly changed for the better; yet, as a result of that man's influence, there are to-day in that community immoral persons who have been born since his death. There are things that are not harmful in themselves that Christians should refrain from doing because of the evil influence that might follow. Paul teaches this truth in his reasoning on the subject of eating meats offered in sacrifice to idols. Those who had knowledge could eat the meat, simply as meat, without injury to themselves; but their example might lead the unlearned to eat as a sacrifice, and thus the weak brother, for whom Christ died, would perish. In view of this, Paul said: "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth." Because Christians have not always been

thus careful of their influence, many have been led to ruin. The following is a true circumstance, and it fully illustrates this last statement: In a certain town, a short time after the close of the Civil War, two boys, between sixteen and twenty years of age, were standing on the sidewalk in front of a drink shop. They were discussing the propriety of going in and taking a drink—one, insisting; the other, objecting, saying that they had been taught it was wrong. The latter's argument prevailed; and, deciding not to do so, the two boys turned to walk away. Just then three prominent citizens from the same community, sober members of a church, having ridden into town and hitched their horses on a back street, walked into the drink shop without hesitation and took drinks. When they came out and passed on, the boy who had proposed drinking said: "Did you see that? There are not three better citizens in all our country than they are. That is not as bad a thing as we have been taught, or they would not have done it." He again proposed that they go in and drink, his companion yielded, and thus each of these boys took his first drink at a public bar. What was the result? These boys stood there at the parting of the ways. Through the example of these old men they took the downward way; both became drunkards, and died from the effects of drink, comparatively young, led to ruin by the example of men who died in the fellowship of the church. Had these old men been as

careful of their example as Paul was, these boys would never have been started to ruin by them.

7. Finally, Paul is an example to us, in that he was willing to give up all things, even life itself, for Christ. This last he cheerfully did. Brought before Nero a second time, sentence of death is passed upon him. He is now bent with age. The dust of time is upon his threadbare garments, the scars of many a conflict are upon his body; but he is the same intrepid warrior that he has ever been. His heart turns to the loved ones who will be left to continue the battle for human redemption, and he sends them this message of hope and triumph: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (2 Tim. 4:6-8.) Here inspired history ends, but tradition tells us that almost by the time the ink was dry upon the parchment on which these words were written a band of soldiers led Paul out of the city, and there, kneeling down upon the green sward, with a look of tenderness, he repeated the apostolic benediction: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." The executioner's sword gleamed forth in the sunlight, Paul's head rolled upon the grass, and the hero of the ages was absent from the body and present with the Lord.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Lessons from a Failure in the Christian Life.

Whenever a person embarks in a new business or undertakes a new enterprise, it is wise to study the methods of those who have preceded in the same kind of business or in the same kind of enterprise. If the preceding ones have been successful, then it is well to pattern after them; on the other hand, if they have been unsuccessful, then the cause of failure should be ascertained and their wrong methods avoided.

The “vocation wherewith” Christians are called stands preeminently above any of the avocations of earth; greater is the gain when a success is achieved, and greater is the loss when a failure is made. A man may succeed in a business undertaking, and the fruits of success may not bring joy or happiness; on the other hand, a man may make an utter failure, the money and the time put into the enterprise may be a complete loss, yet in the end he may find that, in his case, failure was better than success. Not so in the Christian calling. Success here means untold blessings through all the ages of eternity; failure means untold misery through a like period. In the New Testament are

to be found both classes—those who succeeded and those who failed. In a former chapter the apostle Paul was presented as an example of a successful Christian life, and an effort was made to ascertain the methods used by him. The purpose of this chapter is to gather some lessons that will be helpful from the life of one who failed. Paul, in his preaching tours, always had a greater or less number of companions with him. These were generally young preachers—such as Timothy, Titus, Crescens, and others. During his first imprisonment at Rome, as related in Acts 28, he dwelt in his own hired house, and had some of these companions with him, who were helpful to him in the ministry. One of these was Demas. When Paul wrote his letter to the Colossian brethren, Demas joined in with Luke, the beloved physician, in sending greeting. (Col. 4:14.) In that tender, courteous letter to Philemon, entreating kindness for the converted slave, Onesimus, Paul mentions him as a fellow-laborer in connection with Mark, Aristarchus, and Luke. The term “fellow-laborer” implies that Demas was a preacher, as were the others. Demas, then, up to the close of Paul's first imprisonment, was a preacher whom Paul considered worthy of special mention. Paul had been a prisoner at Rome for two years when Luke closes his narrative (Acts 28); but from the letters to Timothy and Titus it is clear that he was released and made some extensive tours, during which time he wrote the first let-

ter to Timothy and the one to Titus. He is then made a prisoner again. This time he is treated not as an honorable prisoner, but as a felon. (2 Tim. 2:9.) Sentence of death was passed upon him, but before its execution he was allowed to write a second letter to Timothy. Here, again, and for the last time, Demas is mentioned; but how sad the statement when contrasted with the former allusions to him: "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica!" (2 Tim. 4:10.) John says: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John 2:15.) Jesus says: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Matt. 6:24.) "Demas hath forsaken me" means more than a mere separation from the companionship of Paul. Mammon, love of the world, led to his course, and it was an open forsaking of the religion of Christ, as well as of Paul.

This is a short history, but it teaches a number of important truths:

1. It teaches the freedom of the will. Demas acted voluntarily; there was no overshadowing force that compelled his will. He cultivated the love of the world, and allowed this love of the world to influence his action. That man's will is free is a well

settled fact in every man's consciousness; that man has power of choice is attested by numerous passages of scripture. Moses, in his farewell address, said: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." (Deut. 30:19.) Joshua, addressing the children of Israel for the last time, said: "Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth.

And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve: . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Josh. 24:14, 15.) These great teachers were not tantalizing the people when they entreated them to choose whom they would serve. This same truth is taught in the New Testament. Jesus said: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11:28.) The word "come" carries with it the idea of volition. Again, Jesus said: "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." (John 5:40.) "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matt. 23:37.) Paul said: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey?" (Rom. 6:16.)

2. It teaches the possibilities of apostasy. Demas ceased to be what he had been as a Christian, had imbibed more of the love of the world; therefore, in a degree at least, he had apostatized. Apostasy to the extent of being lost is possible. If not so, then man in the process of conversion loses the power of choice; with him the will is no longer free. If apostasy is not possible, the following, as well as many other, passages of scripture are meaningless: "But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned; in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die." (Ezek. 18:24.) "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." (1 Cor. 10:12.) "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." (Heb. 3:12.) "Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." (Heb. 4:11.) "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." (2 Pet. 1:10.) "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning."

(2 Pet. 2:20.) “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.)

3. Apostasy is always gradual; no one crosses the whole distance that lies between an earnest, devoted life and that of a disorderly one at one bound. There are certain symptoms that presage apostasy; a disposition to find fault with everybody and everything is one, extreme sensitiveness is another. That brother who ceases to meet and work with the congregation because he thinks he is neglected fin on the road to apostasy, open and ruinous; his only hope is to turn back. Repeated absence from the assembly of the saints, with no hindering cause, is a pretty sure sign that the love of the world is taking the place of the love of Christ and his service. The time to check apostasy is in its earlier stages. Often a break in the levee of the great river could, in its first stages, be stopped with one shovelful of earth; but, if neglected, it becomes a great opening, through which flows a flood that inundates the country. So it is “in departing from the living God.” The erring one can easily be turned from his apostate course at first; but when he has become confirmed in an evil life, it is frequently too late.

4. This little history teaches that in our actions in life we are often controlled more by our likes and dislikes than by our reason or judgment. There

is nothing to indicate that the judgment of Demas had changed, no intimation that he had ceased to believe the gospel or to regard Paul as a Heaven-inspired teacher. He simply allowed the love of the world to grow upon him until it overbalanced his love for Paul and the cause he represented; hence he forsook him. A young man, a good worker, but of convivial habits, had employment in a neighborhood where he had a number of boon companions. Not a week passed but a night or more there was a gathering of these, and, when together, they always had a hilarious time of it. The young man's contract expiring there, he secured a place with a man in a community some distance away. He engaged himself for a certain length of time. His surroundings here were wholly different; there were no companions like those in the other neighborhood, no places of resort, and hence no nights of revelry. The people with whom he now lived were very kind, treated him as a son, did not require unreasonable work, and paid him his wages promptly. There being no opportunity to spend it, he was saving the money he received. About a month before his time expired he said to his employer: "You will have to get another hand; I am going to leave you." "Why," said his employer, "what is the matter? Have we not treated you right?" "O. yes," replied the young man; "I have not a word of complaint to make. I know as well as you do that it is better for me to stay here and,

when the day's work is over, go to bed and sleep, as I do, and to save my wages, as I am; but I like the other life better, and I am going." He was not singular in his conduct. Many, even in their actions about matters of eternal interest, exemplify the truth of the couplet:

We know the right, approve it, too; Condemn the wrong, yet the wrong pursue.

This solves many riddles, explains many inconsistent actions. A man drinks, carries long at the wine," until he wastes his property, breaks the heart of his wife, brings his children down to rags and tatters, defrauds his creditors, alienates his friends, destroys his body, and damns his own soul; but ask him at any stage of his downward course, and he will tell you that he knows a sober life would be infinitely better—better for him, better for his family, and better for his community. Why, then, does he do it? There is only one possible explanation: He likes it better. Every one will concede that man's mental faculties are superior, infinitely so, to the physical. On the one hand, there is a lecture or a literary exercise that would develop the mind; on the other hand, there is an athletic game that is purely physical—aye, sometimes brutal—yet the few attend the former; the many, the latter. Why so? They like it better. A meeting is going on; the songs, the prayers, the edifying sermons, and the sweet fellowship of the saints are

lifting men up to a higher plane, a holier atmosphere; but the great circus comes—with its spotted horses, its clown with last year's jokes, its trained riders, its ground and lofty tumblers, and its bejeweled women; and—10!—the meeting is left and the circus is attended. Why so? Only one answer is possible: They like it better. There was much human nature in that young man's remark.

5. Finally, taste can be cultivated. This is true alike in physical, mental, and moral things. There are certain kinds of food that, at first, are distasteful, but, by continued use, become palatable. One can cultivate a taste for refined or rude society, as he chooses; the same is true of wicked or religious company. A person can cultivate a taste for light, trashy literature, or for that which is instructive and helpful. Sin may be abhorrent at first, but one may so familiarize himself with it that much of its ugliness disappears.

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien As, to be hated, needs but to be seen; But, seen too oft, familiar with its face, First we pity, then endure, then embrace.

When one first enters into the church, for a time the simple service of the Lord's house may not be interesting, may be even irksome; but by a steadfast continuance in meeting with the brethren and participating in the service he will become so enraptured with it that no ordinary hindrance will keep

him away. Earthly pastimes will lose much of their charm, and he can appropriate to himself the language of the psalmist: “A day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.” (Ps. 84:10.)

CHAPTER XXX.

Good from Seeming Evil.

“But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel.” (Phil. 1:12.)

Man is shortsighted, restless, and impatient. He lays his plans for the future—how he shall attain the end desired; but his best-laid schemes will “gang oft agley.” Then he becomes restless and peevish, and concludes that providence and everything else is against him. He considers the causes as evil, and only evil, that brought about his failure; but as time goes on he finds that this seeming evil was for his good. The quotation with which this chapter begins was written by the apostle Paul while a prisoner at Rome, and it refers to his imprisonment. The supreme purpose of Paul's life was to preach the gospel. He was “more abundant in labors” than any of the apostles. He was never happier than when engaged in the work. There was a very tender relationship between him and the brethren at Philippi. They were in sympathy with him in his work and rejoiced with him in his success. When he was arrested and carried away

and placed in prison at Rome, they sorrowed with him—not specially because of the physical sufferings incident to imprisonment, but because, from a human standpoint, it seemed he would no longer be a factor in the propagation of a cause they all so dearly loved. A year's experience in prison at Rome has shown him how utterly groundless were their fears, and he writes them the cheering words that instead of his imprisonment's circumscribing his work, it had “fallen out . . . unto the furtherance of the gospel.” How could this be and he a prisoner?

1. Paul was allowed unusual liberties for a prisoner. He was allowed to dwell in his own hired house, to receive the ministries of his brethren, and to preach to all that came unto him. Much publicity was given to his imprisonment. Rome was then the capital city of the world, and visitors came there from various parts of the empire. Many of these, no doubt, being attracted by the fame of the prisoner, went to see him. From him they heard the gospel, and carried a knowledge of it to their far-off homes.

2. There were timid disciples then, as there are to-day. Paul's firmness and fearless manner gave courage to these, who, waxing confident, began to speak the word without fear.

3. Paul had enemies there. These, hoping to make his prison life harder, began to preach the

gospel also. While their motive was bad, those who heard were benefitted.

4. Being confined at one place, Paul had time to write a number of the books that go to make up the New Testament Scriptures. All of this, indeed, instead of hindering Paul's work, simply enlarged his field of labor. Surely God knows how to make the wrath of man to praise him.

The truth here developed is in perfect harmony with our everyday observation and experience in life.

1. There comes a severe drought. Crops are cut short, and food stuffs for man and beast are scarce. The people complain, thinking that irreparable injury to their material interests will follow. Afterwards it is found that the fields were enriched by the drought; and having learned lessons of economy, frequently a tide of prosperity such as they had never known sets in. A long season of financial depression is always followed by more prosperous times.

2. The boy that is reared in poverty, having to bear privation and the burdens of labor, envies the easy and unrestrained life of his wealthy neighbors; yet in the course of time it is found that what he thought was evil, and only evil, was for his good. The life of toil and self-denial developed in him a manhood that led to success in life; while the others, by idleness and ease, became enervated and were simply nonentities. The burden of labor and

self-denial fell to my lot in life. From early life my strength was taxed from “early morn to dewy eve” on a stony farm. I had but few holidays; and, with bitter repinings, I envied the more fortunate boys, as I thought, of the community. What I then thought was evil I now see was good. I feel to-day that if I have ever been anything in life I owe it to the self-denial and discipline of my youth.

3. Before the war between the States, in one of the fertile valleys of Tennessee, there lived a prosperous business man. He was owner of a fine farm and of slaves to cultivate it. In addition, he was profitably engaged in merchandising. He was a man of dignified bearing, with a mind well cultured for his opportunities. Around him was gathered an interesting family. He was an ardent politician. His time and the best thoughts of his life were given to his business and politics. When the strife between the sections developed into a war, with all his ardent nature he espoused the Southern cause. His cause was lost; and four years of devastating war, the marching and countermarching of armies through his region, swept away his property, leaving him in his old age broken in health and penniless. His idols were shattered, and for a time he brooded gloomily over his misfortune. No silver lining appeared in the cloud that hung so heavy over his head. As the strained bow must be unbent, so he at last sought relaxation in something

new to him—the reading of the Bible. Gradually his mind was drawn away from his worldly misfortunes and became deeply interested in the wondrous things in that most wondrous book. His life had been wholly absorbed in business; and he, therefore, had no religious prejudice to overcome. He accepted the truth as he read it. One day he said to a neighbor: “I wish I could find somebody that preaches that book as I read it.” He told how he understood men were saved. “Why,” said the neighbor, “if you will go to a certain place at a certain time, you can hear a man who preaches that way.” He went, and came away happy in the thought that he had found a people who believed as he did. Soon after this he made a journey of twenty-five miles on horseback to obey the gospel, and thus became a Christian only. During the remainder of his life he had great peace of mind; was a happy, pious, God-fearing, and devoted Christian. Not long before his death he spent a week with the writer where he was holding a meeting. It was then that he related the facts of his life as here given. “I felt,” he said, “that I was ruined when my property was taken and my political idols broken; but what I then thought was evil I now see was good. Had no reverses ever come, I should never have given a thought to religion; and instead of grieving over that loss, I thank God for it. I have no money; I am dependent on my children for the food I eat and the clothes I wear; but I am a

happy man. I am near my end; and, through the grace of God, I am sure heaven is my home.”

4. An excerpt from my own experience enforces in my case the truth designed to be set forth in this chapter. In my boyhood I had an ambition. In my daydreams I saw myself in an office in a town or city. Around me were many volumes of legal lore. I saw myself in the crowded courtroom and heard myself plead the cause of my client before judge and jury. I saw large fees from grateful clients. To be a lawyer was the ambition of my life. All my reading and study was with that in view. The war cloud burst upon us. In company with most of the young men in the country, I became a soldier. Returning home after a service of four years, I found many changes, but no abatement in my ambition. A man—a rising young lawyer—who had become my friend during the war, and who afterwards stood in the forefront of the profession in the State, made me a flattering proposal, opening the way for me to gratify my long-cherished desire. He offered me a home while taking an additional literary course and while pursuing my law studies, and, when prepared to begin the practice, to admit me to a partnership with himself. A person who has never had a burning ambition for years to be a certain thing can have no conception of the temptation these propositions were to me. My strong desire pulled me in the direction of accepting the very liberal offer, but duty directed me

in another direction. My father and mother were old. The misfortunes of war had left orphaned children to their care. Duty demanded that I should share with them this burden. Without hesitation, I followed duty and forever turned my back upon the cherished ambition of my life. To-day I stand thirty-seven years this side of that time. My course in life has been wholly different from that of the daydreams of my youth. Instead of the sedentary life in an office, it has been the active one on the farm; instead of legal contests before judges and juries, it has been humble, earnest teaching of the word of God and pleading with people to be reconciled to God; instead of the large fees of the solicitor, it has been, to a great extent, the self-sacrificing labors of a preacher in destitute places. While my work has not brought me fame or money, I thank God—not for the misfortunes of war, but that my feet were turned into a different path from what I had marked out for them. I had rather be a humble preacher as I am and preach the unsearchable riches of Christ in the highways and byways of earth, without money and without price, than to occupy the highest position the legal profession could give me. There is still another consideration. When I stood at the parting of the ways, my feet were just slipping into the chilly waters of skepticism. The association into which I would have been thrown in the law would have pushed them on into open unbelief. The humble sphere I chose

and the association into which I was thrown brought me under the influence of the simple gospel of Christ and saved me from the doom of the unbeliever. For thirty-five years Jesus has walked with me, cheering my pathway and helping me bear the burdens of life. While fully conscious that my life has been imperfect, yet I have an abiding trust that, with God's help, I shall at last stand with all the redeemed in the city of our God.

5. The truth of the leading thought of this chapter is sustained by the following scriptures: "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." (Heb. 12:11.) "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." (Heb. 13:5, 6.) "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Rom. 8:28.) "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Verse 31.)

CHAPTER XXXI.**A Few Practical Precepts. (Read Tit. 2.)**

When a man has been legally enlisted in an army, he needs to be instructed in the duties of a soldier. Without this instruction he can never become an efficient soldier. So it is when a person has submitted himself to the requirements of “the word of reconciliation,” and thus entered into the army of Christ, he needs to be well instructed in the duties required of the soldier of Jesus Christ. This teaching is found in the letters of the inspired apostles. I shall here call attention to Tit. 2, for in the same space in the New Testament there is, perhaps, not so much and such varied teaching as is found there. It abounds in instruction for all classes. It is the language of an old preacher to a young one, telling him what to teach. There were two classes of preachers in that day. To the first class it was said: “Take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.” (Matt. 10:19, 20.) Of this class it is said: “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as

the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts 2:4.) This class could say: “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” (1 Cor. 2:12, 13.) To the other class it was said: “Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.” (1 Tim. 4:13.) “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” (2 Tim. 2:15.) To this class it was furthermore said: “The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.” (Verse 2.) The first class received directly through the inspiration of the Spirit what they were to teach; the second class had to learn from these inspired men (the first class). Hence to the one class it was said, “Take no thought;” to the other: “Study.” It is well to say, in passing, that all preachers to-day belong to the second class, and must learn from the Bible (which contains what was revealed to the inspired men) what to teach; and the man who preaches anything else for the gospel imperils his own best interests. (Gal. 1:9.) This modern-day claim that men are inspired now as much as was Isaiah, Paul, or Peter is a

species of infidelity more hurtful than the reasonings of such men as Paine and Voltaire—more hurtful because it comes from those who claim to be followers of the meek and lowly Jesus. Paul, who wrote the language to be considered, belonged to the first class; Titus, to whom it was written, to the second class.

Paul, in making a tour among the churches after his first imprisonment at Rome, had Titus as a companion. They came to Crete, a large island, upon which were a number of churches and many disciples. These churches were in their formative period; and not having that order that should belong to churches of Christ, Paul left Titus there to “set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city [church].” Paul continued his journey; but that Titus might be prepared for this work, Paul wrote him this letter, telling just what to do and what to teach. The churches there had in their membership the various classes of men and women, and the apostle gave instruction suitable for all these. Chapter 2 begins with a command to “speak thou the things which become sound doctrine.” The modern distinction made between doctrinal and practical preaching is not warranted in the Scriptures. Now, teaching the way of salvation to alien sinners is called “doctrinal preaching,” while teaching the duty of Christians is called “practical preaching.” The “sound doctrine” that

Titus was to speak related to the duty of the various classes belonging to the church.

1. "Sound doctrine" for aged men is that they "be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience." (Verse 2.) A serious, grave deportment becomes age. Nothing is more disgusting than to see an old man whose locks are whitened for the tomb acting in a silly, frolicsome way, like the untamed young. As physical vigor becomes impaired, one is inclined to become impatient. It is, therefore, necessary that the aged be admonished to cultivate the grace of patience.

2. "Sound doctrine" for aged women is for them to "be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things." (Verse 3.) The field of woman's work is more circumscribed than that of man, and, as a result of this continual round of duty, she is more liable to acquire a habit of fault-finding; hence the warning against false accusing; and lest she should seek to impart artificial vigor to a naturally weakening body, she is warned against the use of "much wine." "Sound doctrine" also requires that aged women be "teachers of good things." Their pupils are the younger women, who are to be taught "to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." (Verses 4, 5.) These are duties of the young women mainly in family and

home affairs, and for them to fall short of these is to blasphemethe word of God. Aged women, having had long experience, are presumed to be qualified to instruct the young and inexperienced. They obey the injunction to be “teachers of good things” not by going into the pulpit or upon the platform, but by going to the newly-married women, and, of the fullness of their experience, instructing them in the duties that rest upon them in their new relationship and pointing out the difficulties along their path. This should be done in a kind, motherly way.

3. “Sound doctrine” for young men is that they “be sober-minded.” (Verse 6.) This requires that they be free from passion, calm, rational, temperate, unruffled. Young men who are the opposite of “sober-minded” are liable to go into excesses that will cause suffering, an early loss of health, and ultimate ruin. I know of no better way by which a young man will be sure of a life of sober-mindedness than to have regular employment in some useful avocation. Idleness is the bane of many sections of the country to-day. Want of employment leads to loafing; loafing, often to vicious associations, which lead to “many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in . . . perdition.” At a reasonably early age every young man should make choice of some honorable avocation, and then bring to bear all his energies in making a success in that avocation. Too many young men are Lying

around waiting for something to “turn up.” In this country of ours, with its various industries and great resources, there is no excuse for idleness. I knew an overgrown, watery-jointed young man, but full of determination, who sought employment in the office of the superintendent of a long line of railroad. He was told that there was no vacant place, except that of the colored janitor, who had recently died. “Of course,” said the superintendent, “you would not want that.” The young man replied: “I intend to be a ‘railroader,’ and anything is better than doing nothing.” So he went to work at a salary of one dollar per month less than his board cost. He was so faithful and did his work so well that he was given a better job at the end of three months. Faithfulness there secured other promotions, and in less than ten years he was made an assistant superintendent of the road. A lazy, idle man will never be a live, active Christian.

4. “Sound doctrine” for the preacher requires him to show himself “a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.” (Verses 7, 8.) A preacher can only reach the highest point of influence and usefulness by exemplifying in his own life the holiness and purity of the doctrine he preaches. His speech must be sound, but his life must be sincere and incorrupt. His life must be a pattern of

good works for others to follow. Signboards point out the way, but never travel it. Preachers should both point out the way and walk in it.

5. “Sound doctrine” for servants is for them “to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining, but showing all good fidelity.” (Verses 9, 10.) As master and servants are “one in Christ,” it is required that each shall deal justly and honestly with the other. Christianity did not abruptly break up existing political and social relationships, but the operation of its principles gradually has corrected, or will correct, all that is wrong in them. Christianity is a great leveler. All—rich and poor, bond and free, wise and unwise—are brought upon one common plane. On one occasion the great Wellington, after he had become famous as the conqueror of Napoleon, went into a chapel to worship. A humble peasant came in and took a seat in the pew by him. When the time came to kneel in the service, the peasant discovered whose pew he had entered, and, feeling that he had been guilty of a great breach of propriety, began to move out. Seeing what he was doing, Wellington laid his hand upon him, saying: “Stay, brother; we are all equal here.”

6. “Sound doctrine” for all classes is for them to deny themselves of “ungodliness and worldly lusts” and to “live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.” (Verse 12.) Duty grows

out of relationship. No duty devolves where there is no relationship. It is only where one has a child that the duty of a parent exists; only the man who stands related to a woman as a husband owes the duty of a husband. A man, in a general way, sustains three relationships in this life—a relationship to himself, to others, and to God. Out of these relationships there grow three classes of duties—soberness, righteousness, and godliness. The man who lives up to these reaches the standard of duty laid down in the Scriptures. Soberness covers the ground of duty one owes to himself; righteousness, to others; and godliness, to God. The Christian should be a sober man, having his passions under control and avoiding all excesses; he should be a righteous man, being kind, sympathetic, and helpful to all by whom he is surrounded; and he should at all times be a godly man, submitting reverently to God's will and walking humbly and trustfully in all his appointments. Thus living, he can then look “for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

CHAPTER XXXII.**Unity.**

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” (1 John 1:7.)

It should be the supreme desire of every Christian to so walk at all times as to feel the sin-cleansing efficacy of the blood of Christ and to be in fellowship, concord, or union with all of God's people. Both these ends can be reached only by walking in the light. God is the source of all spiritual light, and that light is conveyed to us through the Bible. To walk in its principles and precepts is to “walk in the light, as he is in the light.”

The question of fellowship, or unity, among the people of God is one of the live questions of the day. The religious world is aroused on the subject as it has never been before. Few apologize for division, while many plead for union. The passage above quoted enforces the plea for union and points the way to its attainment.

1. Division is a cause of weakness in the church. (a) From a business standpoint. Much of the energy and means that should be expended in building

up the body of Christ is expended in building up rival factions. This is especially true in country places and small towns. Some years ago, on the line of a new railroad out West, a town was laid out; and when there were only sixty inhabitants, all told, from the grandmother to the infant in its mother's arms, there were six preachers working with might and main to establish six different religious organizations. I know a town, the county seat of a mountain county, that has existed for forty years or more. The average population is from fifteen to twenty families. In all this time there has never been a house of worship built. About five different shades of religious belief are found there. Each, more or less, has service in the courthouse or schoolhouse, but none are strong enough to build. In both these places how much better it would be if all were one, having "fellowship one with another?" (b) Division is a cause of weakness, because a divided Christianity does not commend itself to the world. Jesus prayed that his people might be one, that the world might believe God had sent him. (John 17:21.) It is related that on one occasion, when a deputation of prominent Indians were on a visit to Washington City on business for their people, a number of ministers, representing the various churches, took charge of them and showed them the sights of the city, and especially the magnificent church buildings. To the question put by one of them, "What do you think of our

religion?” an old chief, with a withering glance from his keen black eyes, replied: “Go home and agree among yourselves what that religion is; then come, and I will tell you.” Missionaries in heathen lands find division in the way of success in converting the heathen. To obviate this difficulty, they find it necessary to enter into some kind of comity and present an outward show of unity that really does not exist.

2. The Scriptures condemn division and enjoin unity. “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” (1 Cor. 1:10.) “Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.” (2 Cor. 13:11.) “Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.” (1 Pet. 3:8.) “Neither pray I for these [the apostles] 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.) During the Civil War I saw a brigade of soldiers crossing the James River on a pontoon bridge—a bridge built upon boats. Being well drilled, the men naturally took the military step,

all stepping together. Soon the sharp command, “Halt!” came from the commander. Then they were ordered to take the “rout step,” each soldier to step at will. The force of a thousand men all stepping together was about to crush the bridge. So if all the lovers of the Lord Jesus Christ would march together, keeping step in the unity of the Spirit, the powers of sin and Satan would soon be crushed beneath their feet.

3. Seeing that Christians are exhorted to speak alike, the important question arises: How can this be done? The way is pointed out in the Scriptures. Peter, in writing to Christians, says: “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.” (1 Pet. 4:11.) All speak alike who “speak as the oracles of God” (the Bible) speak. This gives the rule, and the only rule, by which all can speak the same things. But Christians are exhorted to walk alike. How may this be done? The way to do this is also pointed out in the Scriptures. “Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.” (Phil. 3:16.) An architect has a contract to build a stone house. He sends a dozen stonecutters into the quarry, giving to each the same rule for cutting the stones. If these men use this rule in their work, then the stones will all fit in their places. “If we walk in the light, as he is in light, we have fellowship [are united] one with another.” Each one who walks in the light is in fellowship with every

One else who walks in that light. The way, then, to get in harmony with each other is to “walk in the light,” thus getting in harmony with God. Every one who is in harmony with God is in harmony with all others who are in like harmony. A traveler stopped in the night in a strange city. Going upon the streets the next morning, he was struck with their cleanness. Hoping to learn a lesson that would be of service in his own city, he sought the mayor and asked him how they managed to keep the streets so free from filth. “The way is very simple,” replied the official. “Every man sweeps before his own door.” Here was cooperation in a good work, but the cooperation was by each doing his own part of the work. So it is that each Christian, in getting himself in harmony with God, cooperates with every other Christian who is in harmony in bringing about the unity for which Jesus prayed. Soldiers on parade step together by all following the same signal. I once stood on an eminence and saw an army of twenty thousand or more on the plain below march by the review stand. So far as I was able to see, the right foot of every one of that twenty thousand struck the ground at the same instant; so did the left foot. This unity in movement was the result of each soldier's guiding his steps by the same drum tap. Whenever the soldiers of Jesus Christ step to the same drum tap, the word of God, then there will be unity among them.

4. People living to-day are not responsible for the beginning of the divisions among Christ's professed followers, as these divisions existed before they had a being; but each one is responsible for their continuance to the extent of his influence. He can "walk in the light" and get himself on the true and only ground of unity; he can cease to speak, only as the oracles of God speak; he can cease to walk by any rule, only the divinely-given one.

A friend of mine was engaged in the ministry of the word in a certain small city. This city had the usual variety in churches, each with its preacher laboring to build it up. One day one of the older preachers issued a call for the others to meet him in consultation. When convened, he unfolded his purpose. He said that Satan had charge of the city, that sin and wickedness were running riot, and that something ought to be done to put a check on the hurtful work. He then said: "I propose that we all come out of our ecclesiastical shells and join in one grand union meeting." He said he believed such a work would rescue the city from the clutches of Satan. The other preachers, successively, heartily indorsed the proposition. My friend, being youngest in years and residence, was last to speak. He indorsed what had been said about the prevalent wickedness, about the necessity of something being done, and also indorsed the plan for a united effort. "Now," said he, "if when we come out of our 'ecclesiastical shells' to hold this meeting we

will crush them so we cannot get back into them, I will join you heartily in the work.” He then went on to say that if it was necessary to come out of these “shells” to successfully attack Satan for a month, it was necessary to stay out to keep up the conflict. This reasonable proposition was not accepted, the ministers there are in their “shells,” and the work of Satan still flourishes.

Do I need to say more as to how unity among the lovers of Jesus can be brought about? If so, I repeat the statement: Let all “speak as the oracles of God,” all walk by the same rule, and “walk in the light, as he is in the light.”

CHAPTER XXXIII.

**The Development and Consumption of the
Man of Sin. (2 Thess. 2:3-8.)**

The apostles were incredulous when Jesus had taught the duty of forgiving a brother even seven times a day if he should turn and say, "I repent," and exclaimed: "Lord, increase our faith." (Luke 17:5.) Faith is founded on testimony, and may be increased by additional testimony or a better understanding of that already in existence. Additional testimony to that which we have on the truth of God's word and the certainty of his promises need not be looked for to-day, but a better understanding of what exists is calculated to increase our faith.

While the internal, the typical, the historical, and the monumental evidences are strong, in my judgment that from fulfilled prophecy is the strongest and most convincing. In reply to my question as to how he could explain the correspondence of the facts, as they developed centuries afterwards, with the prophecies in both the Old Testament and the New Testament concerning cities and peoples, aside from the inspiration of the writers, an unbeliever said: "I have never been able to satisfy myself

about that.” Paul is not specially classed among the prophets, yet he wrote some of the clearest and most striking prophecies to be found in the entire Bible. If I had no other proof of his inspiration, this would satisfy me that an intelligence above that of man guided his pen. In his first letter to the Thessalonian brethren he unfolded the doctrine of Christ's second coming. The brethren there inferred that this coming was immediate, and, as a result, became unsettled in mind. Hearing of this, the apostle wrote them another letter, in less than a year from the first, for the purpose, in part at least, of disabusing their minds. In six verses—chapter 2:3-8, inclusive—he points out a number of great revolutions in human affairs that must take place before the second advent of Jesus. He erects, as it were, a number of milestones along the way that must be passed before the Lord will come. These milestones, in the order of time, are: (1) The taking away of a hindering power (verse 7); (2) a falling away, or a great apostasy in the church (verse 3); (3) the revelation, or development, of the man of sin (verse 3); (4) the consumption of the man of sin by the spirit of the Lord's mouth (verse 8).

1. Paul, in foretelling the great apostasy, said that “the mystery of iniquity” was then at work, but that there was a restraining power that hindered and would hinder until taken out of the way. (Verse 7.) What was that hindering power? Some

take the position that it was the personal presence of the apostle Paul; others, that it was the personal presence of all the apostles. In my judgment, it was neither of these, but the Roman Government, which at that time was a persecuting power. As long as the church was persecuted it was kept measurably pure. When a man imperiled his life and all he possessed by confessing Christ, only true men would do so; therefore tendency to apostasy was only slight. When, though, Constantine, the emperor, professed to believe in Christ, made the Christian religion the religion of the empire, and required that all who held places of profit or trust should be Christians, then the flood gates were opened, insincere and designing men entered the church, and the apostasy became rapid.

2. The falling away. This was such a radical change in the church that it lost its original form, and the worship in its original simplicity was destroyed.

3. The man of sin—the same as the “little horn” of Daniel's vision (Dan. 7) that was to “speak great words against the most High” and “wear out the saints,” also the same as “Babylon, . . . the mother of harlots and abominations” (Rev. 17:5). It was an apostate form of Christianity, having its chief embodiment in the Roman Catholic Church, with the pope at its head. The characteristics given by Paul are met with nowhere else. The man of sin was developed out of the apostasy. The apos-

tasy resulted from a departure from the truth. Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." (1 Tim. 4:1.) "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." (2 Tim. 4:3, 4.) With nothing but the truth taught, believed, and practiced, a falling away was impossible. Physical forces may effect changes instantaneously. Not so with moral forces; they produce their changes gradually. An earthquake in a moment may rend the massive mountain, a tornado in an instant may lay the forest low and wreck the mighty city. Revolutions in human affairs, being the result of the operation of moral forces, are effected only by time. Men may be in the midst of the working of moral forces that will at last effect a mighty change and not be cognizant of the fact. The forces that brought about the revolution of our forefathers and gave independence to this country were at work many decades before the final outbreak came. So of the terrible Civil War that clad our fair country with the somber garments of mourning. So imperceptible was the working of these forces that men lived and died in the time without perceiving them. From the day when "the mystery of iniquity" began to work un-

til the apostasy had become so great that a man of sin, claiming both ecclesiastical and civil authority, stood forth, was over five hundred years. The departures from the truth were so gradual that generations came into being and passed away, believing all the time they had the religion of Christ as originally given. The same is true of many who hold to apostate forms to-day. To trace this development from the assumption of authority by the bishops through priestly claims to a universal bishop, or pope, and the selling of indulgences, would require more space than can here be appropriated.

4. The consumption of the man of sin. Of the four milestones that stood between Paul's day and the second coming of Christ, we have passed the first three. Pagan Rome exists no longer. The church fell away, became corrupted. The man of sin came into being and dominated the world for many centuries. The fourth and last milestone we are passing now. The man of sin became a mighty power; and while he has lost much, he is a mighty power to-day; but as sure as Paul spoke by inspiration, that certainly he will be consumed by the spirit of the Lord's mouth and destroyed "with the brightness of his coming." What is the spirit of the Lord's mouth, and how will it consume the man of sin? Isaiah (11:4) said: "He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." Hosea (6:5)

said: "I have slain them by the words of my mouth." John, the revelator, gives this message from Christ: "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." (Rev. 2:16.) "Out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations." (Rev. 19:15.) "Out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword." (Rev. 1:16.)

From these quotations it is clear that the expressions, "sword of my mouth" and "spirit of his mouth," mean the word of God. The word of God, then, is the means to be used in consuming the man of sin. This will be done by the free preaching and practice of that word. The man of sin sought to take the word of God from the people, and so successful had he been that in the first quarter of the sixteenth century, when Luther was a young man, there was not a copy of the Scriptures in a known tongue out in free circulation. Translations had been made, it is true, prior to this time; but constables, commissioned to do so, had been so diligent in their search for them that most of the copies had been burned, and those not burned were hid away in some secret place. Luther, after he had been condemned as a heretic, was concealed by his friends in the castle of Wartburg. At the end of a year he came away with a translation of the Scriptures into the German language, which was soon printed. By this time the work of reformation had grown so

that none dare molest him or prevent the circulation of the translation he had made. With the circulation of the Bible in a living language, a knowledge of it began to grow and bear fruit. Thus it was that the consumption of the man of sin by the spirit of the Lord's mouth (the word of God) began. Luther broke the fetters that bound the word of God. It has been free ever since. The circulation of the Scriptures is all the time on the increase. People are learning more and more of its precious truths and drinking into its spirit more and more. Thus it is that the consumption of the man of sin began when Luther gave the world a free Bible; and it has been going on, and will continue to go on, until the work shall be complete. One may say the work goes on very slowly. From a human standpoint this may be true. Moral forces operate slowly. It took five hundred years to develop a full-grown man of sin; it may take much longer to consume him. Nevertheless, it will be done. He was developed as Paul predicted; and, as predicted, so he will be consumed.

The man of sin is doomed; the mouth of the Lord has spoken it. Every one who teaches or practices the incorrupted word of God is contributing his part to the overthrow of the man of sin and all false religions. May God help all to be satisfied with the simple word of God, without addition-or subtraction.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

“ The Reward of the Inheritance.”

This book—this holiest, this sublimes”, book—
Was sent. Heaven's will, Heaven's code of laws entire,
To man this book contained; defined the bounds
Of vice and virtue and of life and death;
And what was shadow, what was substance, taught;
Much it revealed—important all, the least
Worth more than what seemed of highest worth.

—Pollok.

By sin man became alienated from God, who, in his infinite love, devised a way by which he might be reconciled. In the preceding chapters of this book I have tried to set forth simply and clearly how we are reconciled and how we are to live after being reconciled as taught in the Bible—” this holiest, this sublimest, book.” It now remains to inquire what the final reward of a life of service to God will be. This is a legitimate inquiry. Men, In the undertakings of this life, look forward to the reward. It helps them to work faithfully if they can see the reward is sure and great. So it is in the service of Christ. On one occasion Peter, speaking for the apostles, said to Jesus: “We have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have

therefore?" (Matt. 19:27.) If the apostles had had repinings over their temporal losses in following Jesus, the answer, that when he took his seat upon the throne of his glory they should sit upon thrones also, was calculated to reconcile them to these losses. Duty made it necessary for Moses to give up the most enchanting earthly surroundings and prospects; but he could do it cheerfully, "for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." Paul, to encourage those disciples who were enduring a great "fight of afflictions," who were a "gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions," reminded them of the "great recompense of reward." (Heb. 10:33-35.) These did, indeed, take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, because they knew that in heaven they had a "better and an enduring substance." The Bible is the only source of light upon the problem of man's existence here and hereafter; hence to it we must go to learn what the final reward of the Christian will be. To prepare our minds -for what it reveals, a few preliminary thoughts will first be presented:

1. The Bible gives in epitome the drama of human life from the time man stepped upon the stage until the curtain shall fall and time on earth shall be no more. It is an arch, one pillar resting in a paradise past, from which man was expelled because of sin; the other, in a paradise future, where will dwell forever those who have been washed from their sins in the blood of Christ. Between

these two pillars is the whole of human life, with its sorrows and joys, its failures and triumphs. The Bible gives in synopsis the history of man in his probationary state. A part of this history is actual and a part is prophetic. By “actual history” is meant the account of events that had already transpired; by “prophetic history” is meant the account of things He “who sees the end from the beginning” has given through prophetic inspiration. Actual history reaches down from creation to the close of the New Testament canon; prophetic history, until the close of time. In actual history we have an account of man's creation; his primeval home and state; his fall; his increase in numbers; his wickedness; the destruction of the world of the ungodly by the flood and the re peopling of the world through Noah, who was saved in the ark; the call of Abraham; the separation of the children of Israel from other nations and the phenomenal existence of that nation; the birth and mission of John the Baptist; the birth and ministry of Jesus, his tragic death and triumphant resurrection from the dead, his ascension to heaven; the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost; the preaching of “repentance and remission of sins” there; of the establishment of the church, and its growth and upbuilding among all nations—Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles; and, finally, of the writing of the New Testament Scriptures. In prophetic history is given an account of human

events that are still future. In this prophetic history is to be found the destiny of the human family, embracing the reward of the righteous and the doom of the wicked.

2. To strengthen our faith in what is promised in the future, attention is called to prophecies of things which were future, sometimes hundreds of years, but are now past.

During the prophetic period there existed some great cities that equaled in grandeur and stability any of the great cities of to-day. Isaiah (13 and 14) and Jeremiah (50) predicted the destruction of Babylon, minutely describing the condition of the ruins afterwards. These predictions have been fulfilled even in the smallest particulars. Nahum and Zephaniah predicted the downfall of Nineveh. It was destroyed as predicted, and its ruins became a desolation and grazing place for flocks, as the prophets had said. Tyrus, as predicted by Isaiah (23:6), Ezekiel (27:32), and Zechariah (9:3, 4), was to suffer a like fate. All concurrent history shows that these predictions were literally fulfilled. Moses (Deut. 28) and Jesus (Matt. 24) predicted the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jewish people among all nations. Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus and his army in the year 70; and the condition of the Jews to-day—dispersed among all nations, yet a separate and distinct people—gives a living attestation to the fact that what has been promised through inspiration will be lit-

erally realized. In the fullest confidence in their certainty, we will look for what is promised to those who faithfully serve God.

1. Jesus will come again. Forty days after Jesus had been raised from the dead he stood with his disciples upon the mount of Olives. Suddenly he was lifted from the earth; and, ascending, a cloud received him out of sight. While they looked wistfully in the direction he had gone, two men in white (angels) stood by them and said: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11.) Paul, in writing to those who were disconsolate over the death of dear ones, said: "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [or outstrip] them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first." (1 Thess. 4:15, 16.) Jesus came once as the suffering, bleeding Babe of Bethlehem; he is in heaven now, but will come again as the Judge of the living and the dead.

2. When he comes, the dead will be raised. There was a controversy over the question of the resurrection of the dead in the church at Corinth. To settle the question, Paul wrote 1 Cor. 15. He

first proves that Christ was raised from the dead, and from this proves the resurrection of his servants. He concludes his argument in these words: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming." (Verses 20-23.) Christ, "the first fruits," was raised the third day after his death; his people, the second fruits, when he comes again.

3. When raised from the dead, the children of God will be in the image of the glorified Christ. "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." (Phil 3:20, 21.) "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." (Col. 3:4.) "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John 3:2.) As the glorified body of Jesus is to-day, so will be that of the children of God when raised a spiritual body in incorruption, in power, and in glory. The favored apostles—Peter, James, and John—had a view of that body on the mount of transfiguration,

when his face did shine as the sun and his raiment was white as the light—white as the snow, so as no fuller on earth could white them.

4. The redeemed, glorified children of God will ever be with the Lord. “Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” (1 Thess. 4:17.) When the disciples were troubled because Jesus had said he was going to leave them, he said “Let not your heart be troubled.... In my Father's house are many mansions.... I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.” (John 14:1-3.) It foreshadowed untold sorrow and misery for our race when our first parents,

Hand in hand, with wandering steps, and slow,

Through Eden took their solitary way

out into that world that was cursed, there to suffer the consequences of eating

Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste

Brought death into the world, with all our woe;

but the loss of the first paradise will more than be compensated for to the redeemed when, with the glorified Jesus, they enter the second paradise. The old apostle John, when on the lonely isle of Patmos, saw in vision this paradise. He saw it

come down from heaven “as a bride adorned for her husband.” Its gates are of pearl; its walls, of jasper; and its streets, of gold. It needs not the light of the sun or of the moon, for God himself is the light of that city. There is no night there; there is no pain, no sorrow, no crying, for God himself wipes away all tears; there is no death there, for all the former things are passed away. Blessed and happy is he who is accounted worthy to enter there, where he will ever be with the Lord.

We speak of the realms of the blest,
Of that city so bright and so fair;
And oft are its glories confessed;
But what must it be to be there?

I once stood in view of a great forest. Every bough and every twig was pendant with icicles congealed from the falling rain. I saw the clouds drift away and the sun come forth, making a scene brilliant beyond description. Reflected from these icicles there seemed to be myriads of suns. From this inspiring sight I went in imagination to the city of our God, and there beheld the millions of the redeemed, clothed in garments pure and white, reflecting in their faces the light of the glorious Sun of Righteousness; and I thought such a scene as that would a thousand times compensate for all the sacrifices we can possibly make for Christ in this world.

May all who read these lines be accounted worthy to enter through the gates into the city.