

THE SAVIOUR'S WAY

Sermons of
Garland Elkins

A Series of Sermons
Delivered in a Campaign
in Morrison, Tennessee
March 14-26, 1965

GARLAND ELKINS
Roanoke, Virginia
1968

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By
Garland Elkins

Dedication

This book is affectionately dedicated to my devoted wife, Corinne, and our three lovely daughters, Connie, Jan and Denise.



The Garland Elkins

Acknowledgment

I wish to gratefully acknowledge the unselfish work of brethren Kenneth Bowers, Oak Ridge, Tennessee and Charles R. Williams, Texarkana, Texas, who have rendered invaluable assistance in the publication of this book. I am also indebted to brother A. T. Connelly, of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, who painted several of the charts contained in this volume.

I shall be eternally indebted to those who typed the manuscripts and to those, who in any way, contributed to the success of the meeting.

Garland Elkins

INTRODUCTION

I have known and loved the author of these sermons through the years for "his works sake." It is with joy that I can write these words of introduction. We are indebted to our author for the fine job he did in "The Saviour's Way Campaign" at Morrison, Tennessee, March 14-26th, 1965, where these sermons were preached. This great meeting was a marvelous demonstration of the tremendous power of the gospel of Christ. Our author preached the gospel in it's truth and simplicity as one can well see from reading these sermons. He didn't hesitate to brand false doctrine and emphasize the one church.

The messages each evening were so plain that a great number of 92 responded to Heaven's invitation. We had 46 baptisms and 46 restorations. There were 10 people, who renounced denominational doctrines, to accept the truth and 30 of the 92 were not church attenders. We had some of the largest crowds ever to gather for a meeting at Morrison. Some of the best Christians today came out of the meeting. It was one of the most successful efforts ever put forth in this area.

It is my opinion that the author of these sermons is one of the soundest contenders for the "faith" that we have among us today. He is very able and willing to proclaim the truth and defend the faith.

It is refreshing to see some sermons come from the press filled with scriptures and doctrinally sound. He quoted freely from both the King James and the American Standard

Versions of the Bible. The lessons are plain and powerful. Every young preacher should have a copy of these sermons. The one sermon on the "New Birth" is worth the price of the book. Best of all these sermons are thoroughly loyal to the great basic truths of the "faith". It is a real pleasure for me to recommend this book to everyone that is interested in "what is true instead of what is new". May the Lord bless this work to our good and His glory.

. . . Lynwood Mathis
Morrison, Tennessee

Foreword

There are at least **four** requisites to a great sermon or a great series of sermons: (1) A great theme; (2) a great preacher; (3) a great occasion; and (4) great results.

All of these characteristics were present when these sermons were originally delivered; and, they are evident and will continue to exhibit themselves in their publication thus preserving them for posterity.

(1) Their **theme** is salvation. Whatever may have been the specific subject announced, it was the design of the speaker that all who heard (and all who shall read these sermons), should learn what to do to be saved, and how to live the Christian life in order ultimately to enjoy the bliss of heaven. This is indeed **the grandest theme** ever announced by **mortal tongue**.

(2) The **preacher** --Brother Garland Elkins-- is truly one of the most faithful, devoted and dedicated preachers among us today. His love for the truth, his unswerving allegiance to the Word of God, and his fearlessness in declaring it have endeared him to all who respect His will and way today.

(3) The **occasion** and (4) the **results** of the great meeting in which these sermons were orally delivered are elsewhere described; and, magnificent through these results were, we think that they are but the firstfruits of the tremendous harvest which shall be reaped in the future from the reading of these outstanding messages. They are purposely prepared to be simple in form; they are exceedingly rich in scriptural content; and they honor the Christ our Lord and Savior. A copy of this remarkable collection of sermons ought to be in the living room of every member of the church today and regularly read until the themes discussed are familiar to all. It is a distinct pleasure to commend it.

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CHAPTER 1

THE WAY

This morning we are beginning a discussion of the Saviour's Way. I am confident that the choice of a theme for this series was an excellent one. I know of no better way of expressing what we are attempting to do. In a conversation with Thomas, recorded in John 14:6, our Lord said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me." If this expression were to be truly understood by everyone, each would come to realize that it is one of the most remarkable statements found in the word of God. If we could fully understand everything concerning John 14:6, we would have an adequate knowledge of God's word. Many times we read a passage hurriedly and fail to give proper consideration to it. We need to meditate upon this word day and night, as is said of the good man in Psalms I. Christ said a number of things concerning the "Way", and I want to affirm that the Bible teaches that Christ set forth a "Way" of life. As we follow Christ--the Way--we have a new and living way that has been dedicated for us by him. This "Way" becomes a way of conduct, a way of thinking, a way of action, and reaction. This "Way" is often referred to in the New Testament when people have in mind the New Testament Church--the church of Christ. There

are six passages in the book of Acts in which the "Way" is mentioned.

No. 1 - Acts 9:1,2 - "But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and asked of him letters to Damascus unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem."

No. 2 - Acts 19:9 - "But when some were hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus."

No. 3 - Acts 19:23 - "And about that time there arose no small stir concerning the Way."

No. 4 - Acts 22:4 - "And I persecuted this Way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women."

No. 5 - Acts 24:14 - "But this I confess unto thee, that after the Way which they call a sect, so serve I the God of our Fathers, believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets."

No. 6 - Acts 24:22 - "But Felix, having more exact knowledge concerning the Way, deferred them, saying, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will determine your matter."

We can further analyze these passages by sub-dividing them into four categories.

No. 1 - We learn that people had membership in the Way.

No. 2 - We learn that the Way was persecuted.

No. 3 - We learn that Paul and the other early Christians taught and preached the Way.

No. 4 - We learn that in the Way was the way of service and worship.

What do we preach when we preach the Way? It would not be sufficient for me to stand before you and merely say over and over again the Way, the Way, the Way. But this is all some people do when they preach Jesus. They just repeat Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. They never tell you what to do to accept him. Denominational preachers may tell their audiences that they should accept Christ, but none of them ever say what a person must do in order to accept Christ. Now what do we do when we preach the Way? When we preach the Way, the Saviour's Way, we preach Christ. Paul said in II Cor. 4:5: "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake." I love that passage of scripture. It is one of my favorites. "For we preach not ourselves." Then whom do we preach? And what do we preach? We preach "Christ Jesus." Not only "Christ Jesus" but "Christ Jesus as Lord." And then what? "And ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake." Paul said in I Cor. 2:2: "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

In Acts 8:5, we find a man preaching Christ; this man was Philip, an inspired evangelist. "And Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ." What did he preach when he preached Christ? "But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ they were baptized, both men and women."

When Philip preached good tidings concerning the kingdom of God, he preached the truth about the church. When he

preached about Christ, he preached the truth about the authority of Christ. "They were baptized, both men and women." So when we preach Christ, we preach the truth about the church. There is but one Christ--there is but one church. If a man does not preach the truth about the one church, he does not preach all the truth about Christ. When we preach and teach the Saviour's Way, we preach and teach the gospel of Christ, the word of truth. Paul states in Romans 1:16,17; "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." The gospel of Christ is the Way. We must contend for the Way. There is but one Way. Christ said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." There is one church and one way to heaven.

I am alarmed about the tendency in some areas to hide the stringent demands of the Way, the idea being, to get someone into the church and later break gently to them the New Testament teaching that there is one church and one way to heaven. Friends, I have no desire to hide any of the truth and yet I want to be kind in stating it. There is one church and there is but one church, and we must preach the gospel in detail on this point or else we are not preaching the whole gospel of salvation. Paul said, "but speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into him, which is the head, even Christ." (Eph. 4:15). Christ also said, "and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32). Christ said, "and ye shall know the truth," not just guess at it or just think you have it. In John 17:17 he tells us what the truth is, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." So we preach the truth and when the truth is obeyed it purifies our souls. I Peter 1:22.

This way of salvation is a very narrow way. Our Lord said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many

there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Matthew 7:13,14. Our Lord used a series of contrasts. The strait gate is spelled s-t-r-a-i-t, not s-t-r-a-i-g-h-t which means not crooked, but strait meaning difficult. In other words, this gate he is speaking of, is a gate through which we cannot pass unless we meet the stringent demands. He contrasts the strait gate with the wide gate, the gate that is wide enough to admit all sin and sinners. He then said there is a broad way, but contrasted it with the narrow way. On the broad way there are many who travel but on the narrow way there are few. There are two destinations: the broad way leads to destruction, but the narrow way leads to heaven itself. This is our Lord's picture concerning the Saviour's Way.

Let us observe that in Matthew 7:13 he said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate." Luke recorded it in these words, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." (Luke 13:24.) Many of us have probably overlooked that statment in Luke 13:24. Note what Jesus said, "Strive to enter in." How many of us, at this hour, have our minds on the lunch to be eaten at home following our dismissal? How many of us have our minds on our jobs Monday? I say there are a number of us who are asleep in the service of Christ, and need to remember that Paul said, "Wherefore he saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee." Christ said one must strive, or agonize, to enter in. It is a painful, tedious process; one must agonize to go to heaven. How many of us are doing it? I am concerned when I see people take the work of the church so lightly. Some brethren act as if they are doing the preacher, the eiders, or someone else a great favor if they happen to come back on Sunday night or Wednesday night, and wouldn't think of doing any personal work. I appreciate the work you have put forth to prepare for this meeting. I pray that I can do my work as well as you have done yours. I once read of a man who went to an electrical company to buy some equipment, and, while he was

there, he observed several different types of equipment and a sign in bold, large letters which read, "wired for service." Now that is what I mean; we need to be wired for spiritual service! If we are not, somewhere we have failed for our Lord said, "Strive to enter in." Having entered at the strait gate by faith, repentance, confession and baptism into the narrow way, what kind of way is it? This way was prophesied in Isaiah 35:8: "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." Brethren, we do not want to forget this prophesy of the way. It was said that it would be a way of holiness. That means that those of us who are in the church must be holy, without blemish, having no spot or any such thing. It is my conviction that there will be many people in hell because of their pride. They are too proud to live right, and, once it is called to their attention, they are too proud to correct it. In fact, many people will never enter the narrow way because they are too proud to enter it, and are not willing to meet the demands of Christ to enter. What kind of a man does the Lord respect? "But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." Isa. 66:2. If one is not very humble he cannot enter at the strait gate, travel the narrow way and reach heaven. Our Lord gave three characteristics of the man to whom he would look. Such a one will have to be a man who is of contrite spirit; a man that is poor in spirit, a man that has poverty of spirit, a man who respectfully trembles at God's word. In Matthew 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." I care not how long one has been a child of God, if he needs to repent, he ought to be willing to do it. This is true of all of us, or of any of us. I pray that I will never get to the point that I become too proud to confess my sins and repent of them. I have heard people say "they were not ashamed of anything they ever did." I am frank to say that I am ashamed of every sin that I have ever committed. This "way" is a way of holiness and unless we are holy we shall not be able to convert others. For example, suppose you

wanted a nice red apple. A man had a bushel of beautiful delicious red apples. He offered you one to eat but you noticed that his hand was afflicted with huge open boils. Would you take the apple from his hand? There was not a flaw in the apple, but the hand was diseased. We need to make sure that our lives "adorn the gospel of Christ." Philippians 4:9 "The things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do: and the God of peace shall be with you." If your life is out of step, you need to correct your mistakes. Our Father is waiting to forgive you and angels are waiting to rejoice.

In conclusion, may I suggest to you that there are many paradoxes of the cross. In I Timothy 1:15 "Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." Why did he do so? He did so that you and I might go to heaven. In John 14:1-3 "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. 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." Christ was born in the flesh; "but when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal. 4:4,5). Christ was born in the flesh that we might be born of God; "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (I John 5:4). In addition to that, Christ lived and died in poverty that we might leave poverty and inherit everlasting riches, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich." (II Cor. 8:9).

There are many other things that could be said about the Saviour's Way, but again I emphasize that Christ is the

way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by him. The church is referred to as the Way, the only way. The church is certainly adequate and sufficient. Many passages show that this conclusion is irresistible.

We must remember that there is a strait gate leading into the narrow way. We must be holy as we walk the narrow way in order that heaven may be ours to enjoy forever. But, the sad fact remains there is a wide gate that leads into the broad way, and one enters it without any effort. If he travels the broad way and dies on it, he will forever suffer in the place called hell. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Proverbs 14:12.

When we preach Christ as the Way, we preach Christ, we preach the church, we preach the gospel, we preach the word and we preach the truth.

If you desire to enter the way by faith, repentance, confession and baptism for remission of sins, you may enter. The Lord will add you to his church. Christ will be your leader. If you are an unfaithful child of God, he will gladly reinstate you by repentance and confession of sins and prayer. (Acts 8:20-23; I John 1:9). Will you therefore respond?

The Blood of His Cross

BLOOD CONTACT:

not in disobedience Rebellion
 not in denominationalism Division
 not in faith only Perversion
 not in repentance only Insufficient
 not in baptism only Hypocrisy
 not at mourner's bench — altar Evasion

BUT:

in obedience Rom. 6:18 (made whole)
 in the body (church) Eph. 2:16 (reconciled)
 in the truth Jn. 8:32 (made free)
 in faith & works Jas. 2:24 (together save)
 in baptism after belief & repent. (Rom. 6:4)
 in life by walking in the light I John 1:7

Theories of Men

Blood before obedience Heb. 5:9
 unconditional I John 1:7

WILL NOT DO:

make a mem. of den. I Cor. 1:10
 give a den. name Acts 4:12
 obligate to den. program Gal. 5:1
 cleanse before F. R. C. B. Mk. 16:16
 Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:3
 save one in sin Acts 11:30-31
 save one out of church Acts 2:47
 save one out of Christ I Cor. 5:17

WILL DO:

wash away sinful past Rom. 3:25
 purge and cleanse I John 1:17
 redeem soul I Pet. 1:18-19
 set apart - dedicate "sanctify" Eph. 5:26
 feed the spirit II Cor. 4:15
 protect from contamination Heb. 10:20
 lead to Heaven Heb. 10:20

"CLEANSING by the BLOOD"



CHAPTER 2

THE BLOOD OF HIS CROSS

I would like to join with Brother Mathis in expressing my deep and sincere appreciation for your presence this evening. We have many visitors with us and also a number of congregations are represented.

We have the truth - the word of God. Let us use it as Christians. Let us not be afraid to unsheathe the sword of the spirit - which is the word of God. Let us make sure that we do not have a generation to arise that will not contend for the faith. When correctly used, the truth will overthrow all of the doctrines and commandments of men.

We have been singing about the blood of Christ. Tonight, I want to speak to you concerning that blood. I want to discuss the subject from the standpoint of: (1) Where we cannot contact the blood. (2) Where we do contact the blood. (3) Some of the theories of men concerning the blood. (4) What the blood will not do; and (5) What the blood will do.

The blood of Christ is not contacted in disobedience. Disobedience is rebellion. There are multiplied thousands of people who really believe they have contacted the blood, but they are as rebellious as was Cain or King Saul of the Old Testament. I recall that Jude said; "Woe unto them! for they

went in the way of Cain, and ran riotously in the error of Balaam for hire, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah." These examples from the Old Testament were given to show us to what disobedience will lead. Paul says in Romans 15:4; "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope." We learn from the New Testament that the blood is not contacted in disobedience. Several passages will be given later that show this point to be true.

The blood is not contacted in denominationalism. Denominationalism is division. James 3:14-16 states; "But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth. This wisdom is not a wisdom that cometh down from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed." Could we hope to contact the blood in confusion and where every vile deed is? Could we hope to contact the blood in denominationalism, division, strife, and all that attend it? Denominationalism is built upon division from the very foundation to the superstructure. Therefore, the blood is not contacted in denominationalism.

The blood is not contacted in faith only. "Faith only" is a perversion of the truth. There are not many things, if any at all, that cannot be perverted. Paul says in Titus 3:11 that even a man can become perverted. Others may pervert us and religiously speaking, we can become self-perverted (II Thess. 2:10-12). Hear this from James 2:24; "Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith."

We do not contact the blood in repentance only. Repentance alone is insufficient. Thousands of preachers today will be telling their audiences on radio, television, and in the pulpit that they contact the blood at the point of repentance. There are others who teach that the blood is contacted even before the act of repentance. But in both cases this is not

true. The Bible teaches that there is something else to do. Repentance is not into Christ, but it is unto salvation. "And when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18).

We do not contact the blood of Christ at the mourner's bench. No person ever has, nor ever shall, contact the blood at the mourner's bench. Paul was a very penitent man. He prayed, was without sight three days, and neither ate nor drank. But Paul did not contact the blood before baptism because his sins, three days later, were still not forgiven. He was told; "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

The blood is not contacted by baptism only. Baptism is scriptural only when it has been preceded by faith (Heb. 11:6), repentance (Acts 11:18 - Acts 17:30), and confession (Matt. 10:32 - Acts 8:37 - Rom. 10:10). Many times I have heard people say; "The people in the church of Christ believe that water is the only thing necessary for salvation." We do not believe that. There are other conditions in the plan of salvation besides baptism. I have known of boys at the old swimming hole down on the farm when one would say to the other; "I am going to baptize you." Then by force he would push another boy under the water. Of course, that was not baptism, for it did not have the scriptural design and was not preceded by faith, repentance, and confession from the heart. It would be hypocrisy to ignore all of these other conditions and contend only for baptism - and we do not do that. In fact, the New Testament teaches, and therefore we believe it, that faith, repentance, confession, and baptism are equally important.

So, we do not contact the blood in disobedience, denominationalism, faith only, repentance only, baptism only, or at the mourner's bench (or altar as it is sometimes called).

The blood is contacted in obedience. "But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered; and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:17,18). Also, in Romans 6:1-4; "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein? Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life." It is in obedience that we contact the blood.

It is in the body, the church, that we contact the blood. We are reconciled to God, at peace again with God, through Christ our Lord when we obey the gospel and are added to the church. "And might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Eph. 2:16).

Sometimes people say; "Why don't you preach Christ and leave the church out of it?" The answer is simply that you cannot preach Christ correctly and leave the church out of it. Paul says that we are baptized into Christ. "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). And in I Cor. 12:13 Paul also states; "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit."

What is that one body into which we are all baptized? Paul answers this question in Eph. 1:22,23 by saying; "And he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." We are baptized into Christ. We also enter the body, the church, by baptism.

It is one and the same process. We therefore contact the blood only in the church. Read your New Testament and you will of necessity come to that conclusion.

We contact the blood in our obedience to the truth. Christ said; "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). He said to His Father as recorded in John 17:17; "Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth." Peter states in I Peter 1:22; "Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently." Peter also tells us that it is necessary to be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

We contact the blood of Christ in faith and works. The only time the expression "faith only" occurs in the New Testament is in James 2:24 which says; "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." Many people do not realize that a man is not justified by faith only, but James knew that people could understand that fact if they so desired. Yet denominational preachers all over this land say that one is justified by faith only. But note - it takes both faith and works to save. We are justified by faith when it works. "Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect" (James 2:22). One of the best commentaries on the degree of faith that saves is in Gal. 5:6 where Paul says; "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through Love." Faith avails when it is obedient - when it works. It is at that point we contact the blood.

We contact the blood in baptism. But baptism must be preceded by faith, repentance, and confession. Baptism is the turning point for the alien sinner. One does not turn to the Lord at the point of faith only, for we read in Acts 11:21; "And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord." The turning act follows faith.

Repentance is not the turning point for the alien sinner. In Acts 3:19 we read; "Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." So, there is a turning act following repentance. What is that turning act? For the alien sinner, the turning act which follows repentance is given by Peter in Acts, chapters 2 and 3. "And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). In Acts 3:19 he says; "Repent ye therefore, and turn." And in Acts 2:38 he says; "Repent ye, and be baptized." Therefore, the final turning act for the alien sinner in his obedience to Christ is baptism.

Faith is unto salvation. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness..." (Rom. 10:10). Repentance is unto salvation. "And when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18). Confession is also unto salvation. "...and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10). But notice that baptism is into salvation. "Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death" (Rom. 6:3). Also, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27).

Remember that faith, repentance, and confession are unto Christ; but baptism is into Christ. It is at the point of baptism that the alien sinner contacts the blood.

I would like to emphasize here that if one has submitted to sprinkling or pouring as substitutes for baptism, he has not been scripturally baptized, for baptism is a burial (Rom. 6:4 - Col. 2:12). Remember that the newness of life comes after baptism, thus showing that baptism is necessary in order to be saved.

Having made contact with Christ's blood in baptism, we must continue to walk in the light to have access to the blood as a child of God. We read in I John 1:7; "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Observe the word "cleanseth." We can see that it is a continuing process. But do you know what it is dependent upon? It is dependent upon our continuing to walk in the light.

I often use this illustration: Sometimes when I leave Oak Ridge for a gospel meeting, it may be raining quite hard. I use a little switch to turn on the windshield wipers. As long as that little mechanism continues to function, the wipers will keep most of the moisture off the windshield. But if something happens to it; if the mechanism becomes defective, the wipers will cease to operate and the water will accumulate. I have had that experience. Now here is the application: After we have become children of God, we are not to live a life of sin. We are to continue to walk in the light. However, we will commit some momentary acts of sin unintentionally. But as long as we are faithful, the blood will continue to cleanse us.

Our Lord said in Revelation 2:10; "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life." If our Lord had told us to be perfect unto death, none of us could hope to qualify. But we can be faithful. There are many couples in this audience that have been faithful to each other. But is there a couple that can say, "We have been absolutely perfect in all of our relationships to each other. We have never made a mistake."

I heard of one fellow who claimed that he had never made a mistake. But while coming downstairs one morning, he missed a step and came down rather rapidly, surprising all

that were in the house. When he finally landed with a thud, the lady of the house ran to him and said, "Oh, are you hurt?" He jumped up, brushed himself a little, and said, "No, madam, I always come down that way." He then went to the table but was still a little shaky from the fall. He reached for the sugar and got the salt by mistake. When he did so, the lady of the house said, "Oh, sir, you made a mistake and put salt in your coffee instead of sugar." He replied, "I always put salt in my coffee." After the meal, the salt having made him a little sick, he walked out onto the porch and fell off into the yard. The lady ran to help him but he said, "I always leave the porch in that fashion."

Some may say that they never make mistakes, but we all make mistakes. However, here is the important thing: Christ's blood cleanses only as long as we walk in the light. When those windshield wipers cease to operate, the water accumulates. There may be those in this audience tonight who have perhaps allowed sins to pile up mountain high. You are children of God, but you are unfaithful. And, if you were to die tonight, you know your destiny. Now, these are serious matters. It is not a light thing to disregard Christ's blood. Do you not know that?

In Hebrews 10:28-31 the writer says; "A man that hath set at nought Moses' law dieth without compassion on the word of two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be judged 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? For we know him that said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." My brethren, if I were not living as a faithful child of God tonight, it would be difficult for me to live with myself. And to those of you who are not faithful, I hope you will be so miserable that you cannot sleep tonight or until such time as you correct

your sins.

While in a meeting some years ago, I made a statement which I had later forgotten, but which was brought back to my remembrance in an unusual way. I had said, "There are people in this audience who know the truth. And, if you do not obey the gospel during this service, I hope that you are so miserable that you cannot sleep tonight." At least one couple was so miserable that they slept very little that night, for they obeyed the gospel the next night. A few years later, I returned there for another gospel meeting and that young man was the preacher. In the announcements he related what I had said, the effect it had upon his wife and himself, and how they had obeyed the gospel the next night. I hope that you are just as miserable as they were if you are an alien sinner who knows the truth but will not obey it, or if you are an erring child of God who will not repent of your sins, confess them, and ask God, Christ, and the church to forgive you.

These are beautiful flowers on the table, but you would want more than flowers on the table at home if you were hungry for some solid food. You do not have me here to tickle your ears. There may be times when it is permissible to talk in generalities, but when seeking the salvation of lost souls, we need to be specific. As an alien sinner or an erring child of God, you do not have contact with Christ's blood. You are lost and undone, and to perdition you would go if you were to die tonight.

Let us briefly look at some theories of men concerning the blood of Christ. A large number of religious people today argue that the blood is contacted before obedience; this is especially true of protestantism. Not many of them will admit that they hold to such a theory, but it is true of them nevertheless. Sometimes I hear some member of the church remark that some false teacher is such a fine, lovely fellow. Of course, it would be repulsive to a compromising member to call a false teacher what he is - a false teacher. A false

teacher may have a good personality, but if he is using it to deceive people, that makes him even more dangerous. Regardless of whatever good might be said about him, if he teaches that one contacts the blood in disobedience, he is a false teacher of the worst sort. Christ has set the example for us to follow in obedience. "Though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered: and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation" (Heb. 5:8,9). One cannot contact the blood before obedience, and I have already shown that the final act of obedience on the part of an alien sinner's becoming a child of God is baptism.

Also, there are those that argue for universal salvation by claiming that everybody has contacted the blood of Christ. They are very definitely wrong, for, though Christ did "taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9), yet he is the "author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9). Christ died for all - but all will not obey him; therefore, all will not be saved.

The blood of Christ will not make one a member of a denomination. In Corinth, where seeds of division had been sown, the Holy Spirit, through Paul, soundly condemned division. He said, "Now I beseech you, brethren, through 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 perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been signified unto me concerning you, my brethren, by them which are of the household of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I mean, that each one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized into the name of Paul" (I Cor. 1:10-13). The very beginning of division was condemned, but in later centuries that "mystery of lawlessness" which was at work even in Paul's day culminated in the establishment of the Roman Catholic Church and many other

systems of error.

The Lord does not and will not endorse denominationalism. When the church was referred to as a sect, Paul made it clear that it was done by the enemies of Christianity. "But this I confess unto thee, that after the Way which they call a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers, believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets" (Acts 24:14). His enemies called the church a "sect." But Paul, among other things said; "Neither can they prove to thee the things whereof they now accuse me" (Acts 24:13).

The blood will not give one a denominational name. Listen to Acts 4:12; "And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved." We are married to Christ as Christians. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ; that ye should be joined to another, even to him who was raised from the dead, that we might bring forth fruit unto God" (Rom. 7:4). All who are purchased by the blood of Christ are commanded to wear the name "Christian." "But if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name" (I Peter 4:16).

In spite of these plain statements, denominationalism argues that there is nothing in a name. What is in the name of Christ? Salvation is in the name and we are commanded to wear His name. Even in material things there is something in a name. There is something in the name of razor blades and soap. Proverbs 22:1 says; "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold."

The following illustrations will serve to show the importance in a name:

THE BLOOD

No. 1 - A certain woman sought to make a preacher practice what he was preaching. He had preached that there was nothing in a name, so, in a service where he was preaching she arose and said, "Glory to Beelzebub." The preacher ordered her to sit down but she said, "If there is nothing in a name, why is Beelzebub's name not as good as Christ's?" The preacher apparently did not believe what he preached.

No. 2 - A man decided on one occasion to test a preacher who said that there was nothing in a name. So, when the preacher asked for money, which he often did, he wrote a check for a hundred dollars and gave it to him. After arriving home, the preacher looked at the check and found that the man had not signed his own name, but had used someone else's. He called the man and said, "Sir, you signed the wrong name to this check." The other man replied, "No, I did it purposely. You preach that there is nothing in a name, and, if that is true, I am glad to sign another's name to the check and help you in the amount of one hundred dollars."

That preacher did not believe what he preached either. In fact, he could easily see that there was something in a name when money was involved. Do you suppose he considered money more important than salvation? In almost all towns, the majority of religious groups wear names that are not one time mentioned in the scriptures. And the majority of the remainder, though they may wear all or part of a scriptural name, teach the false doctrines of denominationalism.

The blood of Christ will not obligate one to a denominational program. I have talked with preachers who had to admit; "Well, we must send to headquarters to see what we can do about this matter." Paul said in Galatians 5:1; "With freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast therefore, and be

not entangled again in a yoke of bondage." Some of these people had already gone back to the bondage of the law and others were in danger of doing so. Denominationalism takes people into spiritual bondage.

The blood of Christ will not cleanse one before faith, repentance, and confession. But, when these are followed by baptism, one is saved from past sins. Jesus said in Mark 16:16; "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." People often say, "Oh, we can't understand that." It is not a matter of being unable to understand it, but rather an unwillingness to believe it.

To illustrate, suppose that a Chevrolet car dealer in McMinnville were to say, "He that believeth and is baptized shall receive a new car." I assure you that everybody would understand that, and there would be a very long line waiting to be baptized. It is obvious that if people can understand it when a new car is involved, they can also understand it when their soul is involved, unless someone has caused them to misunderstand it, or still worse, to disbelieve and rebel against it. The blood cleanses-but it does not cleanse before faith, repentance, confession, and baptism.

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

I have three little girls and to me they are the sweetest girls I have seen anywhere. Even the youngest one has known from the time she was two or three years old what "for" meant. She sometimes comes to me and says, "Daddy, I want a nickel for some gum or candy." Or, it used to be a nickel. Sometimes it is more now since inflation has set in. She doesn't think that she already has the gum. She knows that she doesn't have it, but she wants the money in order to ob-

tain the chewing gum. The word "for" is used in different senses, but that is the meaning of it in Acts 2:38 as well as in Matthew 26:28 which says; "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

The blood of Christ will not save one in sin. It will not save one out of Christ's body, the church. I have discussed religion with people of the Hindu faith who believe that one can be saved apart from Christ and his blood. In fact, they teach a number of false doctrines, one of which is reincarnation. For example, if you swat a fly, according to them, you may be swatting your grandfather. They believe that the soul comes back in flies, cows, and various other things. They do not, of course, eat cows.

On one occasion when in a discussion with three of them I asked, "Do you not eat beef?" They said, "No." I then asked, "Why?" They replied, "We believe that there is a soul within the cow because of the life." At this point I asked them, "What do you eat?" They said, "Grain." I said, "Well, don't you know that grain has life in it?" They said, "Yes, but when we eat the grain, the life is gone out of it." I then said, "Yes, and I have never eaten a cow that the life had not gone out of either. I have never eaten a live cow in my life."

The truth is, regardless of who you are, you cannot be saved apart from Christ. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Paul said in II Cor. 5:17; "Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new." He is in a new relationship. He is a new Creature. He has a new life to live and a new destination.

I have discussed the plan of salvation in detail tonight as well as the requirements that must be met by the

erring child of God. If you are subject to our Lord's invitation, why not obey him tonight?



BACK TO THE BIBLE

1. "JESUS TARRIED BEHIND IN JERUSALEM." LUKE 2:43
2. "AND HIS PARENTS KNEW IT NOT." LUKE 2:43
3. "BUT SUPPOSING HIM, TO BE IN THE COMPANY, THEY WENT A DAY'S JOURNEY." - LUKE 2:44
4. "AND THEY SOUGHT FOR HIM AMONG THEIR KINSFOLK AND ACQUAINTANCE" - LUKE 2:44
5. "AND WHEN THEY FOUND HIM NOT, THEY RETURNED TO JERUSALEM, SEEKING FOR HIM." - LUKE 2:45

CHAPTER 3

BACK TO THE BIBLE

It is good to see such a fine audience this evening. Paul said in Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me." Some years ago, I preached in a gospel meeting in which twenty-six people responded to our Lord's invitation. I returned to conduct a gospel meeting again the next year and on the first Sunday morning I suggested: "Brethren, it is possible for us to have twenty-six responses again this year." Everyone looked at me like they thought that I was beside myself, but that year we had either fifty-two or fifty-four responses. Brethren, I say that we can have one hundred responses during this meeting. To do this we must work hard and pray often. The gospel of Christ is far more powerful than any of us realize.

This evening I am calling attention to the Saviour's Way - Back to the Bible. The average young denominational preacher does not believe that the Bible is verbally inspired. I want to emphasize the word "young" in order to be correct about it. I want to speak the truth in love as Paul advises in Ephesians 4:15. The statement in reference to the young denominational preacher may amaze some in this audience, but I challenge you to investigate if you doubt the truthfulness of what I am saying. That is one of the reasons why I would

like for young and old alike, and especially the young people, to come each evening at 7:00 o'clock and study with us lessons pertaining to revelation and inspiration of the scriptures as well as lessons pertaining to inspiration and archaeology.

We need to go back to the Bible. Christ is the master. He is the master of the problems in the home. He is the master of man's relationship to his fellow man; and, indeed, he is the master of all problems. Paul says concerning the Old Testament scriptures, "For whatsoever things were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope." Romans 15:4. So the scriptures were written for "our learning." I hasten to say that the plan of salvation for us is not revealed in the Old Testament. Paul says, "But hath now been manifested by the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." II Timothy 1:10. We do learn from the Old Testament. I have heard people almost all of my life say, "Why, the Church of Christ doesn't believe the Old Testament." In Luke 17:32, Jesus said, "Remember Lot's wife." If we didn't know something about the Old Testament, we would not understand the lesson he wants us to learn. During much of the Old Testament period, God's servants devoted a great amount of time in an effort to prevent apostasy and encourage the people to "...ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein." Jeremiah 6:16. One of the saddest statements that I have ever read is, "But they said, We will not walk therein." Now, the present day application: Today, there are those who say we will not walk therein. When we point out that Peter said in I Peter 4:11, "If any man speaketh, speaking as it were oracles of God; if any man ministereth, ministering as of the strength which God supplieth: that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, whose is the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Or as Paul said, "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good."

I Thessalonians 5:21. Many say, "We will not walk therein." There are those who ridicule the idea of speaking where the Bible speaks, remaining silent where the Bible is silent, calling Bible things by Bible names and doing Bible things in Bible ways. Yet, Peter commands this in I Peter 4:11. There are those who say they will do as they desire and feel no obligation to present Bible proof for it, but Paul still commands "prove all things."

This evening, I want us to study a lesson from the New Testament. This lesson has to do with our Lord. From the time of his early infancy until he was twelve years old we have no detailed information concerning him. "And the child grew and waxed strong, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him. And his parents went every year to Jerusalem at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up after the custom of the feast; and when they had fulfilled the days as they were returning, the boy Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and his parents knew it not; but supposing him to be in the company, they went a day's journey: and they sought for him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance; and when they found him not, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking for him. And it came to pass, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions: and all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. And when they saw him, they were astonished; and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. And he went down with them and came to Nazareth; and he was subject unto them: and his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." Luke 2:40-52. There are many things that can be said about these wonderful passages but there are some

lessons that I especially want us to study.

First, let us note the statement, "Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem." Luke 2:43. Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem when the great apostasy came. Last Tuesday evening, I received a call from a nice young man who said, "Brother Elkins, I would like to come and discuss a matter with you." He is married to a Roman Catholic. I knew something of the problem. Though he is not a member of the Lord's church, his parents are unfaithful members. Incidentally, I want to sound a note of warning to you parents. Some years ago this boy's parents were active members of the church but they fell from grace. They have allowed their children to grow up without the benefit of Christian parents. So, this boy grew up and married a Roman Catholic. The boy said that they were married by a civil official. The young man began to take instructions to become a Roman Catholic, but the more he studied Catholicism, the more he read his Bible, and therefore, could not accept Catholicism. He requested that I call the priest and make an appointment to discuss the differences between Catholicism and the Bible. His wife was also with him. I attempted to reach the priest by phone until eleven o'clock or later but could not contact him. Another priest answered the phone and when I asked for Mr. Snupp, he seemed to be unhappy that I would not refer to him as father. I did not reach Mr. Snupp until the next morning, and, when I did and told him the request of the young man, he said, "Oh, I am going to have a discussion with them." I said, "They want me included, or at least the husband does." To make a long story short, I was included. We were soon involved in the discussion. Mr. Snupp, of course, was an intelligent man and we treated each other with courtesy. Among other things, I asked him this question, "Could you marry and remain a priest?" He answered, "No." I then pointed out to him that Christ tarried behind when the Roman Catholic church was originated and began to advocate such false doctrines. To prove this, I then quoted I Timothy 4:1-5. "But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed

to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by them that believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer." He said, "I am not allowed to marry but I have agreed to this voluntarily." I then asked him who made this law? He said that the Pope, "papa", as he referred to him, had made it. I then pointed out to him that by such "voluntary humility" to the Pope, a human law giver, he would lose his soul.

I then asked him why he referred to himself as "father." He said, "There are two senses in which the term father is used. One is in the physical sense, and we do not use it in that sense." I said, "Well, I hope not, for you do not have a wife and you are not supposed to have any children." He said, "It is used in another sense." I asked, "In what other sense?" He said, "In a spiritual sense." I said, "That is exactly the sense of which our Lord was speaking when he said in Matthew 23:9 "And call no man your father on the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven." I asked him if it had ever occurred to him that he had been referring to Peter and Paul without using titles, but that he called himself "father" in disregard to Christ's prohibition in Matthew 23:9. Then, using the words of Job, I said to him, "Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man. For I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing my maker would soon take me away." Job 32:21-22. These are just a few of the many things that we discussed, but let me tell you the outcome of the discussion. The young man said, "Brother Elkins, I would never become a Roman Catholic." I wish that we could have more such discussions. Many people do not realize that apostasy began centuries ago, and, though many people are following religious errors sincerely, Christ does not endorse

them, and is not with them in this false doctrine.

Now, note again, the statement, "forbidding to marry." The priest contended that though they had been married by civil ceremony they were not married in God's sight. Did you know that according to him there is not a person in this audience that is married in God's sight unless he has been married by a Roman Catholic priest? I questioned him for Bible authority as to why he claimed that they were not married unless the ceremony was performed by a Catholic priest. He again admitted that his authority was the Pope instead of the Bible. Paul said in Hebrews 13:4, "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." Now the next part of I Timothy 4 says, "... and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth." Now observe two points; number one, "Of them which believe" the truth, and point number two, "and know the truth." I say this as kindly as I know how, but anyone who says that it is wrong to eat any kind of meat at any time simply because human authority forbids it, either does not "believe" the truth or else he doesn't "know the truth." Whether it is a Seventh Day Adventist or a Roman Catholic or whoever he may be, that is true. The observance of Lent is wholly unauthorized and I do not care to practice anything that originated with Catholicism. Jesus tarried behind when these and other false doctrines were brought in. In 120 A.D. so-called "holy water" was brought in but "Jesus tarried behind," and has never endorsed such. Sometime later about 318 bishops met in Nicea and in 325 A.D. wrote the first human creed. This creed is called the Nicene Creed. Then in 606 A.D. the apostasy resulted in the first pope being set over the apostate church. By 670 A.D. instrumental music was used for the first time by a Roman Catholic church. The Catholic church instituted instrumental music, and those who use it in their worship can find no higher authority for it than the Roman Catholic church. There is absolutely no New Testament authority for it. Someone

may say, "I like it." Well, I like "country ham" but it would be sinful to put it into the worship of the New Testament Church in connection with the Lord's supper. We must have a "thus saith the Lord" for what we do in the worship of the church. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." John 4:24. There are three component parts in worship. Number one, God is the object of our worship. "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him." Psalm 89:7. In the second place, New Testament worship must be "in spirit," it must be with the right manner, in the right attitude. In the next place, it must be according to truth. Christ said in the prayer to his father in John 17:17 "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." It is easy to find passages authorizing singing in the worship of the New Testament Church. We find, for instance, in Hebrews 2:12 "Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." Never, however, can one find "in the midst of the church will I sing and play praises unto thee." The reason many unscriptural things are done in religion is because people like them. One that has that attitude, the determination to do a thing whether the Bible authorizes it or not, does not have the spirit of Christ. In Romans 15:3 "For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me." Christ did not please himself. He said, "For I do always those things that please him." He was here, of course, speaking of his Father. Incidentally, Christ said, "These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me." Luke 24:44. Jesus does not endorse mechanical instruments in New Testament worship.

Jesus does not endorse sprinkling. He tarries behind in Jerusalem, as it were, when sprinkling is done as a religious act. The Roman Catholic church in the Council of Ravenna,

in 1311, legalized sprinkling instead of baptism. May I kindly say this, because I love the soul of every person here; when a person has had water sprinkled or poured upon him, he has not yet been scripturally baptized. Paul said in Colossians 2:12 "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." And, in Romans 6:4, "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."

We could elaborate more, but let us go to the next point. You will observe that it is said, "And his parents knew it not." The reference for these statements is Luke 2:43 "And when they had fulfilled the days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem, and his parents knew it not." Would anyone say that his parents were not honest? I would not. His parents were as honest and sincere in not being aware that he had remained behind as they could possibly be. Surely no one would think that one has reflected upon the sincerity of a person's parents when he says what the Holy Spirit says, through Luke, "and his parents knew it not." Now friends, our parents must not be our authority in religion. If our parents are to be set up as our authority, then we might as well destroy this Book. If our ancestors are to be accepted as authority, which ancestors are to be followed? If one went back seven generations he would have one hundred twenty-eight, and, you may rest assured, he would find them divided religiously. This statement in Luke is not intended to reflect upon the parents of Jesus, but is merely a statement of truth. To say that Jesus is not in the company with a person's parents today is not to reflect upon the honesty of one's parents, but is simply to say it is true of these parents as it was true of Jesus' parents, "and his parents knew it not." Suppose that your parents owned a large hardware store and that they died and willed it to you. But, in your weighing of nails someone became suspicious, and they reported you to those who have the control

over weights and measures, the authorities; and they came and checked. Suppose they found that your scales gave fourteen ounces instead of sixteen ounces to the pound. Would you say, "although I know that you have an accurate way to test my scales, nevertheless, I intend to continue to give only fourteen ounces to the pound because by questioning my scales you are reflecting on the honesty of my parents?"

Such would be a foolish attitude. To correct a mistake would not reflect upon your parents. Rather, if you didn't change it would be a reflection upon you. Sensible people would reason like this; my parents were honest, they didn't know that the scales gave only fourteen ounces for a pound, and had they known it they would have corrected this error. Instead of arguing with the accurate equipment used to check, one should admit that his parents made a serious mistake, but that they were not aware of it. Had the error been pointed out to them, they would have corrected their scales. Now suppose you should say, "I don't care what you prove, if my parents gave fourteen ounces for a pound that's what I will give; if fourteen ounces for a pound was good enough for my parents then it is good enough for me, even though I know they were wrong." If you adopt that view then you wouldn't be honest even though your parents may have been. Now this is what I am saying, the New Testament is our authority; our parents are not.

These are serious matters. I am not here tonight simply to make a speech. I am here because I am interested in your soul's salvation. At this point may I ask this question in the words of Paul in Galatians 4:16, "So then am I become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?"

Let us look at our text again, "but supposing him to be in the company." Tonight there are multiplied thousands of people in religion who suppose that Christ is in their company, but, if their life depended on it, they could not find their doctrines or, in many cases, even the names of the

churches they belong to, in the New Testament. They are simply relying on the supposition that Christ is in their company. Christ's parents were wrong when they only "supposed" that he was in their company; they should have made sure. Any person who depends upon supposition for truth in religion tonight is wrong also. Christ tells us, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." He did not say ye shall "suppose," "guess," or "imagine" that you have the truth. Rather he said, "And ye shall know the truth." Only by knowing and obeying the truth can we be made free from sin.

Note again, "they went a day's journey." I have often thought how awful it would be and how grieved I would be if I had to go one day without Christ. I do not want to go one second without him, and certainly not one day. I know I have Christ because I have obeyed his will, "And hereby know we that we know him, if we keep his commandments," I John 2:3. But, if I found I had not obeyed his commandments I believe I would change. Would you?

But supposing him to be in the company they went a day's journey." Let me emphasize this, they went one day's journey without Jesus but it took them three days to get back to where they had lost him. When people leave the Lord it sometimes takes them three days, or thirty years to get back to him, and, in many instances, they never return. There are many erring children of God in this community. You are in a worse condition now than you were before you ever knew the truth. Peter compares one who thus apostatizes to "the dog turning to his own vomit again, and the sow that had washed to wallowing in the mire." II Pet. 2:22. We don't even like to talk about these matters. Imagine a dog eating a hearty meal, running around and getting sick and being relieved; then coming back and eating that vomit. Even to think of such almost nauseates us. But friends that picture is from the pure and holy word of God. This is God's picture of a child of God who turns back and becomes entangled and overcome in sin

again. If this description of the actions of this dog's going back to his own vomit is repulsive, then if you are an erring child of God, look in the mirror tonight and you will be looking at the type person God is describing. Read II Peter 2: 20-22. It is much easier to leave than to return to the Lord. It is certainly therefore in order to sound this note of warning.

Observe please, "And they sought for him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance." They are to be complimented for this, but they went to the wrong place. They sought for him first among their kinsfolk. I have talked with people who admitted that they could not prove by the Bible that their practice was in harmony with Bible teaching. But they said that their kinsfolk believe in their practice and they were intelligent people and they knew that they must be right. Question: Were not the parents of Jesus sincere? Yet this did not prove that he was among their kinsfolk. Now we all have some kinsfolk among whom Christ does not travel and in whose life he does not live, because they follow false doctrine. I hasten to say that because they are your or my kinsfolk does not make them any more acceptable in God's sight. The truth is, our Lord did not set up our kinsfolk as our authority in religion. Rather, he set up the word of God as our authority.

One of the finest compliments ever paid to a gospel preacher's audience is found in Acts 17:11. "Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind examining the scriptures daily whether these things were so." These people were open minded and they searched to see whether Paul had told them the truth. It is a terrible thing not be open minded. In I Timothy 5:21 "I charge thee in the sight of God, and Christ Jesus, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing by partiality." If a tight fitting cork stopper has been put in a jug, even though the jug is plunged under water, not much water will get into the jug. If a person's mind is closed, one may preach the truth to that person until he dies, but if he will not open his mind, the

truth will not penetrate. One of the most serious accusations possible to make against someone is that he is not open minded. I believe that this audience, for the most part, is open minded or you would not be here. Christ's parents sought for him among their kinsfolk but they did not find him. Then they reasoned like this; if he is not among our kinsfolk he surely is among someone that we know in this company. So they then searched among all the people that they knew, others with them from Nazareth, who were in their traveling company. But they did not find him among any of their acquaintance.

Then a very complimentary thing is said about them, "and when they found him not, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking for him." That is the plea of the churches of Christ; that is the plea of every faithful Christian, and that is the plea of every faithful gospel preacher. It is "back to the Bible for it all," back to the old Jerusalem gospel.

Now, what is required in order to go back to the scriptures for it all? There is nothing too difficult to understand. In fact, it is difficult to misunderstand what to do to be saved. One will not misunderstand unless someone helps him to do so.

Briefly stated, the plan of salvation requires the alien sinner to hear the gospel and believe (Acts 15:7; Heb. 11:6); next, the sinner must repent (Acts 17:30); then he must confess his faith in Christ (Rom. 10:10). The final step that the alien sinner must take in order to become a Christian is being baptized into Christ. I want you to participate in a test with me. I want to rapidly call attention to some passages, and I want us to observe two things. Number one, baptism always precedes salvation. Never is an alien sinner saved until he has been baptized. Salvation is from past sins. Number two, rejoicing because of sins remitted always follows baptism; it never comes before.

In Mark 16:16 "He that believeth and is baptized shall

be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Note baptism precedes salvation.

Then, in Acts 8 when Philip preached Christ to the Ethiopian eunuch let us observe at what point the eunuch rejoiced. "Then Philip opened his mouth and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing." (Acts 8:35-39). Observe carefully, the eunuch was first baptized and following baptism rejoiced.

In I Peter 3:21 "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Here we see the same story repeated; baptism comes first, then following baptism comes salvation.

So, in conclusion, I emphasize that faith, repentance, confession and baptism are requirements that the alien sinner must obey before the Lord will add him to the Church. (Acts 2:41,47).

In Acts 2:38 "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." Note, baptism precedes the remission of sins.

CHAPTER 4

THE CHURCH

Our singing has been excellent in this gospel meeting. I am sure that it prepares us for this phase of our worship. Most of us are aware that the Bible says we teach and admonish one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs as we make melody in our hearts.

One week from tonight, the Lord sparing us and being willing, this gospel meeting will come to a conclusion unless it continues longer than originally scheduled. Time passes so rapidly that what we do -- we should do quickly. When the meeting comes to a close, there will be many places that we will not have had time to go. The harvest indeed is plentiful, the fields are white unto harvest, but the laborers are few. Let us not only pray, therefore, that the Lord of harvest will send forth reapers into his harvest, but let us become a part of this reaping force. This will result in approval from God and the salvation of many souls, and throughout eternity there will be rejoicing exceedingly.

Before beginning the lesson this evening, I want to emphasize that "I have you in my heart." This being true, I shall not hesitate to be plain and bold of speech. Paul says; "Having therefore such a hope, we use great boldness of speech" (II Cor. 3:12). I love the souls of men. To show this

love, I must not only demonstrate this love by kindness, but I must present the truth plainly, firmly, and without compromise. In II Cor. 12:15, Paul presents my sentiments; "And I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you more abundantly, am I loved the less?"

This evening, I am calling your attention to a discussion of "the church." If people universally followed New Testament Christianity, that is all that I would need to say. When someone spoke of the church in the days of Peter, Paul, James, and John, everyone knew about what they were speaking. There was but one church. They did not have this problem of rivals to the church in the same sense that we do today. None of the present day denominations existed then. One of their major battles was with those who were rivals to Christ (the head of the church, Col. 1:18). It should be obvious that when denominationalism becomes a rival to the church, then it becomes a rival to Christ. If the early Christians had been willing to say that Christ was no more than the idol gods, and had they been willing to put a statue of Christ in the Pantheon along with the idol gods, then Christianity would have been accepted as simply another religion. These early disciples were not content to do this. They said that Christ was "the Way" (John 14:6).

There are not many people in this community who will deny that Christ is the Son of God. In fact, there may not be any. But here is the problem we are faced with tonight: Although everyone in this community will admit that Christ is the Son of God, there are those in every community that will deny that his church is the only church. Now when the early disciples came preaching that Christ was the Son of the Living God, that all must obey him or be lost, this truth caused those who were not willing to accept the truth to react by "...crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also" (Acts 17:6).

My friends, the apostles and other early Christians

were persecuted because they contended that the only way to heaven was through Christ. Now tonight, when I contend that there is one church and only one church, I may encounter opposition. I have been referred to as "narrow minded" and many other things far less complimentary. But it is a compliment to be narrow minded provided one is just as narrow as the truth. Christ said in Matthew 7:13,14; "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

If you were to ask the average man on the street his conception of the church, he would probably say: "One church is as good as another." He could not be further from the truth. He certainly did not get the statement "one church is as good as another" from the New Testament. That idea is not there. Such talk does not come from the Bible. That's the way some preachers talk, but there is a vast difference in Bible talk and preacher talk.

The average philosopher of today probably would claim that one religion is as false as another. Again, such people would be wrong in making this claim. The average politician might look at it like this: "If it serves my purpose, I can use one religion about as well as another. If in Utah, play up to the Mormons. If in New York, play up to the Catholics." Now here is the correct explanation: The church is the people of God who have been called out from the world.

A person asked me today, "Brother Elkins, are you called?" I replied, "of course, I am called by the gospel." I then explained that I am called in the Bible sense of the term. Listen to II Thess. 2:13,14; "But we are bound to give thanks to God alway for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, for that God chose you from the beginning unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you through our gospel, to the obtaining

of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Every Christian is called by the gospel. When he meets the demands of the gospel, he is called. Whether he teaches a class, directs the singing, ministers to the sick, preaches, or whatever he does, he is called - but not in any way separate and apart from the gospel of Christ.

There are many people with misconceptions of the church. There is but one church and no person has ever read of more than one in the New Testament. But some of you may be thinking about the seven churches in Asia. Well, that's right - there were seven, but they were not seven different types of churches. They were not seven different denominations. The Laodicean church was one of the congregations and the Colossian congregation was near by. They had exactly the same teaching. Paul said in Colossians 4:16; “And when this epistle hath been read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans: and that ye also read the epistle from Laodicea.” They had the same doctrine and received the same teaching.

Now this idea of different denominations, all teaching conflicting doctrines, but still all going along together is erroneous. They teach differently or they would not be different denominations. To advocate denominationalism is to advocate division, for that is exactly what denominationalism rests upon. God is not the author of such confusion (I Cor. 14:33). They say, “we are all united,” but you and I know that neither a Catholic priest nor a Baptist preacher would allow me to come into their building and preach the truth about the one church and the plan of salvation. If everyone taught the same thing, they would not be divided. The seven congregations in Asia Minor that we read about in Revelation were seven churches of Christ located in seven different geographic parts of that country. When we speak of “the churches of Christ in Warren County,” the churches of Christ of McMinnville,” the churches of Christ in Tennessee,” we

do not mean that they are different types. They are simply in different geographic locations.

The word "church" occurs more than one hundred times in the New Testament. Tonight, we are studying The Marks of Identification of the Church. The word "church" comes from the Greek word "ecclesia" - meaning the "called out." Christ was the builder of his church. We have this reading in Matt. 16:13-20: "When Jesus came into the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ."

These passages tell us that Christ was the builder of the church. Here he promises to build it and later we shall see that he did. I call attention to a point that I hope will remain with you from henceforth: All the people that the disciples mention as expressing their views concerning the identity of Christ were wrong as to who he really was. Yet, as far as I know, they were all honest and sincere. I have no reason to doubt their honesty and sincerity. Likewise, I have no reason to doubt the honesty and sincerity of many people today who are wrong. Nevertheless, they are in error. Note again verse 14 of Chapter 16. "Some say that thou art John the Baptist." Friends, Christ was never John the Baptist.

Therefore, all those who believed thus were wrong as to his identity. Herod was of that class. We read in Matt. 14:1; "At that season Herod the tetrach heard the report concerning Jesus, and said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist: he is risen from the dead: and therefore do these powers work in him." Previous to this, it is said of Herod; "And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison" (Matt. 14:10). To tell a man that he is in adultery can cause a preacher to get his head figuratively cut off today. Frankly, I am very much concerned about the increase of adultery everywhere, and among God's people in particular. Herod, along with all others who thought that Christ was John the Immerser, was wrong.

There was another group that said, "he is Elijah." They perhaps had misunderstood the application of Malachi 4:5,6 which says; "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." Jesus, of course, explained that this reference was to John the Baptist and his work. "And if ye are willing to receive it, this is Elijah, which is to come" (Matt. 11:14). Even before John's birth the angel of the Lord prophesied of him. "And he shall go before his face in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just; to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him" (Luke 1:17).

John the Baptizer was a fearless, courageous prophet like the great prophet, Elijah. The prophecy did not mean that Elijah himself would come back, but rather that John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, the harbinger of our Lord, would be fearless and of great courage, as was Elijah. Although some thought that he was really Elijah, they were wrong about it, even though they may have been honest.

Then there were others who believed that Christ was Jeremiah the weeping prophet. Christ was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Isaiah prophesied in Isaiah 53 that this would be characteristic of him. Our Lord said in Matt. 23:37; "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."

There was a fourth class which said, "All of you are wrong. He is neither John, Elijah, nor Jeremiah. We do not know which one he is, but he is just one of the prophets." Friends, all of these people erred as to the identity of Christ.

Let us now make the application to the church. There are those who contend for one man-made church and others who contend for another. But Christ has no connection with any man-made church. The truth is: if a church does not teach Christ's plan of salvation, worship, organization, and all the other marks of his ownership, such a church does not belong to Christ. Christ was the founder of his church.

Jesus complimented Simon Peter for making the confession "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16). Jesus promised to build the church. "And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). Christ promised to build his church upon this rock. The rock, therefore, must refer to either Christ's confession of Peter - or - Peter's confession of Christ. Our Catholic friends contend that the reference is to Peter since the word "Peter" means a rock or stone. However, the original language will not permit this interpretation, because two different words are used for "Peter" and "rock." "Thou art Peter (petros), and upon this rock (petra), I will build my church." Thus, Jesus did not promise to build his church upon Peter (petros), but rather upon the rock (petra) - the wonderful truth that he was the Son of God.

Our Lord pointed out to Peter that he was going to build his church upon the great rock - the solid truth that he was the Son of the living God. But it is not entirely necessary for you to know the difference in these two Greek words in order to know the truth on this subject. For we read in I Cor. 3:11; "For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Also Eph. 2:20 says; "being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone." Peter contended that Christ, not he, was the foundation of the church. "Be it known unto you all and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:10-12).

I mentioned last night my discussion with a Catholic priest on this subject. I gave the difference between those two Greek words and he did not deny it. I also brought up Matt. 16:18 and discussed it for the benefit of the couple that was listening. The priest could not overthrow the arguments. The truth is, Peter did not have any more authority than the other apostles. It is true, of course, that he was granted the privilege of preaching the first gospel sermon to the people on the day of pentecost - thus using the keys of the kingdom. In other words, Peter was given the privilege of setting forth the conditions that must be complied with in order to enter the church - or kingdom. All the apostles had the same authority that Peter had. "Jesus therefore said to them again, Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit; whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John 20:21-23). So Christ, not Peter, was the builder of the church. The church was not built upon Peter or any other man.

Let us note that Christ's church was established at the scriptural time and at the scriptural place. We can learn this from passages in the Old Testament coupled with the second chapter of Acts. In Isaiah 2:2,3 we read; "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." Even the place is specified. I emphasize that any church which did not have its beginning in the city of Jerusalem on the first pentecost following the resurrection of Christ as we read in Acts 2 could not possibly be the Lord's church.

A number of things are predicted by Isaiah: (1) The mountain of the Lord's house (also called the house of the God of Jacob) was to be established. (2) It was to be established in the last days. (3) When established, "all nations" were to flow unto it; and (4) The word of the Lord would go forth from Jerusalem.

Please note that these prophecies were fulfilled on the day of Pentecost as recorded in the second chapter of Acts. There we find that: Peter referred to that time as "the last days" (verses 16 & 17); the commission that embraced "all nations" then became operative (Matt. 28:19 - Luke 24:47-49); the word of the Lord went forth from Jerusalem (Acts 2:16-42); and, it was on that day of Pentecost the kingdom came with power. The words "kingdom" and "church" are often used with reference to the same institution.

Observe first of all that the kingdom was to come "with power" (Mk. 9:1). This definitely means that the kingdom and power would come at the same time - one would come with the other. Also, the power was to come when the

Holy Spirit came upon them (Acts 1:8). And, the Holy Spirit came "when the day of Pentecost was fully come" (Acts 2:1-4). Since the Holy Spirit came "when the day of Pentecost was fully come," the power came at the same time, for it was to come when the Holy Spirit came. Notice that the kingdom was to come "with power." So the kingdom came "when the day of Pentecost was fully come."

This Pentecost is referred to as "the beginning." When the Holy Spirit fell on Cornelius, Peter compared it with the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost. "And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, even as on us at the beginning" (Acts 11:15). This day of Pentecost, therefore, marks the origin of the church of Christ. Statements before this Pentecost pointed forward to the establishment of the church. A short time before he died, Jesus put the origin of the church in the future when he said; "upon this rock I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18). All students of language know that "will build" is future tense and thus, the church had not been built when Jesus made the statement.

Beginning with the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ, the church was always referred to as in the present. It was on that day that "there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41). "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). In fact, friends, it was never thereafter referred to as something yet to be built. This shows the day of Pentecost to be the scriptural time and place when the church of our Lord was established. Any church, therefore, that did not have its beginning in the city of Jerusalem, on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead as we read in Acts 2, cannot possibly be the Lord's church. The builder of the church was Christ. The church was built upon Christ. The place was the city of Jerusalem. The time was "the last days" or "in the beginning of the Christian Dispensation."

Sometimes when I am travelling, I see large signs which read; "we are living in the last days." Well, that is not surprising. We have been living in them since the day of Pentecost. We have now been in the "last days" for almost two thousand years. Of course, we are coming nearer to the "last" of the "last days." The last days began on the day of Pentecost. The Christian Dispensation is the last dispensation of time. We sing the song "The Gates of Mercy May Close." We are living in the last dispensation that this world will have until the judgment. During this Christian Dispensation the grace and mercy of our Lord are freely extended. When the gates of mercy close, there will be no second chance. There will not be a thousand years reign upon this earth. This earth will not even be here. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (II Peter 3:10).

Some years ago, another brother and I were doing some visiting, and while at one place a so-called Jehovah's Witness came in. They are not really Jehovah's Witnesses and let me explain why by using this illustration. Suppose there is an accident which I did not even see, but when the case comes to court I testify, "I am a witness of that accident." The judge might then ask, "Did you see the accident?" I would have to answer, "No, I did not see it but I am a witness of it." All of you know that my testimony would be worthless and ridiculous. But friends, it would be no more false than the so-called testimony of the so-called Jehovah's Witnesses of today. Paul says of Christ; "And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time" (I Cor. 15:8). Paul says that he was the last to be a witness of his resurrection by seeing him. The very idea of these people, who are members of a sect, claiming to be witnesses of Christ.

A few moments later we became involved in a discussion and he brought up the term "Armageddon" and some other of his pet expressions. Our discussion did not continue

very long though, for I quoted II Peter 3:10 which shows that this earth will not even be here for Christ to reign on for a thousand years. The nearest he will ever be to the earth is "in the clouds" (I Thess. 4:17). If anyone doubts this, then find the passage in the New Testament that says he will ever come any nearer. At this point, I was not aware that the man was becoming upset. But after I quoted II Peter 3:10, he leaped to his feet and with a great deal of indignation said, "That's rotten doctrine." I then pointed out that he should apologize for making such a statement because I did not write II Peter 3:10, and that he was charging Peter with preaching "rotten doctrine." He then left hurriedly but not before I pointed out to him "resist the devil and he will flee from you."

On the day the church of our Lord was established, every nation under heaven was represented; "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judea and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, we do hear them speaking in our tongues the mighty works of God" (Acts 2:9-11). To all these people, the apostle Peter presented the plan of salvation.

Let us now discuss the answer to the question basically and substantially asked in these words; "What must I do to be saved?" I have observed that numerous preachers of today will not tell an alien sinner what to do to be saved. Not long ago, we baptized a man in Oak Ridge who had for many years wanted to be baptized for the remission of sins. But there was not a Baptist preacher in his section who would baptize him for that purpose. In fact, they denied that baptism was necessary for salvation in spite of Acts 2:38.

Let us look into four cases of conversion in order to receive the answer given to different people at different stages of their conversion.

First, I call attention to a man who had never heard about Christ and his gospel. I refer to the Philippian jailor. He was a heathen. His question was; "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Paul had cast an evil spirit out of a certain girl. "And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the market-place unto the rulers, and brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, and teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans. And the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks" (Acts 16:19-24).

Now please notice carefully the next ten verses. "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm; for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, What must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house."

Now consider this observation: This man had never before heard a gospel sermon. Therefore, when he asked the question, "Sirs, What must I do to be saved?", the very first thing that he was told to do was to "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." Notice this reading in John 8:24; "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." Also in Hebrews 11:6; "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." We will perhaps come back to this later but I want to add one thing further at this point. This man (the jailor) was not saved by faith only. He was not saved the very moment that he believed. I heard about a denominational preacher who claimed, in a tract, that he was going to give the answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" He referred to Acts 16:31; "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Then he wrote in large capital letters "S-T-O-P." Why? Because he was afraid that his readers would learn there was more than "faith only" to be done by the alien sinner in order to be saved.

The second case of conversion for our consideration is found in Acts, chapter 2. This is the record of the beginning of the church. Peter's subject on this occasion was Christ. It is stated in verse 22; "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know." In verse 36 Peter begins his conclusion by saying; "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." These words pricked their hearts. "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 were not told to believe as was the Philippian jailor. Why not? Peter's forceful words had already convinced them that Christ was the Son of God. They were already believers; therefore, Peter did not need to tell them to believe. The jailor had not traveled as far as the Pentecostians had, but

he had to travel the same road of salvation; therefore, he had to take the first step - the step of faith. The Pentecostians had taken the first step, but they had not taken the second step, which is repentance. Carefully observe the answer to the question "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" In verse 38; "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."

Let us suppose for a moment I am making a trip of four miles. As I begin my journey I ask someone how far it is to my destination. Certainly if the person knows the correct distance he would say four miles. After going one mile I ask another person how far to my destination. He would not say four miles - because I have already traveled one mile. Therefore, his answer would be three miles.

The jailor had not believed so he was told to take the first step - or travel the first mile. The people on Pentecost already believed so they were told to repent, that is, to take the second step - or travel the second mile on the road to salvation. Of course, they were told to go all the way and fully complete their obedience which included baptism.

After traveling the third mile of my journey, I again ask the distance. Of necessity the answer would be different from the first two answers because I have traveled farther down the road. The Pentecostians had progressed farther on the road to salvation than the jailor had at the point when he asked the question; "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Therefore, they were given a different answer.

The third conversion we shall now mention involves a person who had traveled farther along the road toward salvation than either the jailor or the Jews on Pentecost. I refer to the Ethiopian eunuch. Philip the evangelist "preached unto him Jesus" (Acts 8:35). Note the steps which the eunuch

had to take. It was not necessary to tell him to believe or repent since it was obvious that he had already done so. But he had not taken the third step - the step of confession. After confessing Christ, he then completed his obedience, as did the jailor and the Jews at Pentecost, by being baptized. Listen please to Acts 8:36-39; "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing." We know that Philip did not sprinkle or pour some water on the eunuch for "they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him." Paul tells us that in baptism one is "buried" (Rom. 6:4 - Col. 2:12).

The eunuch took the third step. He traveled the third mile on the way to salvation. He was a believing penitent but was about to overlook the need for the confession. Hence, Philip told him; "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." He then made the good confession. "And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Paul says in Romans 10:10; "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." The eunuch, therefore, had to take the third step.

But continuing on my four mile journey, having now traveled three miles, I ask another person how far to my destination. The correct answer would be one mile. After hearing "the word of the Lord" the jailor had to take the first step - which is to believe. The Jews on Pentecost had already believed so they had to take the second step - which

is to repent. The eunuch had already taken the first two steps so he was told to take the third step - which is to make the confession.

The fourth conversion is about a man who lacked only one step, or one mile, on the road to salvation. I speak of Saul of Tarsus. This man was a believer; he had repented; he had certainly acknowledged the Lord. What was the final step he needed to take to become a Christian? Here is the answer; "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

The jailor was baptized. "And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house" (Acts 16:33,34).

The Jews on the day of Pentecost were baptized. Peter commanded them to be baptized in Acts 2:38 and Acts 2:41. We read "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."

The eunuch was baptized. "And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:38,39).

Saul of Tarsus was told; "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 obeyed the command to be baptized for we read in Acts 9:18; "And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized."

At this point I want to compliment this community for being so receptive to the truth. Someone said to me; "My preacher has been telling me that one can be saved before baptism." I replied, "Yes, and I can probably even tell you some of the passages that he is using and misusing." I then quoted Romans 5:1 which reads; "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." The person said, "That's it exactly." I suggested then that we study the passage. First, I raised the question; "Who made this statement in Romans 5:1?" It was Paul. Paul says we are "justified by faith." I then asked; "Has your preacher been telling you that alien sinners are justified by faith only?" The person replied; "Yes." Well, James says that is not so for we read in James 2:24; "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."

Paul was justified by faith and he had peace with God. But when did he have peace with God? When was he justified? Remember; "And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink" (Acts 9:9). The answer is recorded in Acts 22:16; "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Paul was justified by faith, but it was an obedient faith. It was when his faith was made perfect through works (James 2:22). The last act of his obedient faith in becoming a child of God was baptism so that his sins might be washed away or forgiven. He had peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, but this peace did not come before his baptism - but rather followed it.

Paul was justified. He contacted the blood of Christ, but not until he was baptized. Paul himself says in Romans 6:3,4; "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Note that Paul included himself. He points out here that he did not contact

the blood of Christ until he was baptized.

Therefore, the final step in all these conversions, including the conversion of Paul, was baptism. May I kindly say to you that no person has ever yet been saved by the blood of Christ, or entered Christ, unless he has been buried in water for the remission of sins. From the day of Pentecost until the end of time - this will remain true.

The church of Christ is the Lord's church because it is scriptural in worship. We read in John 4:24; "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." We must have the right attitude and we must worship him according to truth (John 17:17).

I will briefly mention instrumental music. The old covenant had ordinances of divine service (Heb. 9:1). There are also acts of worship specified in the New Testament. When we worship, we are on "holy ground." We cannot use just anything that we want in worship. In Eph. 5:19 Paul says; "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." Every reference in the New Testament pertaining to the music that we are to use in our worship tells us that we are to sing. Also, we are told not to go beyond that which is written. And if one brings in mechanical instruments of music into the worship, he has done just that - gone beyond. "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (II John 9-11).

The power of the gospel is indeed great. When my brother, Clark Elkins, moved to Pikeville, Kentucky some years ago, there were only eighteen members of the church. After four years, approximately three hundred had responded

to our Lord's invitation. While I was there in a meeting, three preachers of the Christian Church came to our services. They claimed to be members of the church of Christ, but they were digressive in their worship and in other ways. After services one evening, we discussed some matters with them until eleven o'clock.

When people there learned that instrumental music was sinful in the worship of the New Testament Church, many renounced the Christian Church. Some repented of that sin in the presence of the three digressive preachers. I had mentioned in my sermon that particular night that there were honest people in error, but now, since they knew instrumental music was wrong, they should renounce it and go on to heaven. I also stated that these preachers should lead the way down the aisles and repent.

One of these preachers had earlier in the day, in a private conversation, admitted that instrumental music was not authorized in the worship of the New Testament Church. He had also admitted that it caused division and that if he were starting a new congregation, he doubted the wisdom of putting in the instrument. However, he went on to further state that he was going to keep it. This preacher had been laughing during my sermon until I told the audience what he had said and then he ceased his laughing. It would be difficult to convince me that a man who would admit things to be wrong in private did not know better than to teach them in public. The truth is, all arguments offered to substantiate the use of instruments in worship are flimsy and have absolutely no scriptural weight to them.

Some people go back to the Old Testament in an effort to prove that instrumental music is acceptable to God in worship today. They say, "they had instrumental music under the Old Testament." Yes, and Solomon, under that same law, had a thousand wives. Also, under that law, animal sacrifices were offered.

The Mormons seek to justify polygamy by an appeal to the Old Testament. It is said that one of the reasons that the streets of Salt Lake City are so wide is that they were designed that way to permit Brigham Young and his many wives to walk down them. It is also said that, on one morning, he went out and married two women, came home and ate a nervous and hasty lunch, and went out and married two others before dinner and called it a day. God did not approve of polygamy even in the Old Testament, though he tolerated it (Matt. 19: 3-9 - Acts 17:30). He allowed both polygamy and instrumental music under the Old Testament, but he neither sanctions nor approves either under the New Testament.

Suppose a man next Sunday seeks to attend the services of a religious group that uses instrumental music. Following him were his fifty wives, with each wife having a goat under her arm. The man carries a lamb to sacrifice, but following them, someone is bringing a piano. They walk to the door and seek to enter and worship with their polygamy, animal sacrifices, and instrumental music. There is not a religious group in this county that would allow them to bring in their goats and sheep and offer them in a religious service upon an altar. None of them, unless indeed it be the Mormons, would tolerate their polygamy. But here is what they will do. They will say, "We will not accept your polygamy nor animal sacrifice, but we will not object to your instrumental music. In fact, we have had it all along." Friends, there is no more authority for instrumental music in Christian worship than there is for polygamy and animal sacrifices. There is absolutely no authority for any of them.

When a daughter marries she usually takes some of her mother's furniture with her. The Roman Catholic Church is an apostate church. The Catholic Church introduced instrumental music into their worship and protestant denominations have borrowed the instrument from the Catholics. Instrumental music in worship has no higher authority than the Roman Catholic Church. There is not a scripture in the New Test-

ament that authorizes its use in the worship of the New Testament Church.

Friends, we are not under the law of Moses, the prophets, nor the psalms, and we cannot go back to any of them for proof of what we are to do in New Testament worship. Luke 24:44 shows that Christ settled this matter once and for all. "And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me."

The Lord's church is scriptural in worship. There are five items of New Testament worship. They are: (1) partaking of the Lord's supper; Acts 20:7; I Cor. 11:23-34: (2) giving of our means every Lord's day; I Cor. 16:1,2: (3) teaching and preaching; Acts 2:42: (4) praying; Acts 2:42: and (5) singing; Eph. 5:19; Heb. 2:12; Col. 3:16.

The church of Christ is scriptural in name. As individual members, we glorify God in the name "Christian" (I Peter 4:16 - Acts 11:26 - Acts 26:28). The church is referred to as "the churches of Christ" (Rom. 16:16); "the church of God" (I Cor. 1:2); "the body of Christ" (Col. 1:24 - Col. 1:18 - Eph. 1:22,23); "the church of the firstborn" (Heb. 12:23). In fact, any scriptural designation is acceptable. However, if a church is wearing any of these scriptural designations but has denominational teaching to go with it, it is, of course, unscriptural.

The church of Christ is the Lord's church because it is scriptural in organization. In Acts 14:23 Luke wrote; "And when they had appointed for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed." Someone today said that he had been told that the early church did not have elders. Acts 14:23 refutes this error and elders' qualifications are stated in I Timothy, chapter 3, and also in Titus, chapter 1.

Christ is the head of his church. "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence" (Col. 1:18). My friends, you can read about the church of Christ in the New Testament. But you cannot read about the Roman Catholic Church there. The first pope of the Catholic Church was Boniface III in the year 606 A.D. Before the year 606, it cannot be found where anyone was ever styled "pope." Yet the Catholics have the audacity to misrepresent Peter and claim that he was the first pope. All such is an insult to the intelligence of enlightened men.

You cannot read of any of the modern denominations in the Bible. You must go to secular history to read about them. At the beginning of the Reformation, Martin Luther arose to defy the pope while the pope was putting on a big sale of indulgences. This, of course, we admire in Luther. He wrote out ninety-five objections to the Catholic Church, nailed them to the door of a church building, and invited any Catholic to meet him in a discussion of them. This brought forth a papal denunciation and finally his excommunication in 1521.

You cannot read in the Bible about one protestant denomination with which we are familiar today. John Calvin became the founder of the Presbyterian Church in the year 1535. Was it the church of Christ? Of course not. Why? Because the church of Christ was founded by Christ in the city of Jerusalem in the year 33 A.D. You will find that Calvinism has assumed different names in different countries. On the European continent, Calvinism was called "Church of the Reformed Faith." In France, Calvinism wore the name of "Huguenots." In Scotland, the very same body was referred to as "Presbyterian." In England, they wore the name of "Puritans." In Holland, the "Dutch Reformed Church." But they all were practically identical in origin, doctrine, and practice. It might be well to point out here that the Baptist Church has, in doctrine, been greatly influenced by Calvinism.

Henry VIII, King of England, was a devout Catholic but he wanted to divorce his wife and marry another woman. Because the pope refused to grant Henry's divorce, Henry broke with the Catholic Church. He then had Parliament pass some laws suitable to him. The Act of Supremacy, which Henry succeeded in getting Parliament to pass in 1534, made Henry VIII the head of the church of England. By the passage of this and other acts, the church of England, or the Episcopal Church as it is known in America, came into being in 1534. It could not possibly be the church of Christ.

Let us devote some attention to the Baptist Church. In the year 1608 the first Baptist Church on earth was founded in Holland. And in 1611 another sprang up in England. Roger Williams planted another in Providence, Rhode Island in 1639. Some Baptist preachers still vainly try to prove from the Bible that the Baptist Church has a right to exist, but the most learned and scholarly of Baptist preachers no longer try to prove the impossible idea of Baptist Church succession.

Methodism is a by-product of Episcopalianism. It was a step taken at first, not to establish something new, but to overcome the coldness and ritualism that prevailed in the church of England. The center of Methodism is not Christ - but John Wesley. I have in my possession the Discipline of the Methodist Church, 1952 edition. On page 3 under the heading "Historical Statement," we find this statement: "This church is a great Protestant body, though it did not come directly out of the Reformation but had its origin within the church of England, its founder was John Wesley...." It can be shown that all denominations are man-made and therefore without divine authority to exist. The church of Christ exists by the authority of Christ and to be saved one must be in it.

Sometimes people say, "One church is as good as another." There might be some element of truth in this state-

ment if they are referring to man-made churches. But if they intend to include the church of our Lord in that statement, nothing could be farther from the truth. From no standpoint could a person be wrong by being in the Lord's church. Since there is only one church, it is a matter of necessity to be in that one church if one is to be saved.

I have earlier in the sermon stated the plan of salvation for the alien sinner - faith, repentance, confession, and baptism. The erring child of God must repent, confess his sins, and pray (Acts 8:20-23 - I John 1:9 - James 5:16). If you are subject to the invitation, won't you come - even now?

**"AND THE MULTITUDE OF THEM THAT BELIEVED
WERE OF ONE HEART AND SOUL
THEY WERE THEREFORE ONE IN THEIR:**

1. THINKINGACTS 4:32-PROV. 23:7
2. UNDERSTANDING ...AC.4:32-MT.13:15
3. DESIRES.....ACTS 4:32-ROM.10:1
4. FAITH.....ACTS 4:32-ROM. 10:10
5. AFFECTIONS...ACTS4:32-MT22:37-1 PET.3:8
6. PURPOSE...ACTS 4:32-2 COR.9: 7

CHAPTER 5

UNITY

It is a distinct pleasure to have this wonderful opportunity to worship God again this evening. We are blessed with many visitors; among them are a number of gospel preachers. My father directed singing for fifty years and loved the church greatly. In our audience tonight there is an elderly gospel preacher who, years ago, preached in my home congregation and was a friend to my father. One characteristic I have always appreciated in my father was the fact that he upheld gospel preachers, the church, and that for which the church and these men stood as the highest ideals attainable in this life.

This evening we are discussing the vital theme of "unity." The majority of people do not realize how serious division is. Division is indeed very sinful. We read in James 3:13-16: "Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by his good life his works in meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth. This wisdom is not a wisdom that cometh down from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed." I do not think that I have ever read a more graphic description of just how terrible, awful, and sinful division is than this. We shall be discussing such

passages this evening.

I hope that all of us will make the necessary applications of these scriptures to our needs. A man said that there are two types of people that go to church. One attends with a pitch fork and he just pitches the truth over his shoulder to someone else and never applies it to himself, while the other type attends church with a rake and he rakes in the truth and applies it to his needs. Let us use the rake tonight. Paul told Timothy, "Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching. Continue in these things; for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee." I am confident, knowing something about human nature, that we have people in this audience who are waiting to see what I will say so they can apply it to someone else.

Of our Lord it is said, "Who in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear, though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation" (Hebrews 5:7-9).

In the very shadow of the cross our Lord's longest recorded prayer was prayed. This was certainly not his longest prayer, for, before selecting his apostles we read, "And it came to pass in these days, that he went out into the mountain to pray; and he continued all night in prayer to God" (Luke 6:12). But our Lord's prayer in John 17 is his longest recorded prayer. He first prayed for himself: "These things spake Jesus; and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee" (John 17:1). And in verse 5 he prayed: "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." He then prayed for his apostles in these words: "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me; for they are

thine: and all things that are mine are thine, and thine are mine: and I am glorified in them. And I am no more in the world, and these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are" (John 17:9-11). Having prayed for himself and his apostles, he then prayed for all who would ever believe and obey him. In other words, he prayed for us. He prayed "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me" (John 17:20-21).

Our Lord prayed for unity. He did not pray for some kind of loose-jointed union. There is a vast amount of difference between unity and union. It is possible to tie two cats together by their tails and throw them across a clothes line, but you certainly would not have unity. There will be some fighting and scratching. The religious world tonight, as a whole, is contending for union instead of unity. Some ten years ago, or at least shortly after I moved to Oak Ridge, the Baptist preacher who preached for a large Baptist church that was located just across from our parking lot approached me one day when we met at the hospital with the suggestion that I join the Ministerial Alliance. Incidentally, he was the President of it at that time. I said, "I have some questions that I would like to ask you. First of all, would I be permitted to preach the whole truth on any and all subjects?" He did not seem very anxious to answer that question. To give him a concrete example of what I meant by the whole truth, I asked him, "Would I be allowed to preach the truth concerning baptism, that is, that baptism is a burial in water for the remission of sins?" Of course, he did not want me to preach that baptism was for remission of sins. I then told him that he and the others of the Ministerial Alliance reminded me of a similar group who invited an old gospel preacher to one of their meetings but strictly forbade him to even mention baptism and its necessity for salvation. The old preacher agreed

not to mention baptism. He went to their meeting and kept his word. However, he read Mark 16:16 like this: "He that believeth and doeth that which this group of preachers do not believe, and will not permit me to mention in their meeting, shall be saved but he that believeth not shall be damned." Then he went to Acts 2:38 and read it like this: "Then Peter said unto them, repent, and do that which I am not allowed to mention, and which this group of preachers do not believe anyway, 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 he went to Acts 22:16 and read it like this: "And now why tarriest thou? Arise and do that which this group of preachers do not believe anyway, and which they have forbidden me to mention, calling on the name of the Lord." At that point, one of the older preachers leaped to his feet and said rather loudly, "Go ahead and say it. You are making it worse the way you are doing it." Also, I clipped a little article from the Nashville Tennessean to use on just such an occasion as I was having with this preacher. It was a quotation referring to Mr. Fisher, of the Church of England, who was just finishing his sixth term as the President of the World Council of Denominational Churches. The reporter stated that Dr. Fisher with his characteristic self-effacing wit said, "We have done absolutely nothing, and we have done it exceedingly well." I showed that clipping to the denominational preacher with whom I was talking, and suggested to him in kindness, that I thought this statement well described their ministerial alliance. I was kind, but firm, when I said those things to him. We did remain friends. However, that was the one and only time that he ever asked me to join the Ministerial Alliance. Time continued and he has now moved from Oak Ridge. However, before he left, I chanced to meet him one day at the store where one of our elders is the manager. He said, "Garland, the Ministerial Alliance now has so many modernists in it that I don't know how much longer I can remain in it." I reminded him of our former conversation and quoted Amos 3:3--"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Our Lord did not pray for a loose-jointed union

wherein everyone agrees to disagree. Rather, he prayed for absolute unity. But quite often you hear people say: "Our Lord does not intend that we be united here but we are just to be united in heaven." But such people are just as wrong about that assertion as they are about any other error. Please listen again very carefully to John 17:20-21: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Observe, please, that Christ said, "that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Our Lord prayed for unity among his followers that the world might see that unity and be constrained to believe that there is indeed something to Christianity; that the Father did send Christ and that the world might come to the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. If we, as followers of Christ, do not unite upon his truth in this life, we need not expect to be in his presence in the world to come.

There are those who say that we cannot be united in this life and yet those same people pray the model prayer of Matthew, Chapter 6, that our Lord taught his disciples. But if you advocate division, you cannot even consistently pray that prayer. Listen to a part of that prayer as recorded in Matthew 6:9-10: "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name, Thy Kingdom come." We cannot pray this part of it today because the kingdom has already come. In fact, it has been here for almost two thousand years. In I Corinthians 15, it is stated by Paul that Christ will reign until he has put the last enemy, which is death, under his feet. Then Christ will deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father. So, Christ is reigning over his kingdom tonight. But we can certainly pray the part which says, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." Now I raise this question: "Is there a person in this audience who really believes that in heaven there will be a little partition here and another there, and that the inhabitants of heav-

en will be divided? I do not believe a single person in this audience believes that. Well, if you do not, and if you pray the prayer, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," you, if you mean what you pray, obligate yourself to work toward the eliminating of division and the obtaining of unity. Everyone admits that there will be no division in heaven. Therefore, there should be no division upon earth. Our Lord prayed for absolute unity, and we need to remember, "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow in his steps" (I Pet. 2:21).

There never were three hundred divisions between Christ and his Father. There never was one division between them. What kind of unity did Christ pray for? Listen to him again, "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 17:21).

God is the God of peace. He did not send Christ to establish divided bodies to fight each other. Christ established but one Church (Matthew 16:18). He did not establish a multiplicity of churches. "And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thess. 5:23). Our God is a God of peace. In I Corinthians 14:33 we read: "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." Earlier I called attention to the fact that "Where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed." But God is not the author of confusion. Therefore, God is not the author of division.

I suggest further that Christ is the "Prince of Peace." Listen to Isaiah 9:6: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

Then in Ephesians 2:14: "For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition." The church of Christ is a kingdom of peace. We have this statement in Romans 14:17: "For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." And we are admonished in Romans 14:19: "So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another." Have you ever known anyone who violated this? Are there those here that have violated this? Then you know your duty. Observe please Romans 14:21: "It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth." Incidentally, this verse does not say "whereby thy brother objecteth." Everything that we do that is right, somebody will object to it. I do not know of anything that our Lord has authorized that someone has not, and does not, continue to voice objection. Sin is the transgression of God's Law, (I John 3:4), but my sin is not the transgression of your opinion. I know of people who object to faith, others object very much to repentance. I had a discussion with a preacher who objected to confession. I have had discussions with a number of preachers who have ridiculed, and scorned, and made light of the necessity of baptism for the remission of sins. I know of people who deny the importance of the Lord's supper. I know people who deny the necessity of simply singing as the Lord authorized. They are not content to do just what the Lord commanded, they are determined to corrupt their worship by adding instrumental music. I know people that ridicule prayer. Some oppose teaching. Some object to the contribution. Somebody opposes any and every act that our Lord authorizes in Christian worship. Some people seem to have been born in the "objective case" and in the "kickitive mood." Some people seem to get their exercise by jumping to conclusions. That is a very poor way of getting one's exercise. The church is a kingdom of peace, and whoever disrupts the peace of the church stands guilty and condemned in the sight of God. Now, of course, if any kind of disturbance comes because one stands for the truth, he is not responsible for it,

but the person that opposes the truth bears the blame. Elijah stood for the truth but the first thing that the wicked king Ahab said to him after "it rained not on the earth for three years and six months" was: "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" Elijah replied in these words recorded in I Kings 18:18: "And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim." In other words, Elijah was saying to Ahab "Thou art the man."

Again, I suggest to you that the gospel is the gospel of peace. In Ephesians 6:15 we have these words: "And having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace." Note the expression "preparation." The gospel is God's prescription to be taken in order to build us up. "And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified" Acts 20:32. If you are a Christian, did you not know that you have been added to the church in order that you might have peace and that you might help to continue to maintain and to keep the peace? I call attention to Colossians 3:15: "And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye were called in one body; and be ye thankful." What is the motivating factor in your life? These passages are directed to those of us who are Christians. Some brethren have so much faction, jealousy, and hatred in their hearts to consign their souls to hell. At this point I hasten to ask, "So then am I become your enemy, by telling you the truth? There is nothing that means enough to me to cause me to compromise the truth. Like Peter, through weakness, in an unguarded moment, I might compromise the truth unintentionally, but I will not intentionally do so. Peter thought that he would not, but did. I am not saying how strong I am, but I am saying that I do not intend to do it. Peter did not plan it that way either. I pray, and want you to pray with and for me, that I shall never compromise the truth. I have lived with and preached for one congregation for the past ten

years, and naturally some of the best friends that I have on earth are members of that congregation. If I know my heart tonight, I can truthfully say that I have not one time compromised with anybody in that congregation whether in private or in public. I only hope that I can say this same thing when the time arrives for me to move from the Highland View congregation.

It has a solemnizing effect upon me to think of I Corinthians 10:12. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Whatever I shall say I need to first apply to myself. And if there is any part that I do not realize that I need, I will count you to be my friend if you will call that to my attention, and I assure you that I will count you my friend. However, on the other hand, I ask you to apply these truths to your own needs.

In Acts 4:32 we have a perfect example of absolute unity. Our Roman Catholic friends are seeking to leave the impression that they are interested in unity. They attempt to leave such impression in the press (which they largely control), television, and radio. If you doubt it, just do a little observing. But they say "we want to fellowship everybody." Well, I know how they want to fellowship everybody. Did you ever see a spider fellowship a fly? I have, but I have never seen a happy fly once he was fully fellowshipped by a spider, have you? That is exactly the way the Roman Catholic church wants to fellowship others. Oh, they may change the outward veneer, or they may change the saying of the mass from Latin to English, but they are not going to renounce their false doctrine. If they do give up a false doctrine they will espouse a dozen more. They want to fellowship others like the spider fellowships the fly. They, along with many other sectarians, are perhaps interested in a certain amount of union but certainly not unity based upon the New Testament. Listen to the words of Acts 4:32: "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them said that ought of the things which he possessed was his

own; but they had all things common." The church of Christ in Jerusalem was absolutely united. Now I want to use Acts 4:32 as the beginning point of some syllogisms. A syllogism contains a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion. If the major premise is true and the minor premise is true, the conclusion must be true. I will give an example: all men are mortal. That would be the major premise. That is the major truth that is stated. Then we could state the minor premise like this: John is a man. What then would be our conclusion? Here it is: therefore, John is mortal. Now that syllogism will stand because the first part is true and the second part is true; therefore, the third part, the conclusion, must be true. All right, I want to use this type of approach for our study of the Bible. The early Christians "were of one heart." Men think with their hearts. "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" Prov. 23:7. Incidentally, no person ever becomes better than his thoughts. If I could read what you are thinking I would know exactly what kind of person you are. They were of one heart, but man thinks with his heart; therefore, they were united and one in their thinking. They were absolutely united in their thinking. Is that true of us tonight? Acts 4:32 sets forth a case of absolute unity and this is the type that our Saviour endorses and that we should endorse.

But let us continue further. "They were of one heart" but man understands with his heart. We read in Matthew 13:15: "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest haply they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should turn again, and I should heal them." The early church was of one heart. The scriptures say that we understand with our heart. Therefore, they understood exactly alike. Their understanding was exactly the same. I say that this is an example of perfect unity. Again, "they were of one heart." Man desires with his heart. Listen to Romans 10:1: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might

be saved." They were of one heart, man desires with his heart; therefore, their desires were exactly the same. Now brethren, the situation exists as set forth in the following illustration: "Two fellows were traveling up a hill with a heavy load. One of them was pulling, puffing, and blowing. He thought that the other man was pushing and when they arrived at the top of the hill, he said, "I was afraid that we would never make it." The other man replied, "I was afraid that we wouldn't also so I kept the brake on all the way up the hill." Now, what is your desire? You could easily deceive me, but what is your real desire? Is your true desire to see the church grow? If I know my heart, I would rather die in this pulpit faithful to my God than to live to be a hundred and develop a desire to hinder and impede the progress of the church of my Lord and to die with that against my soul. Listen to Paul in Galatians 5:15: "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." The early Christians desired the salvation of the lost. We read in Acts 8:4, "They therefore that were scattered abroad, went everywhere preaching the word." They worked so fervently to this end that it was said about them, "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also" Acts 17:6. Though persecuted, this caused them more and more to create within themselves a stronger desire to see the church grow in every right way. Many of us are so lacking in our desire to see the church grow that we have not really become involved. Therefore, we are not pressing for righteousness strongly enough to cause the world to persecute us. Remember, "Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" II Tim. 3:12. Because of our unconcern and indifference toward righteousness, the world does not persecute us very much. Since this situation often exists, this contributes to the waning of our love toward our own brethren. Then, after awhile, some people develop an attitude toward their own brethren that is just as wrong as was the attitude the world demonstrated toward the early Christians. In the story of Ishmael and Isaac, it is related that Ishmael persecuted Isaac. Then Paul adds, "But

as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now" (Gal. 4:29). When a man has worldly desires and ambitions, a desire that is unholy, he will impede the progress of the church. In some congregations worldly members persecute those spiritual Christians whose entire aim in life is to live for Christ and to please him. The first good result that can be seen from doing personal work is to help worldly members to see the necessity of living the Christian life. And then, of course, we will be able to bring souls to Christ. When we pray for souls, even as I have done tonight, if we live, work and preach to that end, our prayers will be answered.

I would also point out that our badge of discipleship is our love for one another. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" John 13:35. But "they were of one heart." But with the heart we believe. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" Romans 10:10. The early Christians were of one heart. Man believes with his heart. Therefore, they believed exactly the same thing. If the early Christians had not believed the same thing, then Peter could not have addressed them as having "a like precious faith." They were of one heart. But with our heart we love. We read from the lips of our Lord as recorded in Matthew 22:37-39: "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Sometimes reference is made to "hard" sermons. Well, some of the difficulty of all sermons by way of application is this very thing, the absolute necessity of love. I remember that Peter says in I Peter 4:8, "Above all things being fervent in your love among yourselves; for love covereth a multitude of sins." Peter says to place love above all things. How fervent is our love? Those early Christians were of one heart. But man loves with his heart; therefore, they were united in love. Now I want to give all of us who are

Christians a test. Note carefully the truth that is set forth in I Peter 3:8: "Finally, be ye all likeminded, compassionate, loving as brethren, tenderhearted, humbleminded." Are we likeminded? Paul says, "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," I Cor. 1:10, and in Philippians 3:16 we read, "only, whereunto we have already attained, by that same rule let us walk." Are we tenderhearted? I am very tenderhearted. It grieves me to see sin become the master of anyone and especially of one of my brethren. If we have a genuine concern for our brethren it certainly becomes known, for Paul said, "Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men" II Cor. 3:2. It becomes evident eventually to all whether or not we love the souls of men.

How do we score on the next one? How compassionate are we? Listen to Ephesians 4:32: "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you." How tenderhearted are we? I have thought sometimes I would like to preach a sermon concerning the tears of Paul. I would like to take my New Testament and check every reference to Paul's tears and present them in a sermon. I tell you brethren that Paul cried time and time again. He cried over the brethren. When he wrote the II Corinthian letter, "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be made sorry, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you" II Cor. 2:4. Their division and other sins caused him to cry. Whether any of the tears fell upon the letter I do not know. But I do know that their sins caused him to shed tears for them. Paul also reminded the Ephesian elders that he had cried while working among them, "And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called to him the elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them. Ye yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, after what manner I was with you all the time, serving

the Lord with all lowliness of mind, and with tears, and with trials which befell me by the plots of the Jews" Acts 20: 17-19.

Then how do we measure up to being loving as brethren? In the list of the seven Christian graces recorded in II Peter 1:5-7, we are told in the next to the last one that we are to add "brotherly kindness," then the seventh and last one is "love." When Peter tells us in I Peter 3:8 that we are to be "loving as brethren," that implies that there is to be a special love for the brethren. John worded it this way, "Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" I John 3:16. I am sure that this noble deed is to be performed only under circumstances whereby the truth would be advanced more by giving my life for my brethren than it would be for me to live. Now brethren, too many of us have neglected to read and apply these passages to ourselves. Sometimes we have been too busy applying them to someone else. Let me apply all these truths to my own needs and I shall be a much better Christian. Finally, are we humbleminded? Did you observe that he began I Peter 3:8 with the fact that we are to be "likeminded"? And then having called attention to three other great and essential needs for us as Christians, he lists last in the passage that we are to be "humbleminded."

Perhaps you remember the story of the Pharisee and the Publican as related by our Lord in Luke 18:9-14, "And he spake also this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and set all others at nought: Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I get. But the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me a sinner. I say unto you, this man went

down to his house justified rather than the other. For everyone that exalteth himself shall be humbled; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." That is a very appropriate prayer for me to pray or for any Christian to pray. How I would rejoice if I knew that at my funeral two statements could be made: First, as our Lord said of Mary, "She hath done what she could" Mk. 14:8. If it could be said that "he did what he could," and, second, "This man humbled himself and obediently served his Lord as long as he lived," I certainly would covet no better or higher compliments than this. I call attention again to I Peter 3:8 with the hope and prayer that it will mean more to us. "Finally, be ye all likeminded, compassionate, loving as brethren, tenderhearted, humbleminded." The early Christians were of one heart. With the heart we love. Therefore, they were united in love.

The early Christians "were of one heart," but we purpose in our heart. We read in Daniel 1:8, "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore, he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself." In II Corinthians 9:7 we have the statement, "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver." Also, in Acts 11:23, "Who, when he was come, and had seen the grace of God, was glad; and he exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord." Remember, according to Acts 4:32, the early Christians "were of one heart." But we purpose with our heart. Therefore their purpose, their aspiration, and their goal, was exactly the same.

Now in conclusion, I ask this question: Could there be those in this audience who have failed along this line? We do not seek to embarrass you. There is no person here more sympathetic to your welfare than I, unless indeed he has greater capacity for such than I. Instead of allowing our pride

to prevent us from correcting our sins for fear of what some man may think about us, we had better be concerned about what God will think about us if we do not do so, and, further, as to where he would place us if we die in our sins. Jesus says in Matthew 11:28-30: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." This invitation is extended to both alien sinners and erring children of God.

We have this sobering statement from the pen of James as recorded in James 5:19-20: "My brethren, if any among you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins," We can seek in vain to cover our sins or we can obey the Lord that he might cover them through forgiveness. We have this statement in Proverbs 28:13: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

Some years ago, two men were condemned to die. The President offered pardon to both, but one of them refused to accept the pardon and was executed. If, as an alien sinner or an erring child of God, you refuse to accept the offer of pardon from God, you will be punished throughout eternity. The alien sinner must believe (Heb. 11:6); repent (Acts 17:30); confess (Acts 8:37, Rom. 10:10); and be baptized for remission of sins (Acts 2:38). The erring child of God must repent, confess his sins, and pray to God for forgiveness (Acts 8:20-23, James 5:16, I John 1:9). Are there those that will come while together we stand and sing?

THE NEW BIRTH

1. BORN OF WATER

2. BORN OF SPIRIT

3. ENTER INTO KINGDOM

JOHN 3:5

1. WASHING OF

REGENERATION

2. RENEWAL OF THE

HOLY SPIRIT

3. SAVED - TITUS 3:5

1. WASHING OF WATER

2. BY THE WORD

3. CLEANSED - EPH. 5:26

CHAPTER 6

THE NEW BIRTH

We are deeply grateful tonight for such a fine audience. I am especially happy that my mother and mother-in-law are here. I love and appreciate them and sincerely believe that both of them are faithful Christians. I have reason to appreciate them since one of them gave me life, and the other gave me my wife.

This evening, we are studying about the new birth as described by Christ in John 3:5. I suggested today via radio that I would show that water means water in John 3:5, and that it actually refers to baptism. It is my purpose to show from God's book the truth on this subject. Do you know why so many preachers are fighting and rebelling against this truth? The devil knows that since water refers to baptism, it, therefore, makes baptism a necessity for salvation. John 3:3 says, "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Then in John 3:5, "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Now the devil knows that there is no difference in these two statements. We know it too if we believe the scriptures. The devil knows as well as anyone else that no man is ever saved until he is born again. He also knows that no man is

ever born again until he is buried in water in the name of Christ for the remission of sins.

We are commanded to "Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth." II Timothy 2: 15. Christ said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32. You remember, of course, that he also said, "Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me." John 5:39. And in Acts 17:11 we read, "Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the scriptures daily, whether these things were so."

At this time, I call to your attention John 3:1-12: "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I

have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?"

These passages are very familiar to many of you. I want us to analyze carefully the passages--especially John 3:3 and John 3:5. Our Lord pointed out the absolute necessity of the new birth when he said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Since water refers to baptism in this passage, Christ is simply saying that "except a man be baptized." Of course, it includes the part that the Holy Spirit plays through his law, the New Testament. The Spirit uses his sword, "which is the word of God." Ephesians 6:17. Christ, in verse 3, points out the necessity of the new birth. And, in verse 5, he points out that it has two component parts--"water" and "of the Spirit."

Many people are perverters of these scriptures. I remember that when a man learned that brother N. B. Hardeman was a preacher, he said to him, "Sir, I want to ask you a question. What do you think the word water means in John 3:5?" Brother Hardeman said, "I think it means buttermilk." The man was greatly amazed. He said, "I have never heard anyone say that before. I don't think it means that." Then Brother Hardeman said words about like these, "Sir, if water doesn't mean water in John 3:5, how do you know that it doesn't mean buttermilk? If it doesn't mean water then you have no way of knowing to what it refers, and, therefore, I think it means buttermilk." Brother Hardeman then proceeded to point out that he did not really think that it meant buttermilk but that water meant water.

I have heard denominational preachers act as if it would choke them even to quote John 3:5 correctly. I have heard them via radio quote it time and again and pervert it by leaving water out and saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," completely leaving water out of the

quotation. They observed, as it were, the "passover." They just passed right over the word water, and left it out. The truth is, the word water means water. If it does not mean water, how are they always so sure that the word Spirit means Spirit? I have never heard any of them in my life who doubted that fact. Spirit means Spirit. Well, if water doesn't mean water, how do they know that Spirit doesn't mean something else? If water means something else, then Spirit means something else. The truth is, water means water and Spirit means Spirit.

Let us look at three passages that are parallel. They are John 3:5; Ephesians 5:26; and Titus 3:5. Let us first quote them. John 3:5, "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Ephesians 5:26, "That he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word." Then Titus 3:5, "Not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit." Note in John 3:5 that Christ points out the new birth consists of two parts. One must be "born of water and of the Spirit." This is a good place to point out also that no one has been born again if he has had water sprinkled or poured upon him. This would be an utter impossibility. One cannot be born of that which is smaller than one's self. It is admitted by all that a thimble full of water is too little to effect a birth. Therefore, one could not be born of water when he has had a little water sprinkled or poured on him. Now, I want to prove this. Paul said in Colossians 1:18, "And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." As you remember, our Lord died and was placed in a borrowed tomb. You also recall that on the third day he burst the bars of death and hell; that he came forth victorious and led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men when he ascended on high. Our Lord died, was buried, and was covered from sight. A great stone

was rolled against the door of the tomb. I want you to note this carefully. Did you know that our Lord's resurrection from the tomb is referred to as a birth? Some years after this wonderful event, Paul wrote about it in the words of Colossians 1:18. Note the expression, "the firstborn from the dead." Our Lord, when dead, did not just have a little dirt sprinkled or poured upon him. He was put into Joseph's new tomb; he was buried out of sight and a great stone was rolled to the mouth of the grave and on the third day he came forth, and the Bible says that was a birth from the dead. Therefore, one, when born of the water, is immersed, is buried, as was our Lord. In fact, Paul says that baptism is a burial. "Having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead." Colossians 2:12. Romans 6:4 says, "We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life." Born of water, therefore, of necessity, requires an immersion in water for the remission of sins.

Let us now look again at John 3:5. Christ says that when one is born again he is born of the Spirit. In John 3:8 he adds, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." I sometimes hear people say that the only part of the new birth members of the Church of Christ believe is that we are born of water. No, we are "born of water and of the Spirit." Now, the Holy Spirit operates, of course, through his law. This is taught in Romans 8:2. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death." And in James 1:21 we read, "Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls." Therefore, the Holy Spirit participates. The word from which we get the word Spirit occurs 386 times in the Greek New Testament. 384 times it is translated Spirit or its

equivalent, Ghost. One time it is translated "life"--Revelation 13:15. In John 3:8 it is translated "wind." Some translations--including the Living Oracles translation--renders it this way, "The Spirit breathes where he will and thou hearest the report of him." Well, how does that report come to us? In Romans 10:17 we read, "So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." Sometimes there are those who read this statement and imagine that when the Holy Spirit speaks that he speaks miraculously, directly, and mysteriously. They even have a song they sing which states, "something got hold of me." I do not doubt something got hold of some of them, but it was emotionalism and misguided zeal, though I do not doubt their sincerity in many cases. I want to raise this question, and hope you will remember the answer to it. How were the voices of the Old Testament prophets heard every Sabbath day? Here is the answer, "For they that dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor the voice of the prophets which are read every sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him." Acts 13:27. Now, what did he say? He said the voices of these prophets were heard every Sabbath. Well, how did they speak? They spoke by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as stated in II Peter 1:21. "But men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." But Acts 13:27 says that when their writings were read and when the people heard them read, these were the voices of the prophets that were heard each Sabbath. Therefore, we do not deny that the voice of the Holy Spirit is heard. But the question is, how? The Bible says that it is by his law in Romans 8:2. Ephesians 6:17 says, "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." I might cut down a tree with an ax. Now, the ax did not do it by itself, and I would not attempt to do it with my bare hands. There are two things true in this illustration. Number one, an ax was used; that was the instrument. Number two, there was someone on the other end of that ax exerting a force and bringing that force to bear on the tree. I want to make this especially clear, because sometimes people do misunderstand. I once preached a sermon in which I suggested that I wanted to preach a lesson

that was very specific. I pointed out that preachers talk in generalities and since Paul had said, "Having, therefore, such a hope, we use great boldness of speech," that I wanted to be very specific. I said that I intended to call the name of a person involved in their sins before I finished. I'm sure that no one went to sleep during that sermon. All through the sermon, I quoted passages and pointed out that this person is a liar and a slanderer and that, in fact he has participated in, and encouraged others, to commit all types of sins. Near the conclusion, since I had promised to call this person by name, I quoted John 8:44 and pointed out that I had made reference to the devil. The devil was a murderer and a liar and the instigator of all sin. That sermon had such a good effect that I repeated it at another congregation. But alas, one lady was about half asleep and evidently awakened about the time I used the word devil. She went away and told that I called all the people there devils. My point here is that I do not want anyone to go to sleep and misunderstand. I want to make the point very clear that no person has ever yet been converted nor ever shall be converted without the participation of the Holy Spirit in that conversion. Let me emphasize that point again. I don't know how many people that I have heard say, "Oh, you don't believe in the Holy Spirit, do you?" I know that these older brethren have had far more experience in this matter than I. But I have talked with many people about this matter and even since this gospel meeting began, someone here has said to me, "Oh, you don't believe in the Holy Spirit, do you?" This was said even after I had finished explaining the plan of salvation. Now, in every case when a man is converted the Holy Spirit operates. But how does he do so? In Ephesians 6:17 Paul says, "and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." That's the way he operated upon the hearts of the people on the day of Pentecost. In Acts 2:37 we read, "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do?" The Holy Spirit was using his sword, his word, through Peter, the gospel preacher, and when they heard the powerful and convincing words they were "pricked"

or "cut" in their hearts. The Holy Spirit always participates in the conversion of an alien sinner, but he never operates in any fashion other than in using the New Testament, his word, the sword of the Spirit. Now, someone might say, "I would like for you to prove that." I repeat a passage that I have already referred to which is James 1:21. "Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls." Note that he said the word is "able" to save your souls. I asked a preacher this question some time past: "Since the Bible says that the word is able to save, why do you say that the Holy Spirit must operate independent of, and distinct from the word of God and in a mysterious, better felt than told fashion?" I could never get him to answer and I know why. He would have had to give up his doctrine or deny the Bible.

Why then are we to be born of the water and of the Spirit? It is in order that we might enter into the kingdom of God. It is an amazing thing to me that there are so many people who are teaching what they call premillennialism. That is just another way of saying another false doctrine. There are multiplied thousands of people who argue that the kingdom has not yet been set up. But I have never seen anyone contend for false doctrine who did not contradict their own false doctrine. These same people argue that they believe in the new birth. Now, if the kingdom has not been established, then there has never been anyone born of water and of the Spirit, because when one is born of water and of the Spirit, he enters the kingdom. He becomes a citizen of the Kingdom by the same process by which he is born of water and of the Spirit. I would like to stand before an intelligent audience and expose the errors of a premillenarian teacher before his own followers. It would be interesting to hear him tell an audience whether people are born of water and of the Spirit during this dispensation. If he admits that people are born again during this time, he gives up his theory of premillennialism. For, when one is born again he enters the kingdom. But if he

denies that the kingdom is now in existence, he denies that anyone can be born again. For all people who have been born again have entered the kingdom.

Another thing, if the kingdom has not been set up, then no one can partake of the Lord's supper scripturally. Christ said in Luke 22:29-30, "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as my Father appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom...." Even a premillennialist will go through the motion of taking the Lord's Supper now and then. He, therefore, admits that the Lord's Supper is to be taken during this Christian dispensation. But our Lord said, "My supper," the Lord's Supper, will never be participated in until it is taken in the kingdom. In I Corinthians, chapter eleven, we learn that when the Church came together they partook of the Lord's Supper. Therefore, the church and the kingdom are one and the same institution. The truth is that we are born of water and of the Spirit in order to enter into the kingdom of God.

Let us take another scripture and see what the Bible says on this subject. The best commentary on the Bible is the Bible itself. A colored lady, having read a number of commentaries, but never the Bible itself, was given a Bible. After reading it she said with a great deal of amazement, "It is amazing how much light the Bible throws on those commentaries." We had better let the Lord get his word in before we get ours in. It is helpful to study "how to study the Bible," but then we need to study the Bible. There is no substitute for study of the Bible. Do not misunderstand me. Commentaries are fine if used correctly. I heard an old preacher say as he commented on a sermon, "Brethren, this sermon was filled with scripture." Then he added, "I don't know of anything better to fill it with." And, brethren, I don't either. We need to study and know the Bible since we are going to be judged by it. John 12:48.

Note Ephesians 5:25-26. "Husbands, love your wives,

even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word." Christ says that to enter the kingdom, one must be born "of water and of the Spirit," Paul says in Ephesians 5:25-26 there is "the washing of water." He is pointing out how these Ephesians entered the church of Christ. And he says, "having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word." So, there is the "washing of water." Christ says one must be "born of the Spirit." Paul tells us how it is done. He says it is "by the word." Christ says when one is "born of water and of the Spirit" he then "enters into the kingdom of God." Paul says one is "cleansed." The statements mean the same thing.

Let us now examine Titus 3:5. "Not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit." Now observe that Christ says in John 3:5 "born of water," Paul says in Ephesians 5:26, "washing of water," and in Titus 3:5 Paul says this is "the washing of regeneration." What does the word "regenerate" mean? It means to be born again; to be made new. Christ said we must be "born of water" while Paul says it is "the washing of water" and "the washing of regeneration." But regeneration means to be born again. It is the washing that is characteristic of the new birth.

I raise this question and I want you to think seriously about it: Can you think of any act, any condition, any step in the plan of salvation for our being saved or entering the Church--which is the kingdom of Christ--that has water in it other than baptism? You may think and search until you are as old as Methuselah--969 years old--and you would never find where there is water in any of the conditions of pardon for the alien sinner except in baptism. There is no water in faith, at the point of faith; there is no water at the point of repentance; there is no water at the point of confession; but there is water in the act of baptism. Paul said that it is that

washing that pertains to the new birth or regeneration.

Let me give you a passage that says our bodies are to be washed with pure water. The element is water. Hebrews 10:22 says "Let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience: and our body washed with pure water." I want you to note that the sprinkling is an allusion to the blood being applied to the heart while the washing is an allusion to being baptized.

In Hebrews 10:22 Paul says that our body is washed with "pure water" while in Titus 3:5 he refers to it as the "washing of regeneration." So, the truth of the matter is that it can refer only to baptism. Baptism is the only act in the conditions of pardon for the alien sinner that has any water in it.

Brother Boone Douthitt told of the following experience some years ago which took place in middle Tennessee. While brother Douthitt was in a gospel meeting there, a denominational preacher decided that he was going to wreck the meeting. So brother Douthitt had a discussion with the man. The denominational preacher did not do his own reading but brought two readers with him. One reader sat on the left and the other reader sat on the right side. He would say to one of them, "now read," and that one would read. Then he would say to the other man "now read," and he would read. The preacher was very confident for awhile but "be sure your sins will find you out." The preacher would give the readers a passage on faith and tell them to read it. The preacher would then walk to and fro and say "not a drop of water in it." But at one point he gave the wrong reference which was Acts 2. The reader read for a few verses and the preacher began to see that it was not the scripture that he had intended. (Of course, he claimed to be inspired. I do not. If I make a mistake you know the Holy Spirit could not be blamed, for I have obtained my knowledge by study.) When he gave the wrong passage, it excited him, but he told the reader to read on. He

did so until he came to Acts 2:38. At this point the preacher became so upset that he was speechless. Brother Douthitt arose and quoted such passages as Acts 8:36-39 and I Peter 3:20-21 and then said, "full of water." That meeting resulted in a number of people being baptized.

The truth is consistent and will stand. The only condition of pardon that has water in it is baptism.

Let us consider some statements by various scholars on this subject. These statements do not, of course, have the authority the scriptures have, but I do think that it will be of value to read them. Some people think that those of us who are members of the church of Christ are the only people who have ever thought that water in John 3:5 refers to baptism. Many denominational scholars have given the correct meaning of John 3:5 because they valued their scholarship, although in their religious lives they may have practiced something else. William Wall, a reliable church historian of the Church of England, affirms that all writers from the time of Christ to the days of John Calvin said to be "born of water" meant to be "baptized,"

"There is not one Christian writer of any antiquity in any language but what understands it of baptism. And if it be not so understood, it is difficult to give an account how a person is born of water, any more than of wood." Wall's *History of Infant Baptism*, Vol. 1, p. 92.

J. R. Graves was for years an outstanding preacher and debater of the Baptist Church. In his paper, *The Tennessee Baptist*, he made the following statement: "If Brother Vaughn convinced us that born of water refers to anything but the baptism of one previously born of the Spirit, we never knew it, and we would have owed it to him and to our readers. It means nothing else, and no Baptist that we ever heard or read of ever believed otherwise until A. Campbell frightened them away from an interpretation that is sustained by the

consensus of all scholars of all denominations in all ages." The Tennessee Baptist, p. 5, October 30, 1886. Quoted from the Commentary on the Gospel of John, p. 45, published by the Gospel Advocate Company, Nashville, Tennessee.

For many years Albert Barnes' Notes on the New Testament has been a popular set of commentaries. He was a member of the Presbyterian Church and an outstanding preacher of that body. In his comments on John 3:5, he makes this statement:

"By water, here is evidently signified baptism. Thus the word is used in Ephesians 5:26 and Titus 3:5." Barnes Notes on the Gospels, Vol. 2, p. 210.

Many additional statements could be given but these are sufficient. Remember that none of these people were members of the church of Christ.

Nicodemus was evidently confused by the knowledge that he had been born by a fleshly birth into covenant relation with God under the Old Dispensation and was therefore a citizen of the only kingdom he knew anything about. He apparently looked for a restoration of the "old Kingdom" to its ancient glory and thought that he must, as a citizen, share in the benefits of the only kingdom he anticipated--an earthly one! It came as a surprise to him that he must be "born again" to be in the kingdom of which Jesus spoke. He failed to understand the spiritual nature of the New Covenant and the spiritual nature of the New Kingdom and thus the need of being "born again."

Now, "born of water," "washing of water," and "washing of regeneration" refer to baptism. "Born of the Spirit," "by the word"--this is the instrument that the Spirit uses--and "the renewal of the Holy Spirit"--are one and the same thing. "Enter the kingdom," cleansed," and "saved" refer to the same thing.

There are two other things I would like to discuss. Many people say that when Christ told Nicodemus "ye must be born again," that he was saying you have already been born of your mother, and the water of that birth was the water to which he alluded. They claim that he was telling him to be born of the Spirit and that there is no water involved. But, remember that Nicodemus asked him the question, "How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" Christ points out to him that he is not speaking of a physical birth--but of a spiritual one. He was not speaking of a child being born physically but of the spiritual birth of a man. "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Thus, he was speaking of the birth of a man--not a baby. Nicodemus, you are a man and I am not speaking of your being born again physically, but this is a spiritual birth and it consists of two elements, "water" and "Spirit." "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." A few days ago I asked someone who is in the medical field to check on some questions about birth for me. I asked if there is such a thing as what is referred to as a "dry birth," he said "yes" and referred to a medical book from which I read. According to those denominational preachers who erroneously contend that the water of John 3: 5 refers to the natural birth, if a child be "dry born" then they would be forced to the conclusion that such a child could never be saved for Jesus said, "Except a man be born of water" he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. The reference to "water" in John 3:5 is not to water in the natural birth pertaining to the birth of an infant, but rather to the "water" of baptism in the birth of a full grown man.

Now let us study the statement, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." There are some who say this

means that the Holy Spirit will come in a mysterious way like the wind. I showed from Acts 13:27 that when the voices of the prophets were heard on the Sabbath, the writings of these men were being read. They heard their voices only in the sense that they read their writings. That is the only way the Spirit operates--through his word. Ephesians 6:17 and Rom. 8:2. Now you cannot see the wind but you can see the effect of it. I had a friend who, at one time, had been a drunkard, a dope addict, and in a denomination all at the same time. But this man, through the influence of the gospel, quit all of them, turned his back to all of them and became a Christian and later a gospel preacher. I may not be able to explain how God was able to put that much power in the gospel but he did, and it, the gospel, is "the power of God unto salvation." Rom. 1:16. I, therefore, accept the gospel as God's power.

I have said from the beginning that I was going to prove that being "born again" referred to baptism. In Acts 2:9-11 a number of nationalities are mentioned. Among them were people from Pontus, Judea, Cappadocia, Asia, and Phrygia. When various ones from these places and others were "pricked in their heart" they asked Peter and the rest of the apostles, "men and brethren, what shall we do?" "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2:38. Now these people were baptized "for the remission of sins." As you know, about three thousand people obeyed the gospel that day. Acts 2:41. Peter, some years later, wrote to these very people and he names some of them. "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." 1 Peter 1:1. And in 1 Peter 1:23 he says, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. These people wanted to know what to do to be saved and Peter told them "repent and be baptized" and pointed out that this was "for the remission of sins." Some years later Peter addressed them and

called some of them by name. He said you were "born again." Therefore, when he told them to be baptized for remission of sins, and when they did so, they were "born of water and of the Spirit." They were born again--but they were baptized. Therefore, baptism is a part of the new birth and water, in John 3:5, refers to baptism.

There are many other things that it would be profitable for us to say but our allotted time is gone.

In this audience there are some who know the plan of salvation but have not obeyed it. Our Lord died for you. "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us out of this present evil world, according to the will of our God and Father." Galatians 1:4. You can never be saved from your past sins until you hear the gospel and believe it (Acts 15:7), repent of your sins (Acts 17:30), confess your faith in Christ (Romans 10:10; Acts 8:37), and are baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27), for remission of your sins (Acts 2:38).

As an erring child of God you need to repent and confess your sins and pray to God for forgiveness (Acts 8:20-23) (James 5:16) (Revelation 2:5).

Won't you come now while our Lord's invitation is extended to you?

CHAPTER 7

OBEDIENCE

It is with great joy and appreciation that we are privileged to greet these fine audiences each evening. It is our hope and prayer that all of us will truly be able to say at the conclusion, "Lord, it was good for us to have been here." I am convinced that heaven smiles upon these services.

This evening we are discussing "The Saviour's Way - Obedience." In Hebrews 5:7-9 we read, "Who in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear, though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered: and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation." Notice now that obedience implies responsibility. Christ was asked, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" His answer was, "And he said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hangeth the whole

law, and the prophets" (Matthew 22:36-40). I suggest to you that in these statements are three thoughts relative to responsibility. First, if we love our neighbor as ourselves, it is implied that we should love ourselves. We are to love self but we are not to selfishly love self. Our Lord endorses the fact that we should love ourselves mentally, physically, morally, and spiritually, "And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:52).

Second, these statements involve and imply our responsibility to our fellow man. Paul said in Romans 1:14-15, "I am debtor both to Greeks and to Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you also that are in Rome."

I owe a great debt of responsibility to many faithful brethren, among whom are many older gospel preachers. I am tonight enjoying much fruit from their labors. I am indebted to my parents for bringing me up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." I am indebted to many of you for your encouragement. I am indebted to those to whom I have preached in gospel meetings. I am especially indebted to the Highland View congregation in Oak Ridge, Tennessee with whom I have labored for the past ten years.

Thirdly, we have a responsibility to God. In Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 we read, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

Tonight, I want to approach the subject first from the negative viewpoint. I raise the question, What is not acceptable obedience unto our Saviour? In the first place, I suggest that a mere promise to obey is not obedience. Christ said in Matthew 21:28-31, "But what think ye? A man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in the vineyard. And he answered and said, I will not; but afterward he repented himself, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. Whether of the twain did the will of his father? They say, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you."

The pioneer preachers quite often used this illustration: "There was a man from North Carolina who sent his son into East Tennessee, when that part of the state was practically a wilderness, to be a forerunner for the family. He was to build a house, a barn, and dig a well. He was also given a blueprint to follow in carrying out the orders which he had been given. He was instructed to build the house and the barn in a certain place; the location of the well was also specified. The young man studied the blueprint and said, 'I like where my father says to locate the house and the barn; these are good locations. But I don't like where he says to dig the well. Therefore, I will move the location of the well and place it where I want it.'" The pioneer preachers then made the point with telling force that this boy actually did not obey his father in any point. The only reason that he placed the house and barn at the correct place was simply because that was where he wanted them. But at the very point where there was a conflict between his father's will and his own, he disregarded his father's will and acted according to his own desires. Now, a mere promise of obedience is not obedience. There are thousands of people tonight who think they have obeyed the God of their being

because they said, "Lord, I will obey you" - yet have never done so.

Secondly, the saying of pious words, even when reinforced with "so-called" good works, is not obedience. Some people think that they will be able to argue with the Lord on the day of judgment about this matter. In Matthew 7:21-23, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out devils, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." So, the offering of pious words reinforced with "so-called" good works is not obedience. I emphasize "so-called" good works, because they were not good works. They were works that the Lord had not authorized. Therefore, they were without divine sanction. Such work that is done in denominations or in any religious system unknown to the Bible is not obedience.

In the third place, I call to your attention the fact that partial obedience is not obedience to God. An example is recorded in Leviticus 10:1-2, "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord." If everyone died on next Sunday that offered a substitute for that required by God in worship, I assure you there would not be an adequate number of funeral homes to bury them. Nadab and Abihu substituted. They were right on everything except one point. They were two-thirds right. They worshipped the right God; they had the right incense; but they had the wrong fire. This leads me to say that one may be right in everything except one point, but

by being wrong in this one point, one is no nearer being saved than if he were wrong in every point.

Let me illustrate. Suppose you have a horse in a pasture, and the fence around the pasture is composed of a thousand panels. If the horse decided to jump outside, he would only have to jump over one panel. I now raise this question. Would it be necessary for the horse to return and jump over all the remaining panels in order to get outside? Obviously not. He is just as much outside when he jumps over one panel as he would be if he jumped over all of them. In James 2:10, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all."

Nadab and Abihu were right in two points, but wrong in one. They should have gotten the fire from the altar according to Leviticus 16:12. I do not know where they got it. They may have reasoned that one kind of fire was as good as another. People today argue that one mode of baptism is as good as another, but in one sense, there is no such thing as a mode of baptism. A burial is not just one way to baptize - it is the only way. Baptism is a burial. Also, many contend that one church is as good as another. They could not be further from the truth. The truth is: people today are partially obeying just like Nadab and Abihu. The Lord will not punish them with death in a miraculous fashion today, but the day is coming when it will be worse for them than it was for Nadab and Abihu in this sense: the fires of hell will burn forever to torment those who partially obey the Lord. Partial obedience is not obedience.

Remember how the Lord instructed Saul, the first king of Israel, to utterly destroy the Amalekites? You will recall that he went on this mission, but before he returned, the Lord had already informed Samuel that Saul had apostatized. The very first thing Saul said to Samuel upon returning was this, "Blessed be thou of the Lord: I have performed the

commandment of the Lord." Samuel then replied with this question, "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" It seems that the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the oxen are saying in effect: "Saul, you are telling a falsehood. You are advocating a lie. You have not performed the commandment of the Lord and you know it." In I Samuel 15:21, Saul blames the people by saying, "But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in Gilgal." In the following verse Samuel replies with this question, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." Samuel is saying that the sacrificing of all these cattle is not to be compared with obedience unto the God of our being. Partial obedience is not acceptable obedience to God.

Substitution is also not acceptable obedience to God. Cain substituted in his obedience. The offering of Cain may have been as costly as that of Abel, but the difference was that Abel offered his sacrifice by faith. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he had witness borne to him that he was righteous, God bearing witness in respect of his gifts: and through it he being dead yet speaketh" (Hebrews 11:4). But how does faith come? "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). In Jude, verse 11, we read of Cain, "Woe unto them! for they went in the way of Cain, and ran riotously in the error of Balaam for hire, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah." Substitution is not obedience.

We shall now approach this subject from the positive viewpoint. In Genesis 6:22 we have one of the finest definitions of obedience to be found anywhere. "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he."

Please note closely, Noah did all that God commanded him - not just part of it. Further, to be obedient is to walk by faith. Paul states in II Corinthians 5:7, "For we walk by faith, not by sight." Again, how does faith come? This answer is supplied in Romans 10:17 as was stated a few moments ago.

I suggest that to be obedient is to do things not only because they are commanded, but also to do them from the right motive. The Pharisees prayed and gave alms to be heard and seen of men. These acts were authorized by God but the motives of those engaging in them were sometimes wrong. One can even preach with the wrong motive. "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: the one do it of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel: but the other proclaim Christ of faction, not sincerely, thinking to raise up affliction for me in my bonds" (Philippians 1:15-17). When one is truly obedient, he will do that which God authorizes from a pure heart.

Those who are sincerely obedient are ready to suffer the consequences. We frequently sing the song "Ready To Suffer." But how much are we actually ready to suffer? Some years ago I was invited to a church in Harriman, Tennessee - a Baptist church, and while there, I had the opportunity to expose error. When the services began at 2:30, the local preacher requested all ministers to come up onto the stage. I did not intend to do so until one of them tapped me on the shoulder. I sat there from 2:30 until 5:00 with five Baptist preachers. One of the visiting preachers misquoted Acts 2:38 like this, "Then Peter said unto them, repent and pray, everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Well, after all five of the preachers had testified, the local preacher arose and said, "We have a young white minister here from Oak Ridge, and now we are going to suffer with him for a while." I arose and said, "Why didn't this fellow read Acts

2:38 correctly? He knew what it said. He is a perverter of the gospel" I then quoted the passage correctly. At that point, the local preacher spoke up and said, "I think that your time is about gone." They were suffering, not for righteousness sake, but, rather, they were being tormented before their time.

Job is a wonderful example of a man of God being willing to suffer the consequences that resulted because of serving God. After all his possessions were gone, and after all his children had been slain, we find these words in Job 1:20-22, "Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, and said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." He was so afflicted that his three friends did not recognize him. "So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great" (Job 2:13). At one point of his great grief, "Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips" (Job 2:9-10). "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job 13:15). Job was willing to suffer the consequences that came to him because of his obedience to God. James tells us the purpose of the suffering of Job. In James 5:11, "Behold, we call them blessed which endured: ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, how that the Lord is full of pity, and merciful." Paul was willing to suffer the consequences of his obedience to Christ. In Acts 21:13, "Then Paul answered, What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." I am confident by now that all of us can see what obedience

involves.

I now want to discuss obedience as it pertains to those of us who are in the church. Let us begin with a command. "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us" (II Thessalonians 3:6). This is a command. No Christian, who sincerely desires to go to heaven, is prejudiced against any of God's commands. We also have the same command in I Corinthians 5:11, "But now I write unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no, not to eat." We must obey all of God's commands whether they refer to giving, Christian living, discipline, or any other duty.

We are commanded in I Corinthians 5:13, "Put away the wicked man from among yourselves." That is just as much a command to the church as Mark 16:16 is to the alien sinner. There are many congregations, and many church members, who ignore this command to discipline the disorderly - as if the command did not exist. It does exist and our responsibility is clear. A failure to do our duty at this point can cost us our souls just as would disobedience to any other command of the Lord.

In the Corinthian church, there was the sin of open adultery. "It is actually reported that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not even among the Gentiles, that one of you hath his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and did not rather mourn, that he that had done this deed might be taken away from among you" (I Corinthians 5:1-2). Not only are we commanded to discipline an adulterer, but also those who commit other sins which are specified in the fifth chapter of I Corinthians. A reviler, for example, is to be disciplined. This applies to those who are

revilers of the truth and those who withstand the truth. These revilers need to be disciplined the same as the adulterers, and if we do not, we violate God's will.

Also, note this: it must be done in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. "In the name of our Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (I Corinthians 5:4-5). To do a thing "in the name of the Lord" means to do it by his authority. In Colossians 3:17 we read, "And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

Please observe that this must be a public withdrawal - "Ye being gathered together." I am aware of the fact that this is to be the last resort. You must have exercised all means possible - love, kindness, compassion, instruction, and rebuke. In fact, Christ instructs in Matthew 18:15-17, "And if thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear thee not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established. And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church: and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican." We need to have fellowship among ourselves, and if we live the Christian life - we will.

Brother N. B. Hardeman often told the story of a man, who, though a member of the church, often drank. The brethren finally decided they would do their duty and discipline him. On a Sunday morning, one of the elders arose and said, "It is with great sorrow that, as of today, we must announce that we are withdrawing fellowship from brother so and so." They then instructed the congregation not to fellowship him. The erring brother, being perhaps not too well taught, and

hardly knowing what was going on, arose and said, "Now brethren, I don't know what is going on here, but it seems like some brethren are planning to pull out. Now, if they are going to leave, I'll stay here and carry on the best I can." The truth is: there must be some teaching so that people will know what is involved.

What is the purpose of a withdrawal? It is certainly not in order to get even with someone. If I am a party to a withdrawal, I must have the right attitude. Incidentally, at Highland View in Oak Ridge, we have withdrawn from perhaps twelve or fifteen in the last few years; one of them has been restored. We withdrew from five erring brethren on one Sunday, and the next Sunday, brother Guy N. Woods began a gospel meeting with us. Some people might say, "Oh, I suppose you didn't have much of a meeting." No, it was not that way at all. That was the best meeting, in many ways, we have ever had. The Lord knows what is best for the church, and who are we to doubt it?

Here is another thought on this subject. When a withdrawal is announced from the pulpit, that is just the announcement of the intention to withdraw. The real withdrawal comes when you refuse to fellowship them. I want to say this, lest I fail to mention it later: sometimes when an ungodly person is disciplined, his relatives and friends get together and say, "We are going to fellowship him - we don't care what the church does." Such a course of action is entirely wrong if such a person has been scripturally withdrawn from, and that is the only way it can be correctly done.

In Numbers 16, we read of the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown. In verse 3, "And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too

much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?" Do you remember what followed when Moses finished speaking? "And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them and they perished from among the congregation" (Numbers 16:31-33). Several in that congregation did not like the discipline that the Lord had administered. "But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord" (Numbers 16:41). Human nature has not changed. The Lord sent a plague among the congregation and killed those who sympathized with those that died earlier. "Now they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred beside them that died about the matter of Korah" (Numbers 16:49).

According to I Kings, Chapter 13, our Lord had excluded an old prophet from fellowship down in Bethel. A man of God from Judah was sent unto Bethel, by the word of the Lord, to cry out against the false worship of Jeroboam, who was there. The true prophet by his own testimony said, "For it was said to me by the word of the Lord, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest" (I Kings 13:17). But the man of God violated God's word and ate with one whom the Lord had said for him not to eat with. While eating with the old prophet, whom God no longer fellowshiped, his punishment was pronounced in these words, "And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of the Lord came unto the prophet that brought him back: and he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the Lord,

and hast not kept the commandment which the Lord thy God commanded thee, but camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of the which the Lord did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcass shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers" (I Kings 13:20-22). We certainly should be very careful not to fellowship someone who has been withdrawn from - scripturally. Also, the congregation that takes in those that have been scripturally withdrawn from need to repent hurriedly. They have no scriptural right to fellowship them, if they cannot be fellowshipped in the congregation where it became necessary to discipline them.

What is another purpose of discipline? "To deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (I Corinthians 5:5). If this became necessary in my family, I know that, due to the close personal ties, it would certainly grieve me. And yet, if I know my heart, I would want to do as the Lord directs. I would also strive to do the same thing if it were in your family. Some people shield their relatives and friends instead of delivering them unto Satan - admitting that they are open and rebellious sinners in the service of Satan and not God. These people may cause their relatives to be in hell forever because they violated this scripture and shielded those that should be disciplined.

Now I want to say at this point in our lesson, that we do not add nor remove people from the church. That is the Lord's affair. However, my responsibility is to tell you what our obligation is to the erring brother. The Lord has commanded us not to endorse sin, and we are to let people know that we do not fellowship a person whom the Lord does not endorse. The Lord adds to the church - and the Lord removes names from the Book of Life. That is not our responsibility. But it is our responsibility to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" (Ephesians 5:11).

Another purpose of discipline is "that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." Discipline is not a personal thing in any sense. Its purpose is not to injure or embarrass; but rather, to direct those being disciplined to the point of repentance. If there is a person in this audience tonight who has hatred in his heart toward his brother, he is a murderer. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (I John 3:15). If you have hatred in your heart and you do not remove it, you will be lost forever.

It is also the objective of discipline to "Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened" (I Corinthians 5:7). On one occasion, brother Guy N. Woods related the story about an old preacher that had become sinful, thus, the church was forced to discipline him. Another man, a faithful gospel preacher, went into that community for a gospel meeting. He knew of the situation there, and was also aware that the brethren had done their duty. The man who had been disfellowshipped invited the visiting preacher to eat with him. He refused the invitation, saying, "No, brother, I am sorry that you have lived in such a fashion that it became necessary for the church to withdraw fellowship from you. I can not eat with you for the Bible says, 'With such a one no, not to eat.'" Human wisdom would say that this kind of approach would never do. But before that gospel meeting was concluded, that man came down the aisle in tears and repented.

A brother who was a druggist was withdrawn from in another community. This brother and the local preacher were very good friends and had eaten together from time to time. On the Monday following the withdrawal, the brother stopped the preacher and said, "Come in and eat with me." But the preacher replied, "It grieves my heart, but the Bible says that I cannot eat with you until you repent." The man then repented.

I know of a man who today is a very capable gospel

preacher. But sometime after he became a Christian, he began to drink for one reason or another. The brethren pleaded with him but could not get him to repent. Finally, they withdrew from him publicly. I heard him say with his own lips, "I would not be a faithful Christian and gospel preacher today if the brethren had not withdrawn fellowship from me." He said, "It made me so ashamed and humiliated that I decided that I would live right."

But, what if one will not repent? What must be done? "Purge out the old leaven." Remember, the brother under consideration is not a person that commits a momentary act of sin and then repents. But rather, it is a person who lives a rebellious life of sin and refuses to repent, and, more or less, dares the church to do its duty. In some congregations, it is difficult for a person to commit enough sins to cause the brethren to withdraw from him. Of course, we are not to withdraw from those who are "babes in Christ." We are, rather, to be kind and patient with them.

We are not to withdraw from each other because of our imperfections. For then, none of us could withdraw from the other. Ecclesiastes 7:20 says, "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." Also in I John 1:8, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." This passage is saying that all of us commit some momentary acts of sin. However, when a person lives a life of sin, drunkenness, fornication, and such like, persisting in them with not enough godly sorrow to repent, letting you know that he does not intend to correct them, and that the entire church had better not attempt to do anything it - such a one needs to be disciplined.

At the church in Corinth, there was a man who was living in open adultery. Not only had the church refused to attempt to correct the situation, but they had also refused to be grieved about it. Sounds like many congregations of today, doesn't it? The entire church at Corinth was guilty at

this point. "And ye are puffed up, and did not rather mourn, that he that had done this deed might be taken away from among you" I Corinthians 5:2). As a Christian, you can be lost for failing to do your duty toward the erring.

What should our attitude and action be toward the dis-fellowshipped? We are told in I Corinthians 5:11, "not to keep company" with them and "with such a one no, not to eat." This passage is not referring to the Lord's supper. After a person has been dis-fellowshipped, that person could, if he so determined, come and eat and drink damnation unto his soul. If this be the case, one could not fellowship him; neither could one keep him from attending if he insisted. However, if you go to his home and eat a common meal with him, that is your own violation. Someone will probably say, "I don't know whether that prohibits the eating of a common meal or not." Well, it says, "not to keep company" with him. Could you eat a meal with him and not keep company with him? All of this is in the same verse. You are not to keep company with him - you are not to eat with him.

At this point, someone is likely thinking, "Judge not that ye be not judged." Yes, I know the Bible says that and I believe it. But if you will study the remainder of that context, you will see that Jesus is discussing a man who has a big beam - something like a utility pole - in his own eye. And, at the same time, he is looking for the little mote in his brother's eye. Jesus did not even say that it was wrong to cast out the mote. But he did say, "Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye" (Matthew 7:5).

Some people might be like the elderly lady who wanted to get married. She placed a pin in a gate post quite a distance from her house. She then asked her man friend if he could see it. After his negative reply, she took him directly to the post and showed him the pin. He was amazed at her

excellent vision. But after returning to the house, she thought a pitcher of water was a cat and slapped it off the table, thus betraying herself. Until the beam is removed from your own eye you would be wrong in seeking to remove the mote in another. Remove the beam, then it is perfectly scriptural to remove the mote.

Paul told the brethren in 1 Corinthians 5:12, "Do not ye judge them that are within?" There is a type of judgment that we are commanded to engage in. We read in John 7:24, "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment." Also, in Matthew 7:20, "Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Let's use an example here: If a man came staggering down the aisle to serve at the Lord's table, is there a member of this congregation that would say he should be allowed to do so? Certainly not. Well then, you are judging. But what kind of judgment are you making? You are a "fruit" inspector. You know him by his fruits. We cannot hide behind the idea that we are not to judge. But there is a type of judgment that we are not to do. It is a faultfinding type of judgment when ones own life needs to be corrected.

False teachers are not to be fellowshipped. In Romans 16:17-18 we read, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned; and turn away from them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly; and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent." In spite of this warning, there have been times when brethren have used such false teachers for meetings, had them lead prayers, lead the singing, make announcements, and teach classes. Some years ago, I traveled all over this part of Middle Tennessee warning brethren of false teachers. I especially warned them about those that were dividing the church - because the church practiced pure religion and undefiled, cared for little orphan

bers of the church. These truths will be in the form of Biblical syllogisms; the aim of which will be to show you the necessity of obedience. Many people accept the necessity of faith, repentance, and confession - but are repulsed by the necessity of baptism. Someone may be thinking, after hearing the first part of the lesson tonight, that nobody will want to obey the gospel. I believe you would be wrong in thinking this way. This lesson will cause people to want to obey. I believe we will have some to obey the Lord tonight. When the Lord miraculously disciplined Ananias and Sapphira in the 5th chapter of Acts, we read in verse 14, "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." Now for the benefit of those who are not Christians, I will set forth the following syllogisms:

1. All spiritual blessings are in Christ (Eph. 1:3).
2. Only those who have been baptized, are in Christ (Rom. 6:3).
3. Therefore, only those who have been baptized are in possession of all spiritual blessings.

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1. Christ is the spiritual head of all saved people.
 2. Christ is the head of the church.
 3. Therefore, all saved people are in the church.

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1. All of God's children are in His house or family.
 2. The house or family of God is the church.
 3. Therefore, all of God's children are in the church.

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1. Only those who have been scripturally baptized are in the one body.
 2. The body is the church.
 3. Therefore, only those who have been scripturally baptized are in the church.

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1. All who are saved have been purchased with Christ's blood.
 2. Christ's blood purchased the church.

3. Therefore, only those in the church have been purchased with Christ's blood.

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1. Only those who have put on Christ are saved.
 2. Men put on Christ only in baptism.
 3. Therefore, only those who have been baptized have put on Christ.

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1. All who comply with the will of God shall be saved.
 2. Only those who are baptized for remission of sins comply with the will of God respecting salvation.
 3. Therefore, only those who have been baptized for the remission of sins comply with the will of God.

In conclusion, I suggest that we should obey God because he is God. "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God" (Psalms 90:2). If you are sick, you want to go to a good doctor. If you are concerned about business, you want to consult a man who has the correct answers. If you want to know about salvation, the answers are in this book, the Bible. The passages I have used tonight are sufficient to answer the questions, "What must I do to be saved?" and "What must I do to keep saved?" The Lord made us and wants us to be saved. To become a Christian you must hear the word of the gospel and believe (Acts 15:7-9). You must repent of your sins (Acts 17:30). You must confess faith in Christ (Acts 8:37) (Romans 10:10). You must be baptized (Mark 16:16) (Acts 2:38) (Acts 22:16). If you will do this, the Lord will add you to his Church. If you are an erring child of God, won't you repent of your sins, confess them, and pray to God for forgiveness. Our Lord's invitation is extended.

CHAPTER 8

YOUTH

We certainly have another fine audience this evening - with a wonderful group of young people in our assembly. Let us free our minds from all distractions and fix our attention upon things that are spiritual. I want to urge upon you the necessity of absolute obedience. I suggest to the young people that some of us are not quite as ancient as you might think. I used to think that when a man was in his thirties he was getting rather old. It is amazing to me how much younger the age seems to become as time continues. To many of us, it does not seem very long since we were twelve, thirteen, nineteen, and twenty.

I suggest to you boys and girls that you have great potential. In Esther 4:14, "...And who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Who knows but that you are members of the church at this time to render some of the most valuable service ever rendered to Christ and the church. Never underestimate the power and the importance of youth; that would be a tragic mistake. It could be that there is a letter left out of "Teen Agers." Maybe we should say "Tween Agers." The little children do not want you around, and you certainly do not want them around. You are not ready to be adults yet, or maybe the adults are not

ready. Perhaps then, you might be referred to as "Tween Agers."

I am sure that some of you think that nobody has ever had the problems that you have, but you are mistaken about that. We adults have had them. Jesus faced every temptation that any of us have and resisted it perfectly; "For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). I do not know of anyone who does not have some kind of problem.

If you are looking to some imaginary future period in this life when there will be no problems, I want to disabuse your minds of that idea right now. The time will never come in this life when you will never have any more problems. Christ will help us solve our problems if we will co-operate with him. The only people that I know of who do not have any problems are those who have died in the Lord - having died as faithful Christians. If you think you have problems now, if you do not die as a faithful Christian your problems will be just beginning and they will continue forever and ever in the place called hell. I do not want you to spend eternity in hell; therefore, with every fiber of my being tonight, it is my purpose to present to you "The Saviour's Way For Youth." I might add this, that no matter what your problems may be, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it" (I Cor. 10:13).

I know that we have problems in all phases of life: problems in youth, middle-age, and old age. We have, for example, the problem of selfishness in all ages. Someone related the story of a little boy and his sister who were standing on the street corner. The little boy was eating an ice cream cone and the little girl was crying. A by-passer said,

"Son, why is your little sister crying? The little boy answered, Mister, don't pay any attention to her. She wants my ice cream cone. So, don't pay any attention to her. She cried when I ate her ice cream too." You can see this problem of selfishness is a problem at every age. Other problems of this kind could be mentioned. But there are some problems you will face that will demand the very best of you in order that you can make right decisions regarding them. I call specific attention to five of these decisions this evening.

First, every person must make a decision as to his vocation. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground" (Gen. 3:19). Paul says in II Thessalonians 3:10, "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." To those who had been guilty of stealing, Paul said in Ephesians 4:28, "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need." A gospel preacher told how a person misread this passage. One can, of course, pervert the Bible but those who do so "wrest" unto their own destruction (II Peter 3:16). This man supposedly read it like this: "let him that stole steal." He then perverted it further by changing the structure and punctuation of the verse. He also left out the part which says, "but rather let him labor." And then by taking some words out of context came up with this: "No more working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need." Perhaps the man was trying to abuse the passage to the point of satisfying his own evil desire to steal. This is a vivid example of someone deceitfully handling the word of God and perverting it.

You boys and girls must make a decision as to your vocation. There was only one man that was fed by the ravens, and that man was Elijah the prophet. But you need not expect to be fed that way. You cannot sit upon the stool of "do nothing" and whittle the stick of "do less" and expect the

world to give you a living. Too many people are influenced by that philosophy. A Christian cannot afford to have that kind of attitude. When you decide what your vocation will be, do not decide it solely upon the basis of: "What vocation will bring to me the most dollars and cents?" I know we must give some consideration to money, but this is secondary as compared to Christianity. Reach your decision this way: "In which vocation can I engage that will enable me to make the richest, greatest, and best contribution to Christianity?" This is the correct basis upon which to decide your vocation.

Second, you must decide what school or college to attend in order to prepare for this vocation. This is a very important matter. I am sure all of us are indebted to the public schools. All of us recognize, maybe not sufficiently, the many benefits we have received from them. Some of the most dedicated people I know are young people, and teachers who are in state schools. But at the same time, though they are people of fine moral quality and character, they are not members of the church, but are in families of the world. I maintain that a Christian family is far superior to any other family.

It has been my privilege, for two relatively short periods of time, to be a student in two state institutions. I graduated from Freed-Hardeman College. I say this especially for the benefit of parents who are striving to make a decision for the welfare of their children - both for time and eternity. I also say this for our young people as well. Freed-Hardeman College is a school operated by members of the church. Every teacher is a Christian. Most of the men are gospel preachers. Freed-Hardeman College is different from any state school I have ever had any contact with. I would like to encourage many of you boys to become preachers. I would like to encourage you girls to become wives of preachers. I know that everyone cannot attend a Christian school. But if at all possible, attend school where the teachers are faithful Christians.

Third, you must decide the type of associates you will have. You know that no man would ever become a drunkard if he did not take that first drink. No person would ever marry an ungodly, worldly-type individual if he didn't have that first date with such a one. No woman is worth a man's soul - and no man is worth a woman's soul. Even though you date a member of the church, you should be selective. I dated a girl in high school on a somewhat regular basis. Most of our disagreements concerned religion. She was a member of the church, but not strong. She thought I was too narrow minded. Tonight she is supporting a denomination. If I had been so unfortunate as to have made the wrong decision, I might not tonight be a faithful Christian and gospel preacher.

Boys and girls, it is highly important that you make the right decisions concerning your associates. Paul says, "Be not deceived: Evil company doth corrupt good manners" (I Cor. 15:33). The New English Bible words it like this, "Make no mistake: Bad company is the ruin of a good character." This is indeed one of the truest statements ever made. The things of the Old Testament "were written for our learning." I remember that Jacob had one daughter whose name was Dinah. He moved into a section where he was surrounded by heathens. We read in Genesis 34:1, "And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land." Girls, let me say this to you. If you go out and begin to mix and to mingle by way of association, and like the company of those who are "the daughters of the land", enemies of righteousness, you had better be careful. Let me tell you what will happen if that is done. Dinah was humiliated. As the Bible says, she was "defiled." And in Genesis 34:5, "And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter."

If there are worldly minded members of the church in this audience who think it doesn't make any difference where their daughters go, how late they stay out, and with whom they associate, it may be said of you one day as it was said

of Jacob. You may hear an evil report, and it may be true. I want to sound a note of warning to you young people; not to take away your joy, but for your own eternal welfare. I can truly say "I have you in my heart."

I want to give you an example of a boy who would not corrupt his good morals. I refer to Joseph, a half brother to Dinah. Incidentally, many times there is a great deal of difference between members of the same family. Down in the land of Egypt, the Bible points out how Potiphar's evil wife sought to seduce Joseph. Day after day she spoke to him, but the Bible says that "he hearkened not unto her....or to be with her." Once when she caught him by his garment, "It came to pass,....she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth." But this is what Joseph said to her at first, and I want to emphasize this point. In Gen. 39:9, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Notice he did not ask how he could sin against Potiphar or Potiphar's wife. I want everyone to carefully observe what he did say. "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Some people may think when they are sowing their wild oats that if they sin it will be against themselves or just some other person. But Joseph said, "If I commit this terrible deed, I will sin against God."

After David's sin with Bathsheba and his sin against Uriah, he wrote Psalms 51. Among the things he said was, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight" (Ps. 51:4). In the final analysis every sin is against God. So remember that we are responsible for choosing the right associates. One of the reasons Amnon, a son of David, committed such a terrible sin was because of the wrong encouragement from the wrong kind of a friend. It is expressed in these words in II Sam. 13:3, "But Amnon had a friend, whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimea David's brother: and Jonadab was a very subtle man." Let me encourage, emphasize, and urge you again to choose the right kind of associates.

Fourth, another equally important decision that you will be faced with is the choice of a companion. In Proverbs 18:22, "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor of the Lord." The happiest day in my life was when I obeyed the gospel. The second happiest day of my life was the day that I married my wife. Whatever I am, and whatever success I shall ever have has been made possible largely because of my wife. In Ephesians 5:25, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it." And in Eph. 5:28, "Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his own wife loveth himself." Choose someone that you can love like that.

Fifth, you must choose "for" or "against" Christ. This is one of the most serious decisions you will have to make. Christ said in Matt. 12:30, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." Therefore, you are either for Christ or against him. There is no neutral ground. In Matt. 6:24, "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." You must make up your mind one way or the other. A number of people have already decided "for" Christ in this meeting by responding to the invitation.

There are a few rules you should use in making decisions for Christ and throughout your life. Make the decisions with regard to the best that is within you; and do so by using the best that you have to do it with now. We should be willing to stoop down to serve. Christ said, "for every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Make these decisions with regard to other people. Oh, I have heard that song, "It's Nobody's Business What I Do," but I do not believe a word of it. Paul said, "For none

of us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself" (Rom. 14:7). You cannot be an island all to yourself; you cannot live or die apart from others. So you should make your decisions with regard to what is best for others, but at the same time, make sure that you never compromise the truth.

You should make decisions as to what is best for Christ and Christianity. And, what is best for Christ and Christianity - is best for you. With this in mind, I call attention to three passages. First, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give no occasion of stumbling, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the church of God: even as I also please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of the many, that they may be saved" (I Cor. 10:31-33). Now some questions. Can you drink beer, whiskey, or other strong drink to the glory of God? Certainly no one in this audience believes that he can. Remember verse 32, "Give no occasion of stumbling, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the church of God...." Can you drink without causing offense and stumbling to the church? Can you drink to the glory of God? If someone believes that he can, he should do some more thinking and studying on this subject.

Can you dance to the glory of God? Remember, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Do you believe that I can stand here and preach with all the fervor of my being, and then, when somebody comes by the door say, "Well, what time are we going to begin the dance tonight?" And what if I paraded around on the dance floor with somebody's wife? Now you know as well as I do that I could not do that to the glory of God. I would be giving offence and I would cause stumbling. Plainly, I would not be fit to be in this pulpit. Now if I cannot do it, what double standard makes it right for you to participate in it, whether young or old? Paul told the young people, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an ensample to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in

purity" (I Tim. 4:12). He told Timothy to be an example to the entire church. Although demands are stringent upon the young people, you will always rejoice that you kept yourself clean and upright in soul and body.

Some years ago I read the following story: A man told his son to drive some nails into a post, and the boy obeyed. The father then told him to pull out the nails, and he did so. Then he told him to "stop up the holes." Although he tried, he said, "Daddy, there are so many holes and the scars are so deep that I cannot completely erase where they have been." His daddy replied, "Son, you are exactly right." Then he made the application for his son. One can never live in sin without some of the scars remaining.

Sometimes people look for suits that are on sale. In a clothing store one might see a sign that says "marked down, slightly soiled." One may sometimes buy such a suit that will give some good service, but he would always prefer one that was not soiled. Boys and girls, do not soil yourselves. Someone may say, "Oh, I will sow my wild oats and the Lord will forgive me." Of course, the Lord will forgive you when you repent, but you will suffer the consequences of sin. You will regret it as long as you live. There is not a person here tonight who has ever been over that road who does not now reproach himself for committing sin, if he is the right kind of person. The truth is: we cannot dance to the glory of God: we cannot dance without causing stumbling; we cannot dance without causing offence.

It won't be long now until there will be some who will engage in what I sometimes refer to as "a coming-out party." By that I mean that they will come out of most of their clothes. Can you practically undress to the glory of God? Can you do this without causing somebody to stumble? Without causing offence? Certainly not. You may rationalize all night about it, but if you disagree with what I say in the pulpit about it, I will be glad to talk with you in private.

There is not a person here or anywhere else that can defend it from a Bible standpoint. In Jeremiah 6:15; "Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush." Note this, "Neither could they blush." Some women and girls have reached the point where they can't blush. If my pointing out the sin of immodesty causes you to blush, you should be thankful that you are still modest enough to blush. I do not know of many things that are more repulsive to a person who wants to live right than a woman in the church who cannot blush. One would probably expect that from some of those on the outside. Someone might say, "Oh, my influence won't hurt anyone." That is where you are mistaken.

I read the following story sometime ago: A young preacher boarded a bus on Monday morning, but the bus driver gave him a dime too much change. The young man remembered that he had spoken concerning "stealing" in his sermon the day before. He knew the dime was not his. He determined to return it to the driver. He went to the driver and said, "Sir, by mistake you gave me a dime too much." The driver said, "Oh no, you are wrong. I did not give it to you by mistake. I heard you preach yesterday, and I wanted to see if you practiced what you preached, and I deliberately gave you a dime too much. I watched you in the mirror while you counted the change. If you had kept the dime, I would never have heard you preach again."

Remember the sermon tonight when the weather warms up. In I Tim. 2:9; "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array." Christ said to the church in Laodicea, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold refined by fire, that thou mayest become rich; and white garments that thou mayest clothe thyself, and that the shame of thy nakedness be not made manifest; and eyesalve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see" (Rev. 3:18). Even though this passage refers to spirit-

ual nakedness, if it had not been true that one should be ashamed when physically naked, our Lord would not have used it in the spiritual sense. If it were not a shame to be unclad physically, it would not be a shame to be unclad spiritually or our Lord would not have made the application. It was a shame to be physically unclad; it is a shame to be spiritually unclad.

In Revelation 16:15; "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." A number of people are not ashamed - they cannot blush. But there are others who see their shame. An old preacher, though regretting that Eve ate the forbidden fruit, said he sometimes wished he had some of it to give to the women and girls. For, he said, Eve did put on some clothes after eating it and he thought maybe it might have the same effect on others. There are mothers in this audience who let their daughters dress immodestly. They may still be their little children, but they are grown up in the eyes of others, and cause sin in the minds of others. I am aware that there are some who would commit adultery in the mind no matter what one did. "Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin" (II Peter 2:14). I am not referring to that kind of person. No matter how decently and modestly a person might be dressed, that type of person would commit lust. But I am speaking of men who do not want to think or do anything wrong. Men who, though after God's heart, as was David, by the lack of proper dress on the part of women and girls, may be tempted to commit adultery either in the mind or else to be guilty of the very act. When women parade around indecently clad, and thereby cause men with pure hearts to lust after them, the women are far from guiltless. One cannot undress to the glory of God, and cannot be immodestly clad without causing offence and stumbling.

For the remainder of the sermon, I want to give an example of a man who made the wrong decision, and then

conclude with an example of a man who made the right decision. I want to refer to the Old Testament for the first, and to the New Testament for the second.

The man who made the wrong decision against God in the Old Testament was Absalom. One of the saddest statements I have ever read is in II Samuel 18:33; "And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" The great mistake of Absalom was his deciding against God. Note some of his mistakes - mistakes which brought this brilliant, handsome, young man to an untimely death.

Absalom thought that he could ignore the right rule of life, and that he could be an exception. In Hosea 8:7; "For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind." In Romans 2:11; "For there is no respect of persons with God." And in Galatians 6:7-8; "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life." Absalom could not be an exception to the right rule of life.

Absalom thought he could take the law of the land into his own hands. The half brother of Absalom, Amnon, committed a terrible sin against Tamar, Absalom's sister. Instead of appealing to his father, King David, Absalom decided to kill Amnon. We read in II Samuel 13:28; "Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon; then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you? be courageous, and be valiant."

Further, Absalom fled from home and was among evil associates for three years. In II Samuel 13:37-38; "But Absalom fled, and went to Talmai, the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And David mourned for his son every day. So Absalom fled, and went to Geshur, and was there three years." For three years he remained among evil associates. It is no wonder that he planned to overthrow his father when he returned.

Another mistake of Absalom was that he was disrespectful to his father. In II Samuel 15:30; "And David went up by the ascent of mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and all the people that was with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up." Boys and girls, the Bible says in Ephesians 6:1-3; "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." In spite of Absalom's mistreatment of his father, David still loved him and commanded his captains in II Samuel 18:5; "Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom." David may have thought much about his past sins during these dark hours, but one thing is certain, he showed his great love for his rebellious son, Absalom.

My heart goes out to anyone whose children have gone astray. I do not know what mine will do - they are still young. But I want you to pray for me that I may be able to train them up in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord." I certainly believe Proverbs 22:6; "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." As David was grieved for Absalom, even so my heart is grieved for others. If there is anything that I can do while I am in this meeting to help anyone who has an erring son or daughter, I shall be happy to assist to the greatest

extent of my ability.

Now, coming to the New Testament, we want to consider Timothy, who made the decision for God, Christ, and the church. Absalom chose against God, Timothy chose for God. David very likely neglected Absalom's religious training during the time that Absalom was growing up. But Timothy had wonderful religious training even from a child. He was fortunate in having both a godly mother and grandmother. Note II Tim. 1:5; "Having been reminded of the unfeigned faith that is in thee; which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice, and, I am persuaded, in thee also." Also, in II Tim. 3:14-15; "But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a babe thou has known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." One of the reasons, brethren, that so many of our children go astray is that we are too busy with houses and lots, stocks and bonds, farms, cattle, automobiles, and various businesses. I have watched that very carefully and I am sure that some of you have also.

I realize that sometimes the reason some of our children are not interested in living the Christian life is because we have done such a poor job of living a life of Christianity before our children in our homes. Sometimes people say, "Oh, I brought my children up in the church." But did you bring them up in the home? That is where you are supposed to bring them up. The church is obligated to teach and instruct them also, but they are to be brought up in the home. "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). One translation says to "bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."

The reason most of our children leave the church is because they do not receive the proper training. If we pro-

vide the correct training and a child will not receive it, we have done our duty. But if we provide the training which includes not only the correct teaching but also the proper attitude, motives, incentives, and all that is involved ... - seldom will a child refuse to accept the training. If you will make Christianity attractive to your children; if you will demonstrate to them that it means everything to you, they will be able to see what it has done for you and then they will want to be Christians.

To summarize briefly, you must decide what your vocation will be. You must decide what school to attend. At this point I would like to point out that it is the responsibility of the home to educate the child - and not the responsibility of the church. The school is an adjunct of the home - not of the church. Of course, there is some overlapping of responsibility. You must further choose your associates. You will some day be faced with the choice of a companion. But, most important of all, you must choose for or against Christ. You now have a decision to make. What will you do with Jesus? What will your answer be?

To become a Christian you must hear the gospel (Acts 15:7-9). You have heard the gospel throughout this meeting. You must believe in God (Heb. 11:6). You must repent (Acts 17:30), confess Christ (Rom. 10:10), and be baptized into Christ (Rom. 6:3-4), for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). The Lord will pardon, forgive you, save you, and add you to his church (Acts 2:41,47).

An erring child of God is restored by repentance, confession of sins and prayer (Acts 8:20-23; I John 1:9). Will you come?

CHAPTER 9

THE HOME

We read in Psalms 118:22-24, "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." This is a prophesy that was made by David concerning this day, the Lord's day. This is a beautiful day. We have had many glorious opportunities and privileges from last Lord's day until this one. From about this time last Sunday when we began this gospel meeting, much good has been done, and I trust that much additional good will be done. To that end I want to encourage us to redouble our efforts, if possible, and to pray even more fervently. This afternoon, let us go out into the highways and by-ways and seek to bring people to Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world!

My prayer to the Lord on this occasion is: "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer" (Ps. 19:14). I hope that all of us will rid our minds of all worldly cares, distractions, or frustrations, and center our thoughts upon the subject that is before us--"The Home."

If I were to ask you to give a definition of your home, what would you say? I heard of a man who said, "My home is the place where we fight our private battles." A woman said, "My home is where I work the hardest, slave the longest, and am appreciated the least." A young man said, "My home is simply a place where I come to eat my meals, change my clothes, and then be on my way again." I heard of a young girl who said, "My home is where I stay from midnight until daylight." Incidentally, I heard of a daughter who came in late one night and the mother told her to lock the door, but she said, "I can't for grandma hasn't come home yet." I wonder what the definition of your home would be if I asked you and you told the truth about it. Obviously I will not do that; but what is your definition of your home? What kind of home do you have?

There are so many things that I would be happy to say in this sermon if time permitted. But I am thankful that I was privileged to teach the combined classes at the Bible study hour, and was able to say some things then that needed to be said.

I feel that the proper place to begin this sermon is with the need for parental education in the home, its purpose, and its value. Paul said in Ephesians 6:4, "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." In Eph. 6:1 we learn, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right." Therefore, the parents, father and mother, and also the children must be included in the discussion. It is our duty to "bring up" our children, and to bring them up right. One translation of Ephesians 6:4 says that we are to bring them up in "the discipline and instruction of the Lord." We are commanded to discipline our children. We, of course, are to discipline them in love, but love sometimes means "peach tree tea." Sometimes it means just talking. The need will determine the particular approach. Solomon said, "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for

his crying" (Prov. 19:18). "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him" (Prov. 22:15). Then in Proverbs 23:13,14, we read, "Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell." "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame" (Prov. 29:15). "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes" (Prov. 13:24). Now, of course we are to use wisdom in all of our discipline, but I am saying this: we need to discipline our children. Some people seem to think that their children could never, under any circumstances, do wrong. I have heard some praise their children highly when others knew that their children were not that good. I have often said that it is not my intention to make any rash statements about my children unless I do it unintentionally. I have confidence in them and I should have, but I do know something about human nature. Therefore, we need to be meticulous in this matter of discipline. If we are not, we may lose our children. Parents have a responsibility along this line.

Deuteronomy 4:7-9 says, "For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons." Then to the fathers of the Old Testament era, "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them

upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates" (Deut. 6:6-9). What do you parents talk about when you make trips with your children? What do you talk about when you sit down at night? Is the major theme Christ, and him crucified? What are the last things that you participate in with them at night? Is it a prayer or some talk about the Bible? What do you do among the first things of the morning? They were commanded to speak of those things diligently; in the way, when they sat in their homes, at bedtime, and when they arose in the morning. They were to write them over their door posts and they were to be as frontlets between their eyes. Do you know why we are losing about half of our young people, and in some cases more than half? It is because of the neglect and the unconcern of those of us who are parents. I do not believe that the average member of the church realizes what he is doing to his own children. I tell you that I had rather all three of my little girls die today, on their way home from services, while they are yet young, than for them to become accountable and fail to obey the gospel; or having become Christians, fail to live the Christian life acceptably and thus to spend eternity in the terrible place called hell. The Bible says, "Do not sin against the child." Some of the greatest sins some of us have ever committed are against our own children. I call attention to some passages in the Old Testament. "Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments: And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious gen-

eration; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God." (Ps. 78:1-8). Among other things, these passages say we know the truth, but we want our children to know it. Our parents have taught us, we know it because we were taught it. Therefore, what is the conclusion? We must tell it to our children. Did you know that one unfaithful generation could cause the entire church to apostatize? We are faced with compromise and softness in many quarters right now of the so-called Carl Ketcherside type. Incidentally, at one time he held error that is diametrically opposed to the new error that he has espoused. He formerly opposed orphan homes, "Co-operation", individual support of colleges where the Bible is taught, and located preachers. This man has now swung to the opposite extreme and he is contending that it is right to fellowship members of the Christian Church. I had a discussion with a group of sectarian preachers of that kind in Knoxville, Tennessee a few years ago. Our phone rang during our mid-week Bible study and some of the preachers from there were calling. They said that the leader was planning to speak that night and that they had agreed to allow me to answer him; so I went. They came in together. Some of them were from as far away as Vermont. Their leader spoke for about twenty-five minutes but did not use one scripture. The reason was obvious, he didn't have anything to sustain what he said. One of the first things that he said was this, "The reason that we have all the confusion in the religious world is this; it is the fault of the Bible." When I was granted an opportunity to answer, I made every effort to conduct myself as a Christian, but of course I pressed him. I answered his attack on the Bible first. I showed from Scripture why he was wrong. I am sure that I had not spoken more than four or five minutes, when he interrupted me, his face very red, and said, "You are carnal minded; rattling off all those scriptures." Those were his exact words. When he had said that, a large, husky preacher asked me, "What denomination are you a member of?" I replied, "I am a member of the body of Christ." He then said,

"That burns me up." It was very obvious that it did too. They then jumped to their feet and walked out. I thought of this passage and almost said it to them: "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." But I emphasize again, we are faced with compromise in doctrine, compromise in morals, compromise in Christianity, and much of this attitude goes back to the home. He said we have "heard," we have "known," our fathers have "told us." Are we hiding the truth from our children? Are we "showing to the generation to come the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done?" What about the generation to come? Will your grand-children be communists, Catholics, or will they be members of the church of Christ? That is a very serious question. Note this, "For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children" (Ps. 78:5). There is a very similar passage in the New Testament regarding our responsibility in teaching others, "And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (II Tim. 2:2). The Psalmist continues, "That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born: who should arise and declare them to their children" (Ps. 78:6). What about your grand-children? Will they know the truth about the one Church, the plan of salvation, the worship, and all that is involved? Further, "That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments: And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God" (Ps. 78:7,8). Now, in the New Testament, I emphasize these words again, "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4).

Next, I want to suggest that which is of most importance in our homes. Parents need to know this. They should know it even before marriage. God, Christ, and the church

must be placed first. Any member who has absented himself from the assembly of the saints today, not being providentially hindered, has committed a sin. Christ commands, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt. 6:33). Now, there are four points in this verse. Number one, there is a command, "Seek ye." Number two, there is the objective of the command, "the kingdom of God." Number three, there is the order, "seek ye first." Number four, there is a promise, "and all these things shall be added unto you."

Now, second in importance in the home is your companion. You should never allow anything to come between you and your companion. You agreed when you married your companion that you would remain with him or her as long as you live. Therefore the husband should be considerate of the wife and the wife of the husband. Some wives treat their husbands about like the man who said, "My wife and I agreed when we married that she would make all of the minor decisions and I would make all of the major ones. But after twenty years there has not been a major decision made." That is the way some wives treat their husbands. In Proverbs 21:9, we read "It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house." If any man ever could speak from experience it surely was Solomon for he had a thousand wives. He said that it would be better to live in a small corner of a house than in comfortable quarters with a brawling woman. There have been many women who have driven their husbands away from home. Though they may have been moral, nevertheless, they were nagging women. Authorities that have dealt with more than ten thousand cases of the breakdown of marriages say that the nagging wife and the egotistical husband are two of the major causes of the breakdown of marriages. They say that more marriages are broken up because of mother-in-law problems than any other single factor. Mothers-in-laws are, however, falsely accused many times.

But a son and daughter are to make their own family as God intended it to be. I heard of a man who was guilty of the terrible sin of drinking; his wife nagged and nagged as if she had been vaccinated with a phonograph needle. Finally, she saw that her nagging was contributing to the breakdown of their marriage. So, one night she resolved that when he came home she would change her tactics. She would throw her arms around him, take his hat, give him a big kiss, and show him that she loved him and that she could change her ways. When he arrived she politely took his hat, threw her arms around him and gave him a big kiss. He backed away a distance, blinked his eyes and said, I am sorry lady, there must be some mistake, if you will give me my hat I will go home."

There are some husbands that treat their wives like they were slaves. You have never seen a normal man going around striking himself. They have a place nearby called Central State for fellows like that. We are to love our own bodies. In Ephesians 5:28 husbands are told, "Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his own wife loveth himself." Peter said, "Ye husbands, in like manner, dwell with your wives according to knowledge, giving honor unto the woman, as unto the weaker vessel, as being also joint-heirs of the grace of life; to the end that your prayers be not hindered" (I Pet. 3:7). Think of your wife, if you have children, she went down to the very valley of the shadow of death to give life to your children. You have stood at times by the bed side or crib, perhaps, of some of your children when you did not know whether they would live or not. You have cried together. You not only have wept together but you have laughed together. If you will remember your first love it will be hard for you to be unfaithful to her. And if you are, you will hate yourself for it. I say that, generally speaking, the wife has a more difficult place to fill than the husband. The old expression, "Man's work is from sun to sun but a woman's work is never done," has a great deal of truth in it. My wife

has it more difficult than do I in many ways, and to her I give credit. Your companion must be next to to the Lord for your marriage to be as the Saviour wants it.

Next in order of importance are the children. Do not let your children come between you and your husband or between you and your wife. You should love your children enough to die for them if need be, but it is a different kind of love. They will grow up and establish their own homes. And, parents, it won't be long till all we will have at home will be dusty toys and precious memories of our children. Therefore, we had better put a lot of living in a few years, while we have them. People who have many children know that they soon are scattered all over this country and abroad. Many of us have not seriously meditated on our responsibilities. Still others are not willing to accept these responsibilities.

Then we must have a vocation. We must have some business or work in order to provide for our children. This is commanded; therefore, it is honorable to work if the work or business that is engaged in is morally right. I gave you scriptures to prove that point last evening.

We must also be concerned about our parents and our in-laws. Perhaps at times this concern will include other relatives. Yet, relatives must never be allowed to come between husbands and wives. It is important that one learn the proper relationship of these matters.

For the remainder of the time let us consider the marriage relationship itself.

The Lord intends that marriage be a union for life. Although the Jews attempted to use Moses' law to prove that one could put away his wife for every cause (Matt. 19:3), Jesus refuted this reasoning in Matt. 19:8, "He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered

you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so." Jesus further commented in Matt. 19:9, "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." We are also told in Malachi 2:14 that ... a man's wife is called his "companion," and "the wife of thy covenant." Also in Malachi 2:16, "For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away."

The importance of this study cannot be over-emphasized. Our happiness in this life, to a great degree, will be determined by our understanding of what the New Testament teaches concerning marriage. Likewise, our misery or unhappiness might well be determined by our failure to understand what the Bible says about marriage and divorce. Even more important, our welfare in the world to come is at stake.

There has been considerable increase in divorce and the breaking-up of homes during the last few years. When the teaching of the New Testament is disregarded, more and more marriages will continue to break up. Because this has happened, it is to be expected that some people will misapply Scriptures in an effort to justify themselves, their relatives, or their friends, who are in adulterous unions. Some, after finding themselves in adultery, rather than admit it and get out of it, have manufactured the argument that those who are out of the church are not amenable to the law of Christ, the New Covenant, the Gospel. Whosoever in Matt. 19:9 includes all, both saint and sinner.

Who can marry, scripturally?

1. Those who have never been married previously. (I Cor. 7:8-9).
2. Those who have been married previously but

- whose former companion was guilty of fornication. (Matt. 19:9).
3. Those who have been previously married but whose companion is dead. (Rom. 7:2).
 4. Those who do not fall under the class of prohibitions set forth in Matt. 19:10-12.

Who cannot marry, scripturally?

1. Those who have a living former companion (husband or wife who was not put away for fornication) (Matt. 19:9).
2. Those who marry anyone who has a living former companion who was not put away because of fornication. (Matt. 19:9).

To determine how long a union continues to be adulterous, we need to ask, why was the union adulterous in the first place? When a man divorces his wife for any cause, except for fornication, and marries again, his second union is adulterous because, in God's sight, he is still married to the first woman. (Matt. 19:6-9). God joined them together and no man can do right and put them asunder. God has decreed that only death or fornication can dissolve the marriage union. When either companion dies, the other is free to remarry. The Christian widow, however, is free to marry "only in the Lord" (I Cor. 7:39).

When one companion commits fornication, the other is free to remarry, provided the innocent one has had no part in this sin. When a man and woman obtain a divorce, except for fornication, God looks upon them as still being married to each other. The "reason" for putting away a companion must exist at the time the new relationship is formed for it to be acceptable to God.

Does the Lord teach that one must get out of an adulterous union in order to be saved? Paul, with full approval of the Lord, wrote to the Colossians and mentioned fornication and other sins which they practiced before they became Christians. Paul said, "In the which ye also walked sometime, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these" (Col. 3:5-8). Also, in his letter to the Christians at Corinth, Paul mentions fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, etc., and says, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified" (I Cor. 6:11). When the people repented after hearing the preaching of the apostles, they put away adultery and other sins of which they were guilty.

The sin of adultery includes not simply the taking of an unlawfully divorced person as wife or husband, but also the continuing in that unlawful relationship. To illustrate: A man steals a car. The sin of stealing the car without the owner's consent is one thing, but the continued holding of the car is also sinful. If the thief repents, he will return the car to its rightful owner. If a thief were to steal your car, and then repent of such an act, would you expect him to still keep your car?

We have heard it said, "There is no example in the Bible where the inspired apostles required an adulterous couple to separate when they were baptized." Of course there is none, because repentance was placed before baptism, and its meaning was so clear that all sinners knew they had to quit all unlawful relationships and practices. When repentance is properly taught today, and people obey the truth, the church will not have much trouble over unscriptural marriages. That problem will have been solved before baptism. If it is not solved at repentance, baptism will not solve it. To be the Lord's people, we must sever all unlawful relationships, whether they be business, social, or marital.

Let us note some questions and objections concerning

the theory that Christ's Law concerning marriage does not apply to the world (the person who is not a Christian):

1. When a man looks on a woman to lust after her, does he break Civil law or the Law of Christ? (Mt. 5:28). (What about the song "Standing on the Corner?"... "You can't go to jail for what you are thinking.") Though one does not go to jail for what he is thinking, yet, according to Christ, if he commits lust in his heart, unless he repents of it, he will be lost. Lust does not break American Civil law, or the song "Standing on the Corner" could not have been sung all over the land. Yet, whether saint or sinner, one is guilty of breaking the Law of Christ when he lusts. (Mt. 5:28).

2. If a man breaks the Civil law when he lusts, please cite the ordinance? If he does not break the Civil law, then does he not break the LAW of Christ?

3. Do men break the Civil law when they disbelieve the Gospel? (Acts 15:7-9; Jno. 8:21-24). (The command to believe the Gospel is certainly not a command of Civil law. When one refuses to believe the Gospel he breaks not Civil law, but the Law of Christ).

4. Do men who refuse to repent break the Law of Christ? (Acts 17:30).

5. If Civil law permitted idolatry, would a man out of the Church sin when he worships idols? (Greek civil law permitted the worship of idols during Paul's day, yet to those who were not members of the church he said, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.") (Acts 17:30).

6. Since men cannot obey law to which they are not accountable, how could people ever become members of the church, according to this theory?

7. Name one sin that a person can repent of without ceasing the sin.

8. Is there any true repentance that does not involve the cessation of the sin repented of? (Acts 19:18, 19).

9. How many people are included in the word, "Whosoever?" (Jno. 3:16; Rev. 22:17; Mt. 19:9).

10. What Civil law does the sin of neglect violate? (James 4:17; Heb. 2:3).

11. If one contends that Christ's law does not apply to the world, how could he apply II John 9-11 to the errors of the false religions?

Observations Concerning The Theory:

1. Paul speaks of "fornicators of this world," showing that a man violates the Law of Christ in committing fornication (while in the world and before he became a Christian). He did not, however, break the Civil law of the time. (I Cor. 5:9, 10).

2. Paul also shows that a man may be guilty of other sins while in the world. (I Cor. 6:9-11). Adulterers are among those mentioned. They, the Corinthian Christians, were guilty of all these sins before they were washed (baptized), sanctified, and justified. This shows plainly that specific sins are held against those in the world before they become Christians.

3. Now that it has been shown that one commits the sin of adultery when he transgresses Christ's law while in the world, what must he do? Paul said, "But now ye also put off all these" (Col. 3:5-8).

Further Proof:

1. All laws which are addressed to all men are laws to which all men are accountable.

2. The law of Christ, the gospel, is a law which is addressed to all men. (Mk. 16:15, 16).

3. Conclusion: The law of Christ, the gospel, is a law to which all men are accountable.

1. All men who obey the law of Christ in becoming children of God are men who are accountable to the law of Christ. (Mk. 16:15, 16).

2. Men in the world (those out of the church) are men who obey the law of Christ in becoming children of God (being made free). (Rom. 8:1,2).

3. Conclusion: Men in the world (all out of the church) are men who are accountable to the law of Christ.

1. All men who must repent in order to gain remission of sins in the name of Christ are men who are accountable to the law of Christ. (Mk. 16:15, 16).

2. All the nations (every person in every nation) are men who must repent in order to gain remission of sins in the name of Christ. (Lk. 24:47).

3. Conclusion: All the nations (every person in every nation) are men who are accountable to the law of Christ.

What This Theory Leads to:

1. It would allow one to marry a thousand times (which would, of course, be in violation to the Law of Christ on marriage) so long as it was done before obeying the Gospel, and so long as civil law did not forbid. One that thus contends could not even condemn polygamy where not forbidden

by civil law. Who can believe this?

2. It denies the universality of the Gospel. (Mk. 16:15, 16).

3. It would allow one to continue in a relationship which violated the Law of Christ after obeying the Gospel, so it would allow one to remain in a false religion. This, no one can believe.

4. It denies that Christ is "King of Kings" and "Lord of Lords" (I Tim. 6:15; Rev. 19:16).

5. It would make it impossible for anyone to be saved, since men in the world could not obey (as this theory erroneously contends) Divine Law.

The Saviour's way in the home is that the husband and the wife be Christians, and the children become Christians at the age of accountability. The Lord intends that the children be respectful and obedient, that the husband love the wife with all of his heart, and that the wife "reverence her husband" (Eph. 5:33).

Now I want to mention some things that, I am confident, if they were to be practiced as they should be, would help us to have successful Christian homes. First, Union; I have given passages for these points before so I will not take the time to repeat them. Second, Unity; Third, Oneness; Fourth, Sympathy; Fifth, Co-operation; Sixth, Self-sacrifice; many homes break up because this element is lacking. Seventh, Mutual Interests; there is something wrong when families do not want to be together. Someone has well said, "The family who prays together stays together." I suppose the biggest sacrifice I make when conducting gospel meetings is that of being away from my family. Eighth, Unselfish Love; of which so many things could be said. Ninth, Understanding Love; and Tenth, Acceptance of Responsibility. Don't you want

all of these things? By hearing and believing the gospel, repenting of every sin, confessing Christ, being baptized into Christ for remission of sins, the Lord will add you to the only church that you read about in the New Testament. If you are an unfaithful child of God, you need repentance, confession, and prayer (Acts 8:20-23, I Jn. 1:9). I am convinced that there are several who intend to respond, boys and girls who are accountable; unfaithful members; older people who have not been baptized.

CHAPTER 10

CONTENTMENT

*T*his evening we shall discuss the Saviour's way and contentment. I do not know of any command our Lord has given us that is not essential. I do not believe that anyone in this audience, who respects the Bible, will claim that any command of our Lord is not essential. I have called attention in previous lessons to such commands of our Lord as Mark 16:16 which states "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." I have pointed out that our Lord commands baptism. One would be a rebel to deny that baptism is necessary. A few nights ago I discussed a command from our Lord and Paul concerning discipline. Paul said, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us." I also pointed out that discipline is necessary or our Lord would not have authorized it.

Tonight, I call attention to another command of our Lord; a command which many people, no doubt, have violated at one time or another. It is likely at some period of our life all of us have violated it, but some are consistent in doing so. Listen to Matthew 6:25-34 - "Therefore I say unto

you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment? Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto his stature? And why are ye anxious concerning raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

I do not believe that we should misrepresent Christianity as one lady did to her little granddaughter. One day the little girl came running in and said, "Grandma, is old Beck the mule a Christian?" She replied, "why no, why do you ask such a question?" The little girl said, "I saw the old mule standing out there with his ears flopped down and looking like he had lost his best friend, and so I thought that maybe he was a Christian too."

Christ said in John 10:10, "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." Paul states in Philipians 4:4, "Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice." In I Peter 1:8, "Whom not having seen ye love; on whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

There is no reason to become frustrated; in fact, we shall see that it is a command not to so do. I am a friend to the announcers at the radio station in Oak Ridge. Sometimes one of them will play a song that pretty well expresses the outlook of many. It is entitled "Life Sure Gets Tedious Don't It?" Though I do not recall the entire song, some of it goes like this: "my roof is falling in; I just ate my last can of pork and beans; my windows are falling out; I have caught a cold in my nose, Life sure gets tasteless don't it?" I am afraid that many people's lives surely are tasteless. There is no reason for a child of God to allow life to become "tasteless."

If we had wanted to become distressed we could have done so tonight, for when we attempted to enter the house we were locked out. And, when we attempted to play the tape that accompanies the slides we are viewing before services each evening, there was no sound on that particular tape. There was no need to become excited for I had another tape. Then, though you probably were not aware of it, when I turned the projector on, the bulb burned out and I had to replace it. Then when we started, some of the slides stuck. But, in spite of all that, we were finished a minute or two sooner than usual.

Sometimes it is said, "worry is like a rocking chair - you do a lot of traveling but you don't go anywhere." Worry is like a bridge that we build over rivers which do not exist anyway. If you do not have the same set of worries tonight that you had three months ago, I maintain that most of you do not remember many of the worries that you had three months ago. Do you know why? You have a new set of worries tonight and many of your former ones were not as bad as you had thought them to be.

Mutt and Jeff were represented as having a conversation, and Mutt was crying. Jeff asked, "Mutt, why are you

crying?" He said, "My little boy just drown." Jeff said, "You don't have a little boy." Mutt said, "Yes, I know, but I just got to thinking what if I did have a little boy and what if he were to fall into water and drown, wouldn't that be a calamity? And so I just got to crying about it." That is the way with many of us. Yet, in Hebrews 13:5,6 we read, "Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have: for himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in anywise forsake thee. So that with good courage we say, The Lord is my helper; I will not fear: what shall man do unto me?"

How many of us present tonight violate the injunction "Be ye free from the love of money?" I heard of one member of the church who, though quite wealthy, was very stingy. Because we are on the honor system in our giving, many people act dishonorably concerning giving to God and will therefore spend eternity in hell. But in that particular congregation the brethren were interested in erecting a new building. It was said that this brother sat in the rear of the building during the business meeting lest he be asked to give very much. The chairman of the business meeting asked him, "How much will you give?" He answered, "I will give ten dollars." But about that time a large piece of plaster fell and hit him on the head and he, being superstitious, said, "I will give a hundred dollars." The preacher said, "hit him again Lord." Some people are not free from the love of money.

We are further told to be "content with such things as ye have." This command is disregarded often, and it is at times rather difficult for any of us to completely abide by this. However, it makes it much easier to do so when we realize, "for himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee. So that with good courage we say, The Lord is my helper; I will not fear: what shall man do unto me?" The worst man can do is to kill you and then, if you are a faithful saint, he won't be harming you

very much. Christ said in Matthew 10:28, "And be not afraid of them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Thus we are told to be "content with such things as ye have."

I now call attention to another passage that tells us to be content. Philippians 4:6, "In nothing be anxious: but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." How much worry does this allow? It doesn't allow a particle - not any. I want to make an observation here for I think that I need to. There is a difference in anxiety, frustration, and the right kind of care. Of course, the Bible does teach the right kind of care. Paul said about Timothy and to the Philippians, "For I have no man likeminded, who will care truly for your state (Philippians 2:20)." In this passage, Paul pointed out to them that Timothy would have the right kind of care for them. The Bible teaches that "the fathers should lay up for the children." The Bible does not condemn "forethought" but it does condemn "fear thought." If we will get that distinction clearly in mind, then this lesson can mean something to us. It's right to have the right kind of care for our children. However, it would be wrong to be so distrustful of God that we would take them into the basement, place them in chains for the rest of their lives, because we were afraid that God could not take care of them when they are out of our sight.

At this point I suggest that if you do not trust God implicitly that it is evidence of little faith. The Bible speaks of "great faith" and also of "little faith." I have an idea that the majority of Christians would find themselves somewhere between "great faith" and "little faith." Naturally I wish all of us possessed "great faith."

There are five passages that deal with what we have

been discussing, but two of them are parallel passages, so really they teach four lessons. The first is Matthew 6:28-30, "And why are ye anxious concerning raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin: yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith." Note the command of our Lord, "Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things (Matthew 6: 31, 32)." To be anxious concerning what we eat, drink, or wear, according to Christ, is evidence of little faith. If Christ had not said this I would not ask you to accept it. Christ tells us "for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." He then said, "But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." We are to make his kingdom, the church, the objective of our search. We are commanded to seek his kingdom first, and, having done so, we are promised that all the necessary blessings will result.

The second lesson is found in Matthew 8:23-27, "And when he was entered into a boat, his disciples followed him. And behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, inasmuch that the boat was covered with the waves: but he was asleep. And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Save, Lord; we perish. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea: and there was a great calm. And the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?" To be fearful in the presence of the Lord is evidence of little faith, and how often we see this demonstrated. I heard of one woman who was riding in a

buggy and the horse ran away. Someone asked, "Why didn't you trust in the Lord?" She replied, "I did until the staves broke." That is characteristic of many of us.

The third passage is Matthew 14:24-33: "But the boat was now in the midst of the sea, distressed by the waves; for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night he came unto them, walking upon the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee upon the waters. And he said, Come. And Peter went down from the boat, and walked upon the waters, to come to Jesus. But when he saw the wind he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and took hold of him, and saith unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they were gone up into the boat, the wind ceased. And they that were in the boat worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God." To doubt the Lord's ability to care for us both physically and spiritually is evidence of little faith on our part.

Our fourth passage is found in Matthew 16:5-12, "And the disciples came to the other side and forgot to take bread. And Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, We took no bread. And Jesus perceiving it said, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have no bread? Do ye not perceive, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? How is it that ye do not perceive that I spake not to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Then understood they how that he bade

them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

The disciples, like many of us, were still so materialistic minded that, on this occasion, at first all they could think about was bread. They had even forgotten about the five thousand and the four thousand that he had fed. Their minds were on material things to the point that they did not discern the spiritual lesson intended. To have our minds centered on material things to such a degree that we do not understand spiritual lessons is evidence of little faith. I ask you this question, do you think that anyone in this audience tonight would likely go to sleep counting one hundred dollar bills? If you can stay awake when counting money but cannot stay awake when spiritual matters are being considered, it may be that you are materialistic minded, and therefore are of little faith.

I have on occasion, when it appeared there was a lapse in audience attention, brought up some point with a humorous side to it, and then have observed that the fellow who was almost asleep would listen attentively. But alas, when I began to use book, chapter, and verse again he went to sleep once more. I am not speaking of those who are sick, or who are so tired that they cannot remain awake. But I am speaking of those who have more interest in "material" things than they do in "spiritual" things. This is evidence of their little faith. One of the reasons that there are so many discontented people is that there are so many people who have little faith.

Let us now advance to another phase of our lesson. Contentment is great gain, provided - provided what? Provided you are godly with it. There are people who are not followers of Christ that are content in their error. In I Timothy 6:6-8, "But godliness with contentment is great gain: for we brought nothing into the world, for neither can we carry anything out; but having food and covering we shall be therewith content."

I want now to discuss a man who was content in his error, but who later learned how to be content as a Christian. After learning and obeying the truth, Paul describes his own condition while in error with these words, "though I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: howbeit I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief; and the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief; howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me as chief might Jesus Christ shew forth all his longsuffering, for an ensample of them which should hereafter believe on him unto eternal life."

I Timothy 1:13-16 indicates that Paul thought that he was right while in error. In Acts 26:9, he said, "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." He also had a good conscience. As stated in Acts 23:1, "And Paul, looking stedfastly on the council, said, Brethren, I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day." Do you know what a good conscience is? Here is the best description that I know. It is found in Hebrews 13:18, "Pray for us: for we are persuaded that we have a good conscience, desiring to live honestly in all things." A good conscience therefore is the desire to live honestly. Paul had that desire, but he was misguided and in error while persecuting Christians. This shows that our conscience cannot be relied upon as a safe guide in religion. We must allow the Bible to be our guide and then the conscience sits in judgment concerning our obedience to the truth. Though Paul was content to persecute Christians, to bring great gain contentment must be coupled with godliness.

Listen to Paul in Galatians 1:13-14, "For ye have heard of my manner of life in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and made havock of it: and I advanced in the Jews' religion

beyond many of mine own age among my countrymen, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers." And in Acts 22:4, "And I persecuted this Way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women."

Paul, after learning that he was in great error, was so discontented and miserable that it is said in Acts 9:9, "And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink." It is amazing to me that a denominational preacher will deny the teaching of Acts 22:16 which says, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." How can any man contend that one is saved before baptism when Paul, a penitent praying man, could not be saved until he was baptized. And remember that Paul said, "that in me as chief might Jesus Christ shew forth all his longsuffering, for an ensample of them which should hereafter believe on him unto eternal life."

There is a need to preach this truth again and again. We need to wipe out softness and compromise from among God's people. When the church preached the strongest, it grew the fastest. It is fine to have flowers on our tables, but if we never had any food to eat we would soon become very weak.

Paul said in Romans 1:16, "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." The reason that the church has grown so rapidly in recent years is because the gospel has been preached without compromise. I am concerned about the compromise that is evident in some quarters. Some say, "we must do positive preaching." I believe this but I also believe in exposing every error by name, if need be, as long as it is done in Christian love. There is one church and only one. There are seven "ones" in Ephesians 4:4-6.

Paul learned a number of things. He learned that he was chief of sinners. He learned that his good conscience was not sufficient. He learned that he must be baptized in order that his sins might be washed away. He learned that baptism puts one into Christ. He learned that one cannot be saved apart from the blood, and that one contacts the blood in baptism. In Romans 6:3-4, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

We now advance to some things that Paul learned as a Christian. He states in Philippians 4:11, "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content." Paul had to learn contentment. He did not always possess this wonderful blessing. I make an effort to grumble as little as I possibly can. The Bible says in I Corinthians 10:10, "Neither murmur ye, as some of them murmured, and perished by the destroyer." But when I do complain, I am made to be greatly ashamed when I read what Paul suffered. Paul was in prison when he wrote the things we are speaking of tonight. I might have complained. Many of us would probably have written volumes about how much "poor little old me" suffered. It is rather disgusting to see a person who has been in the church for years conducting himself like a new born baby. We are admonished, "Brethren, be not children in mind; howbeit in malice be ye babes, but in mind be men" (I Cor. 14:20). Shortly before David died, he instructed his young son Solomon in this way, "I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man" (I Kings 2:2). We need real men in the service of Christ.

Normally, one would expect the brethren to comfort a preacher who was in prison. But in Paul's case, he wrote to encourage his brethren at Philippi. Paul learned that

sometimes even adversity turns out for progress. "Now I would have you know, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel; so that my bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole praetorian guard, and to all the rest; and that most of the brethren in the Lord, being confident through my bonds, are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear" (Philippians 1:12-14).

Sometimes in traveling from place to place I have noticed dead grass burning by the side of the road. This looked as though it would greatly hinder vegetation. But, upon passing by that same place at a later date, I would observe that the slopes were covered with beautiful green grass. In this case, the fire had fallen out to the progress of vegetation. Just so, when things look dark and dismal, through the providence of God they can fall out rather unto progress of the gospel.

In Paul's learning of contentment, he learned how and upon what to think. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8). If one learns how to think correctly all will be fine. "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). No one is better than his thoughts. Paul also learned how to conduct himself in adversity and in prosperity as well. "I know how to be abased, and I know also how to abound: in every thing and in all things have I learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want" (Philippians 4:12). Paul was a remarkable man. He learned these things, but many of us have not learned them yet.

I read of a woman who said, "When I feel good I feel bad; for I have noticed that when I feel good it isn't long

until I feel bad again, so I feel bad all the time." Paul did not share this view for he tells us in II Corinthians 4:17-18, "For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

In Paul's learning to be content, he learned to be an optimist. He said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). I heard someone use a rather humorous illustration to show the difference between an optimist and a pessimist. He said if a pessimist is eating an apple and finds a worm in it, he will throw the apple away. But if an optimist finds a worm in an apple, he will go fishing and catch enough fish for dinner. Paul was an optimist.

Paul also learned that if one learns what he learned and did those things, that one's life would be worthy of recommendation to all. Can you recommend your life to your son or daughter? Can you recommend it to your friends? Can you recommend your life to your husband, or wife, or to your associates? Listen to Paul in Philippians 4:9, "The things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do: and the God of peace shall be with you." This is one of the finest statements I have ever read concerning any man. Can we say: "If you will do what you learned from me, what you see from me, what you hear from me, and what you see me do; God will smile upon you with approval?"

Paul learned that his Father was rich, and no doubt this contributed to his contentment. Some years ago I heard a brother begin a speech in a rather unique way. He said, "you probably do not know me, but you do know my Father, and you do know my elder brother for he is known universally." He, of course, was speaking of our heavenly Father

and of Christ our elder brother. Now listen to Paul in Philippians 4:19, "And my God shall fulfil every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." Also in Philippians 4:17, "Not that I seek for the gift; but I seek for the fruit that increaseth to your account."

There are people in this audience who are not content. You have learned that you are lost in your sins. There are erring members of the church here who are miserable. I believe that there are several in this fine audience who are ready to respond right now.

To become a Christian you must hear the word of the gospel and believe it (Acts 15:7-9). Repent of every sin (Acts 17:30). Confess Christ (Romans 10:10). Be baptized (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).

The erring child of God must repent and pray for forgiveness (Acts 8:20-22), and confess his sins (1 John 1:9; James 5:16). Will you come?

CHAPTER 11

LOVE

This is indeed a wonderful audience for Monday night. I think it will be encouraging for you to know this is the third largest audience of our meeting. Last evening we had the largest attendance of any service of the meeting.

Our interest is very fervent and for that we are thankful. Our singing has been excellent. One of our old songs says, "You met me day by day and knew I was astray, yet you never mentioned him to me." From a child these words have caused me to become very serious and concerned about people that are lost and also with the fact we will be lost if we do not warn them. Brethren, if those words do not cause you to desire to go out into the world to bring the lost to Christ there is something wrong with your Christianity.

I heard of an old preacher who delivered a fine sermon. At the conclusion, a young preacher arose and said, "I would give my life if I were capable of preaching like that." With great humility the older preacher replied, "Young man, that is exactly what it will cost you. It has taken the full measure of my devotion that I might be able to proclaim the gospel of Christ as I have this evening."

It is not possible to sing the songs that we have sung together, and mean them, without becoming more concerned about living the Christian life. It will cost you your life. Christ said in Luke 14:33 "So therefore whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

Our discussion tonight has to do with the new commandment of love. Christ said, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34-35). Had you lived under the old law you would have had these words in Leviticus 19:18, "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the Lord." How came Christ, then, to say that the commandment that he gave his disciples to love one another was a new commandment? Simply because the command in the Old Testament did not have the breadth and length and height and depth of love as demonstrated by Christ. It is written in John 15:13 "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Paul says in Romans 5:6 "For while we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly." And in Galatians 1:4 we read; "who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us out of this present evil world, according to the will of our God and Father." Also in Romans 5:8; "But God commandeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Listen to this beautiful passage in II Corinthians 8:9; "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich." Therefore with Paul we exclaim, "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift" (II Cor. 9:15).

We are commanded by Christ, "That ye love one another." It is commanded in Romans 13:8 "Owe no man

any thing, save to love one another; for he that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law." Peter says, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently" (I Peter 1:22). Our Lord loved and he died to prove his love. Paul states in Ephesians 5:25; "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself up for it."

God the Father loved supremely for in Romans 8:32 it is stated, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?" And to the passage that is often referred to as the golden text of the Bible, John 3:16; "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."

The great theme of love is dealt with quite in detail in I Corinthians 13. Listen to I Corinthians 13:1-8; "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing. Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth:" In I Corinthians 13:13 we have this conclusion; "But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three, and the greatest of these is love." Now let us discuss some of the characteristics of love a little more in detail. Love suffereth long. Love is longsuffering. Love never compromises but it does suffer

long. God has given us the example. Hear this in II Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Christ did not compromise, but he did suffer long. He was longsuffering. Perhaps you remember the story of the contest between the sun and the wind to determine which one could cause a man to remove his coat. The wind blew and blew but this caused the man only to wrap his coat more tightly around him. The sun however, with its warmth soon caused him to remove his coat. Brethren, I want to make this point very clear; there is no justification for anyone, at any place and at any time, to compromise the truth. The sinner is now under the sentence of condemnation and on the day of judgment the penalty will become operative. Christ said, "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). The alien sinner is under condemnation but so is the brother who fails to love. No murderer can inherit the kingdom of God. But a brother that hates is a murderer. Therefore, a brother who has hatred in his heart is, like the alien sinner, under condemnation. Hear this from the inspired John, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (I John 3:15). It would be far less harmful in the final analysis to carry deadly germs in one's pocket than to carry hatred in one's heart. Did you know that if we have hatred in our hearts we cannot convert others? If we do not have the right attitudes we likely will have but little success. We have this recorded in Acts 14:1; "And it came to pass in Iconium, that they entered together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of Jews and of Greeks believed." Note that they "so spake." Certainly no one could accuse Paul of compromise, but he did have the right love for the souls of men. I have very little respect for a compromiser and I know that the Lord does not respect one. Paul was just as sound in love as he was in teaching the plan of salvation. We must

strive to imitate our Lord in being long-suffering in love.

Next we learn that "Love is kind." Paul says, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you" (Eph. 4:32) Then we read in Ephesians 5:1; "Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odour of a sweet smell." Brethren, passages like these simply point out that we are to follow the new commandment to love one another.

Paul further said, "Love envieth not". Many of our problems arise because of envy. I have been preaching when a brother came forward and made a public confession of having been guilty of the sin of envy. This however, is seldom done. I might add that by no means is it to be taken that this sin does not exist. Indeed I am persuaded that the terrible sin is wide spread, even among God's people. Envy helped crucify our precious Lord. The Jews, through envy, crucified our Lord. Pilate knew this. Listen to Matthew 27:18, "For he knew that for envy they had delivered him up." Brethren, we can perhaps camouflage our motives, at least part of the time from man, but never from God. I do not think of anything that the Lord has commanded us to do, but that someone has attempted to do it with envy. One could even preach through envy. In fact some did so in Paul's day. We have the record of such in Philippians 1: 15-17; "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: the one do it of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel; but the other proclaim Christ of faction, not sincerely, thinking to raise up affliction for me in my bonds." James tells that envying or jealousy comes from the devil, is sensual, and earthly. Hear him in James 3:14-16. "But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth. This wisdom is not a wisdom that cometh down from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where jealousy

and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed." After enumerating the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19 in which he lists envyings, Paul says in verse 21 "of the which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they which practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

But "love vaunteth not itself." In other words love never boasts. Love is the very opposite of boasting. One who possesses love appreciates a compliment but depreciates it in his own estimation. Love, "is not puffed up." You may have heard the expression "I would like to buy him for what he is worth and sell him for what he thinks he is worth." This is just another way of describing one who is "puffed up." Remember though: "Love is not puffed up."

Observe further: "Love doth not behave itself unseemly." I always thought that my daddy had a very large hand when he used it to spank with. However, he seldom had to use it on me for when he said "behave" I knew what that meant. Love does not misbehave. Paul told Timothy, "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." We have many brethren who have not learned how to behave themselves in the house of God, the church of our Lord. Let us all at this point examine ourselves (II Cor. 13:5). Some brethren have been in the church twenty or thirty years and still do not know how to behave. It would not be possible to see any difference in the way they live and the way the world lives. In fact there is no difference. They use the same vile language, they frequent the same evil places. One is just as immodest in dress as the other. Yet some of these brethren very piously claim to be "pillars in the church." What they need to do is to repent. Brethren, another thing that grieves me is that when members of the church misbehave, not only are they lost, but they will cause others to be lost. If all the members lived right it would be somewhat easier to convert the alien sinners. Some of us are like Peter

at one period of his life; we need to be converted. Peter, seemingly, had not the slightest fear of falling, but our Lord warned him, "And when thou art converted, strengthen the brethren." We need to do some converting among ourselves.

"Love seeketh not its own." Love does not insist upon its own rights; it is not selfish. It was said that some men were discussing what work they would like to do in the operation of a train. One man wanted to be the conductor; another wanted to be the engineer. One man had said nothing so they asked him what he would like to do. He said, "I would be glad to be a shoveler of coal." We need more shovelers of coal in the church. Sometimes we have far too many chiefs and not enough Indians. We need to remember Philippians 2:4 "Not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others."

Another mark of love is that it, "is not provoked." Love is not quick to take offense. If you are easily provoked and wear your feelings on your sleeves, then don't misrepresent love and attribute that kind of characteristic to love. That is not love but is rather being babyish. We all need the advice that is given in Ephesians 4:15, "But speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into him, which is the head, even Christ." We should not remain spiritual babies all of our lives, "Brethren, be not children in mind: howbeit in malice be ye babes, but in mind be men" (I Cor. 14:20).

Also love "taketh not account of evil." I heard of a man who carried a little black book and recorded all of the wrongs and injustices both real and imaginary that anyone had done unto him. A man of that kind would be miserable and he would make all with whom he came in contact miserable. Love "taketh not account of evil."

Again love, "rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth." If I were to bruise one of my feet do you think that the other foot would say "goody, goody, I

have been hoping that would happen to you for a long time?" Of course not, but the other foot would be willing to carry the entire load in order to assist the wounded foot. Likewise if we are truly Christians we will not be happy when someone does wrong. We will not compromise with the one that does wrong, but it will not make us happy either. If you are glad that others committed evil so that you can rejoice when they are exposed, then they are not the only ones who need to repent, you do also. I never rejoice when someone does something wrong. I could not be the right kind of a Christian and have an attitude of rejoicing when wrong is committed.

Love rejoiceth with the truth. When truth prevails it causes the right kind of pride to dwell up in my heart. I love my preaching brethren. I love all of my brethren. The brethren generally have been very kind and patient with me and I very sincerely and deeply appreciate it. Paul adds further that love "beareth all things." We are told in Galatians 6:2; "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." A couple had been so happy for so many years that they were asked for the secret. The wife replied, "The reason that we have been so happy is that there have always been two bears at our house." This surprised some but she further explained that the two bears were "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." And "forbearing one another in love." I strongly recommend these two bears unto us all.

Love "believeth all things." This does not mean that love is blind or will cause you to close your eyes or to wink at sin. It does not mean that love denies the existence and reality of evil. It means that love gives the benefit of the doubt. I heard of a man who was standing in the kitchen looking out to the public road. He said to his wife, "There goes Mr. Brown with a woman." His wife dropped some dishes and came running to the window. In a moment she said with disgust, "It's only his wife." Her husband replied, "Well, I just said that he was with a woman." Many

seem to distrust everyone and put the wrong construction on almost everything. Love also "hopeth all things." You know why a mother or father has hope for a wayward son or daughter? It is because love "hopeth all things." Though the prodigal son had lived a very, very sinful life, "when he came to himself" and returned home, "his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." And he forgave him. It was because love "hopeth all things". In Matthew 9:9 we have this remarkable statement, "And as Jesus passed by from thence, he saw a man, called Matthew, sitting at the place of toll: and he said unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him." The Bible says that Jesus saw "a man" What do you see when you are in public places? Do you just see numbers or do you see people with eternal souls who will face the Lord in judgment and spend eternity somewhere? Christ also saw a man who was better than his environment. He saw a man in whom there was much possibility for good, so he called Matthew and he followed him. Love looks for and "hopeth for all things."

Love, "endureth all things." Love gives us power to endure everything. The reason some women and men endure so much persecution and sorrow from their companions is that they seem to be more willing to endure hardship if there is any hope of saving their marriage and bringing their companion to Christ. It is sinful to compromise, but love does endure. It is not amazing therefore that "love never faileth." At this point I emphasize that we show our love to God by keeping his commandments, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:3).

Another evidence that we love God is to love our brethren. John points this out in I John 3:14. "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in death." Also John 13:35; "By this shall all men know that ye are my

disciples, if ye have love one to another." If we do not love our brethren, that is evidence that we do not love God. John affirms this in I John 4:20-21; "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen. And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also." If you have hatred in your heart for your brother, it matters not how pious you may appear unto men or with what regularity you attend the services of the church. We may affirm loud and long that we love God but John said that one of that kind "is a liar." In fact, God is not in us if we do not become Christians. If we do not love our brethren God does not abide in us, and we do not even know God if we do not love the brethren. These truths and others are taught in the wonderful passage in I John 2:7-11: "Beloved, no new commandment write I unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning: the old commandment is the word which ye heard. Again, a new commandment write I unto you, which thing is true in him and in you; because the darkness is passing away, and the true light already shineth. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in the darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in the darkness, and walketh in the darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because the darkness hath blinded his eyes." The badge of our discipleship is our love for our brethren. One of the most important ways love is manifested is through forgiveness. How many times in one day shall I forgive my brother? Christ commanded, "Take heed to yourselves: if thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he sin against thee seven times in the day, and seven times turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him" (Luke 17:3,4). Observe that when a brother sins against us it is right to rebuke him, but note also that we are commanded to forgive him. Peter was concerned with a problem. The record is in Matthew 18:21-22, "Then came Peter, and said to him, Lord,

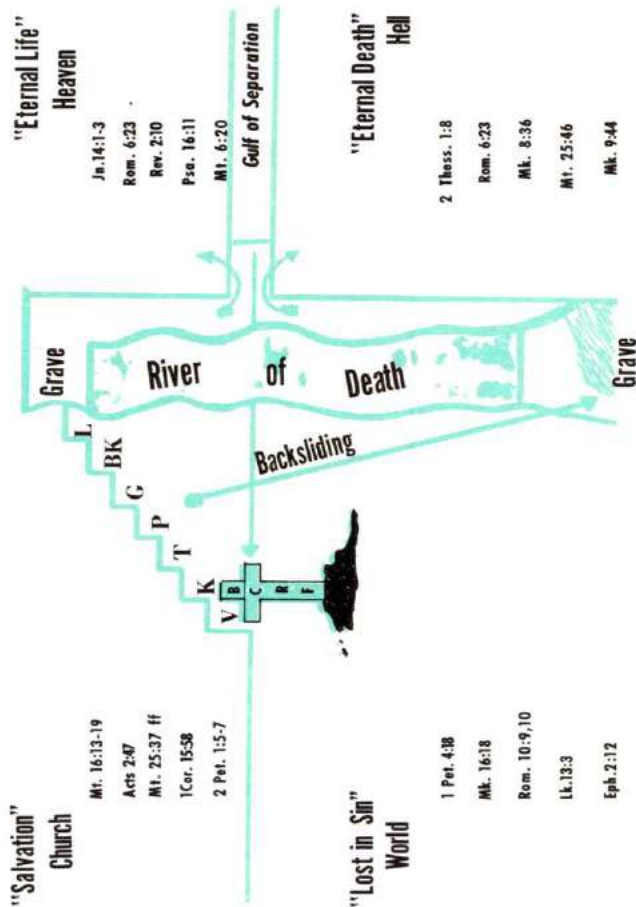
how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven." Jesus then gave the parable of the unmerciful servant and concluded by saying, "So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts," (Matthew 18:35). Our Lord did away with the tabulating system and actually taught that we must forgive our brother as often as he repents and asks for forgiveness. Our Lord did not tell us to forgive our brother "from the teeth out" but "from the heart." But further, love will temper our judgment. It is written in Matthew 7:1-5, "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me cast out the mote out of thine eye, and lo, the beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." It is not wrong to cast out the mote out of your brother's eye provided you have already cast the beam out of your own eye. If a man had a utility pole in his own eye he would hardly be in position to remove a straw from his brother's eye. Christ endorses our removing of the mote from our brother's eye after we have cast out the beam from our own eye. When our Lord said "Judge not that ye be not judged," he did not forbid civil judgments - neither did he forbid church discipline. In fact Paul wrote "For what have I to do with judging them that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Put away the wicked man from among yourselves," (I Cor. 5:12-13). The truth is, we are commanded to "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24). So Christ was not even forbidding private appraisal of the character of another. Our Lord laid down the axiom that a tree is to be judged by its fruit (Mt. 7:17), and a man by his works (Mt. 12:35). Our Lord forbade a particular type of

“judging.” The type was fault-finding, harsh criticism, censoriousness, or a carping attitude. Constructive criticism should be appreciated. It can help us in eliminating weakness, suggesting improvements, and enhancing our success in the service of Christ. Brotherly love is considerate of others. This is taught in Romans 12:10; “In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another; in honor preferring one another.” If I were to ask you what attribute you would put above all others I do not know what you would say. But here is what Peter said in I Peter 4:8; “Above all things being fervent in your love among yourselves; for love covereth a multitude of sins.” Peter words it like this in I Peter 3:8-9; “Finally, be ye all likeminded, compassionate, loving as brethren, tenderhearted, humbleminded: not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling; but contrariwise blessing, for hereunto were ye called, that ye should inherit a blessing.” Love causes us to be considerate of each other. Brotherly love also produces kindness. To be kind is not a sign of weakness but of strength. We read in II Peter 1:5-7; “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.” Observe, please, that “brotherly kindness” and “charity” (love) are both included in the list. Now hear II Peter 1:8; “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.” Peter says these graces must be in us and they must be in us abundantly. Therefore, since brotherly kindness and love are among these graces, we must have them in us in abundance. We are told “to speak evil of no man” (Tit. 3:2). Yet, later in the same letter, Paul warned the brethren, “a heretical man after a first and second admonition refuse” (Tit. 3:10). It is evident that Paul distinguished here, as well as elsewhere, between speaking of a man’s evil and speaking evil of a man. Brotherly love fosters peace. “Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity”

(Ps. 133:1). The Christian is admonished to "seek peace and pursue it" (I Pet. 3:11). There is a mistaken idea among some brethren that Christians should seek peace at any price. Some brethren are desirous of having peace at the expense of the truth. Listen to James 3:17; "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy." Notice the order of "the wisdom that is from above." It is "first pure, then peaceable." After all, if you truly love someone, you are willing to administer rebuke, when such is needed for their benefit. Paul wanted peace, but he knew that true peace comes upon the basis of the truth. He wrote in Titus 1:10-13; "For there are many unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped; men who overthrow whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, idle gluttons. This testimony is true. For which cause reprove them sharply." Well why? "That they may be sound in the faith." I know some brethren, upon whom if you had to depend, the mouths of false teachers would never be stopped. Instead of stopping their mouths, they would fellowship them, pat them on the back and use them in their services. Friends, be reminded that Paul was a man of love but he was not a soft-soaper. I believe in practicing the new commandment of love as much as anybody in the audience, if I know my heart, but that is not to be equated with softness. In conclusion, I point out some important truths: 1. "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (I John 4:8). 2. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). 3. We demonstrate our love for God by keeping his commandments (I John 5:3). 4. Our badge of discipleship is our love for one another (John 13:35). 5. We owe our brethren love, "Owe no man anything, save to love one another," (Rom. 13:8). 6. If need be "we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren," (I John 3:16). 7. "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." (I John 4:11). To be Christ-

ian you must hear (Acts 15:7); believe (Hebrews 11:6); repent (Acts 17:30); confess Christ (Romans 10:10); and be baptized (Acts 2:38). As an erring child of God, you must repent, pray and confess your sins (Acts 8:20-22; I John 1:9). Our Lord's invitation is extended. We urge you to respond.

WHERE WILL YOU SPEND ETERNITY?



CHAPTER 12

WHERE WILL YOU SPEND ETERNITY?

I am almost positive that never again until the day of judgment will this exact audience be together as it is tonight. This causes me to feel a great weight of responsibility resting upon me this evening. I often think when I arise to speak, as a dying man speaking to dying men, that there may be some in this very audience that will never hear another gospel sermon. My favorite verse pertaining to my responsibility as a gospel preacher is recorded as follows in I Corinthians 9:16; "For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; for woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel." I realize there are some who do not take their responsibilities as seriously as they should. But I do not see how any gospel preacher can preach the gospel very long without coming face to face with the truth of this passage.

In this meeting, we have had success because the gospel has been presented. It is, of course, God's power unto salvation (Rom. 1:16). A number of you and others have worked hard to bring lost souls to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world. We have had the prayers of righteous men and women, and in James 5:16 we are told that the prayers of the righteous avail much. The singing has

been excellent and the public prayers have been fervent and scriptural. These have helped us to plant our feet on higher ground and have caused us to better realize that the ground upon which we stand is holy ground. Surely then tonight we are better prepared to enter into this phase of our worship.

A moment ago, just as we were ready to begin the service, the phone rang and I was told of the death of a Christian friend of mine and was asked to conduct his funeral service. It was about two years ago that I baptized him into Christ. He lived only two years, but none of us know that we will live two days. The person in this audience who wants to do the will of God will be anxious and ready to obey at the conclusion of this service. I said at the outset of this meeting that we could have one hundred responses and I still believe that it is possible. I preached in a meeting last year in which, during one service, twenty-eight responded. I believe there are more than twenty-eight in this audience that need to respond.

Tonight we are discussing the subject "Where will you spend eternity?" The word "where" implies that it will be somewhere. We have sung at times; "When he calls me, I will answer: I'll be somewhere listening for my name." It is written in John 5:28,29; "Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment." Friends, there are some assemblies that you can forsake, but there is one assembly none will forsake. One song that everybody in this audience can sing is; "When the roll is called up yonder I'll be there." Paul said, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. 5:10). Tonight, I want to be very specific. The question is not "Where will someone else be during eternity?" The question is: "Where will you spend

eternity?"

The next word is "spend." Where will you spend eternity? We can also word it this way; "Where will you be throughout eternity?" To someone's mind the idea of spending eternity might suggest that there is a time limit. That is certainly not true. You will not simply be there for a certain length of time. Eternity is forever and ever. Regardless of how intelligent you may be, there is not a person in this audience, or, for that matter, anywhere in the world who can fully fathom the enormity of eternity.

Friends, if you will be honest with God and with yourself, you will obey the gospel tonight. Or, if you are an unfaithful child of God, you will be restored. However, here is what some of you will say: "I know what you say is true and I intend to obey the gospel some day, but I am just not ready yet." What would have to happen to you to cause you to get ready? If you knew that you would die before morning, you would get ready, wouldn't you? How do you know that such will not occur? It is written, "Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Prov. 27:1). Also, "Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain; whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow: For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (James 4:13,14).

If you reject the invitation of our Lord tonight, remember that we have the record of a man who had no time for God and who thought that he had a lease on life. "And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall

be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou has provided?" (Luke 12:18-20). Listen carefully to our Lord's conclusion concerning this man and all others of like attitude. "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:21).

I might point out just here that some who boldly affirm that they are self sufficient, and even make hard speeches against God, need to read Jude 14 and 15. "And to these also Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their works of ungodliness which they have ungodly wrought, and of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." Ungodly sinners should read these passages and tremble. They need not think that their idle words and hard speeches will pass unnoticed by our Lord. Christ said in Matthew 12:36,37; "And I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

But how do we become lost in sin? What is sin? We read in I John 3:4; "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." This is the positive side of sin, but there is also a negative side to sin as stated in James 4:17; "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." And in I John 5:17 we read; "All unrighteousness is sin."

Some people think that the only way one can commit sin is by an overt act of transgression such as murder or adultery. They do not realize that omission or a failure to do right is also sin. In many of our Lord's parables he represents the people as being lost, but not because of a sinful overt act which they had committed. For instance, the one-

talent man was not a murderer, an adulterer, or a thief. The only charge that could be brought against him was that he had done nothing. Most people enter gradually into sin. This is recorded in Psalms 1:1,2; "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." Did you notice the three expressions "walketh, standeth, and sitteth?" First a man begins to walk in sinful company. After a while he is standing with people in sin. Then, finally, he sits with them as one of them.

A person usually becomes involved in sin much in the same manner that a cow goes to the middle of a pond. A frog takes one big leap and he lands near the middle of the pond. However, a cow usually walks up to the edge of the pond; slowly picks up one foot, then another; pauses to switch her tail, chew her cud, and swat the flies. After awhile she may be as far out into the water as the old bull frog, but she didn't get there as rapidly. Do you know why some of you are unfaithful? You got into the middle of sin in the same way that the cow got into the middle of the pond. You didn't take one big leap and arrive at your present state. It has been a gradual process.

What is the condition of those who are in sin? To the Gentiles Paul wrote; "that ye were at that time separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). David wrote in Psalms 9:17; "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."

The unfaithful child of God is in a worse condition than he was while still in his alien sins. "For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment de-

livered unto them. It has happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog turning to his own vomit again, and the sow that had washed to wallowing in the mire" (II Peter 2:21,22).

In order for the alien sinner to depart from sin, he must hear and believe the gospel (Acts 15:7); repent of his sins (Acts 17:30); confess his faith in Christ (Rom. 10:10); and be baptized for the remission of his sins (Acts 2:38). The Lord, at that point, adds him to the one true church of Christ (Acts 2:41,47). The saved are in the church. Remember Acts 2:41 and Acts 2:47.

Suppose someone with a large truck load of fish approached a farmer with the following proposition: "If you will allow me to place these fish on your farm and leave them for the next six months, we will sell them and divide the profit." The farmer no doubt would reply with amazement; "Sir, don't you know that fish cannot exist long out of the water? Everyone knows that." My friends, it is just as impossible for the saved to exist out of the church as it is for fish to exist out of water. The Lord has located the life of fish in water. The same Lord has located the life of the saved, the Christians, in the church.

It is written in II Timothy 2:10; "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." Paul tells us that we must get into Christ. How is that done? He tells us in Galatians 3:26,27; "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." He also tells us that we are baptized "into one body" (1 Cor. 12:13). The body is the church (Col. 1:18). Therefore, since salvation is in the church (Eph. 5:23) or in Christ (II Tim. 2:10), and since we must be in Christ and in his church in order to be saved, and since we are baptized into Christ and into his church, both baptism and the church are necessary for sal-

vation.

In speaking of Galatians 3:26, someone might say that it says; "For ye are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Yes, it does say that we are children of God "by faith in Christ Jesus." But observe please, it does not say "ye are children of God by faith only before baptism." It does not say "ye are children of God out of Christ Jesus." Note we are children of God "by faith in Christ Jesus." Why did Paul say that "ye are," present tense, "children of God by faith in Christ Jesus?" Because "As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." In other words, "ye are" because ye "have been." "Ye are" what? "children of God." Why? Because "ye have been." Have been what? "baptized into Christ." So the reason that he could now address them as children of God was because they had previously been baptized into Christ and his church (Gal. 3: 27 - I Cor. 12:13).

Once in the church we are to work diligently. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (I Cor. 15:58). Note please that our labour "is not in vain in the Lord." This passage offers no assurance of reward for labor out of the Lord.

It is written in Revelation 14:13; "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." Does the Bible say, "blessed are the dead which die out of the Lord"? No man can find such a passage for it does not exist. Yet there are many false teachers seeking, and, in many instances, I am sorry to say, succeeding in convincing sincere people that they can be saved out of the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. As Paul would say, "Woe be unto them." These same people argue that one can

be in Christ and not be in his church. That is an impossibility. The same process that puts one into Christ puts him into his church. That step is baptism (Gal. 3:27 - I Cor. 12:13). One cannot enter Christ or the church except by baptism.

Let us observe further that to enter heaven we must add what are commonly referred to as the Christian graces. Peter wrote; "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" (II Peter 1:5-8). These graces must "be in you" and "abound." They must be in us in abundance.

Suppose one does quite well until he comes to patience. Some men might even lose control of themselves when their wives burn the toast. I heard someone say that the only way to make toast was to burn it and then scrape it. It would be better to learn to like it that way rather than to lose control of yourself. Remember, we can fail at any one of these points. Suppose though, that you fall at the point of patience. If one does not return to the Lord through obedience, he will be lost forever (Matt. 25:31-46) (Luke 21:19). However, if one remains faithful, our Lord saves him. "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34). Friends, just to hear our Lord say these words will be worth every affliction, toil, and trial that can possibly be heaped upon us. Surely "heaven will be worth it all."

Let's think for a moment about eternal death. Fire is a terrible punishment. I do not know of anything that can hurt as badly as fire. I knew of one person who had been

very severely burned who said, "If I could just have relief at night it would not be nearly so difficult to bear the pain in the daytime." The Bible says; "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Rev. 20:10). We also read in Revelation 14:11; "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."

A note of warning is sounded for the wicked in Jude 7: "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, having in like manner with these given themselves over to fornication, and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire." What Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about them suffered is only a sample of what awaits the wicked. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8).

If there is a fornicator in this audience tonight, a liar, or indeed if one be guilty of any of these awful sins, he should remember that if he dies in that condition he must spend eternity in the lake of fire and brimstone. We read in Mark 9:44; "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." In short, "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:15).

Some years ago I had a discussion with a man and his wife. The wife was a so-called Jehovah's Witness and he was a retired Baptist preacher. When I quoted passages pertaining to the punishment and fire of hell, he said "Amen" - but she denied them. Later I quoted passages which command baptism for remission of sins. I showed that "wa-

ter" in John 3:5 referred to baptism. At this point he became silent. She denied the fire of hell and he denied the necessity of baptism. However, in spite of their denials, the Bible says there will be punishment in hell, and John 3:5 shows the necessity of baptism in order to enter the kingdom. Please listen to II Thessalonians 1:7-9; "And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

A man once said to me; "If my relative is lost - then I want to be lost." The poor man did not realize the consequences of what he was saying. If I know my heart, I love my wife and children next to God, Christ, and the church. Yet, if I knew that they would be lost, I still would not want to be lost. I could not enjoy their company with their screaming, crying, and gnashing their teeth. Neither could they enjoy my company in that condition. If I know my heart, I would be willing to endanger my own life in order to save them. But if I could not save them, then I would not want to be lost with them. Remember friends, those of good moral character who die out of Christ will be in hell with those of vile character. Read carefully Revelation 21:8 and Revelation 20:15.

Now let us seriously meditate upon heaven. The more interest we have in heaven, the better our opportunity of reaching it. The more we know about heaven, the greater our interest will become. We are told in I Peter 3:15; "But sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: being ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear." If someone were to ask me the purpose of baptism, I would be delighted to give book, chapter, and verse to show that baptism is for remission of sins and therefore neces-

sary for salvation. If someone asked me why I know that the church of Christ is the Lord's Church, it would be a delight to show from the scriptures that the Bible teaches that the church of Christ is indeed the one true church. In like manner, I am happy to point out from the Bible, scriptural reasons why heaven is so wonderful and, therefore, why I am interested in living in heaven throughout eternity.

I am interested in heaven because I can make it mine. I may have an interest in some things in this life that I cannot accomplish, but I know that I can make heaven mine. I know that I can for Jesus said; "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. 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. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know" (John 14:1-4). To be in heaven will be a blessed privilege beyond description. "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Psalms 16:11).

I am interested in going to heaven because of the type of place that it is. Listen very carefully to Revelation 22: 1-5; "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him. And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever." Also listen to the marvelous truths in Revelation 21:4; "And God

shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." And in verse 27 of this same chapter; "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." Then we read in Revelation 7:14; "And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Heaven is more wonderful than our fondest dreams.

I am interested in going to heaven because heaven is eternal. Incorruptible treasures are there. Jesus said; "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust doth consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Matt. 6:19,20). In heaven we shall receive our eternal weight of glory. Please listen to the beautiful passage in II Corinthians 4:16-18; "Wherefore we faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." There we will have an eternal body. "For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens" (II Cor. 5:1).

I am interested in heaven because it is a place of comfort. Job said; "There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest" (Job 3:17).

I want to go to heaven because it is a place of sweet associations. Christ said; "where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3). In addition to God, Christ, and all the holy angels, there will be all who have done the will of God. Christ affirmed: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21). In heaven we shall see loved ones of former days. David said of his child; "But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (II Sam. 12:23).

I am interested in heaven because it is a place of great rewards. Great is our reward in heaven. Our Lord said; "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matt. 5:11,12). Heaven is an inheritance incorruptible. "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (I Peter 1:4). Paul tells us; "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" (II Tim. 4:8). Also, I do not hesitate to say that I want to go to heaven because I believe that some who have gone on to Paradise are expecting me.

In conclusion, I would point out that everybody that is talking about heaven is not going there. Who will not be permitted in heaven? Remember these two passages which were mentioned a few moments ago: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8). Also in Revelation 20:15; "And whosoever was not found written in

the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

I once read the story of a famous actor and an aged preacher who were aboard the same ship. Some of the passengers came to the actor with the request that he repeat the twenty-third Psalm. This he agreed to do provided the preacher would repeat it also. To this the preacher agreed. The actor repeated the Psalm in an almost flawless manner, and at the conclusion there was a great burst of applause. The preacher then repeated the Psalm in a very quiet and humble manner. At the conclusion there was hardly a dry eye. Whereupon the actor arose and said, “I know the twenty-third Psalm - but this man knows the Shepherd.”

Do you, my friend, know the Shepherd tonight? Christ is the good shepherd. He said; “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep” (John 10:11). To follow Christ, the good shepherd, the alien sinner must hear and believe the gospel (Acts 15:7 - Heb. 11:6); repent of his sins (Luke 13:3); confess Christ before men (Matt. 10:32); and be baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:27). The unfaithful child of God must repent, confess his sins, and pray to God for forgiveness (Acts 8:22 - James 5:16). Where will you spend eternity? Christ invites you by these words in Matthew 11:28-30; “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Won’t you come?

Pictures From Life's Other Side

LIFE

No Man Can Serve 2 Masters-
 Outward Appearance Awaits Nothing-
 Many Possessions Here Availeth Nothing
 Neglect Here -- Remember There !
 Must Obey in Life if Saved
 After Death 2 Cor. 6:2
 Poverty No Sign of
 God's Disfavor--

God's Child Not Left Alone
 Death Bed Friends Avail
 Nothing
 Big Funeral Not Needed
 No Priest Needed
 Death Not the End
 Only Beginning
 Something Worse
 than Death
 Lk. 12:4

Jesus Lifts the
 Veil--
 Luke 16

OTHER SIDE

Another life conscious existence
 Two places prepared -- All not in Heaven
 A sad may fall away
 No hope of second chance -- Great Grief
 No heavenly message sent to man
 Message loved ones would send

SADDEST LESSON

Pray
 Believed in Hell
 Realized in Danger
 Awaken to Truth
 Realized something to do
 Heard Abraham speak

Joe
 Life

Saw poor beggar
 Concerned over souls of others
 Great desire to go to Heaven
 Burning desire to escape Hell!

CHAPTER 13

PICTURES FROM LIFE'S OTHER SIDE

Lest I overlook it at a later time, I want to compliment the young people of this congregation and express my appreciation to them for their hearty participation in this Gospel effort.

Last evening one of our colored brethren came to me following the conclusion of the service and said, "Tomorrow night I will not be able to attend, but I am going to pray to God that you will have such great success tomorrow night that the meeting will continue until Thursday evening and I will have another opportunity to attend." To me, that was a touching statement. I have thought about that today and likewise have prayed that prayer. Of course, the success and interest will determine whether or not the meeting is extended. This will be known by the time our services are concluded this evening. It is wonderful to join together in singing these songs of Zion. The prayers during this meeting have been wonderful. Tonight we are discussing "Pictures From Life's Other Side." Each person looks for his own picture when he looks at a group picture. If someone is with us looking at a group picture, in some fashion, either directly or indirectly, we let it be known that "I am located right here at a certain place." That's natural.

Our Lord has shown us some pictures from life's other side. These pictures are true pictures; these things actually happened. I know that our so-called Jehovah's Witness friends say words like these; "this is only a parable." Well, if it were a parable it would teach exactly the same thing, for a parable either did happen or it can happen. It is within the realm of possibility. Our Lord said in Luke 8:5 "The sower went forth to sow his seed..." Now, he may have been looking at a sower upon the hillside, but if not, that often did happen, and they knew that it happened. However, the story we are studying tonight is not a parable. It actually happened, and the rich man is still in the flames of torment and Lazarus is still in a place of comfort. I know that it is true because our Lord stated the truth. Our Lord always stated the truth. Jesus said, "there was a certain rich man" and "there was a certain beggar named Lazarus." In parables, our Lord did not call the characters by name, but in this story he tells us the name of the beggar and says that his name was Lazarus. I believe therefore that such a man did exist and I believe that he still exists in yonder's world. Listen, please, to the record as stated in Luke 16: 19:31; "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate full of sores. And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried, and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass

from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

Remember, our Lord said this actually happened; therefore, I believe that it did. I believe that the rich man is still in torment, and throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity will remain in torment. While Lazarus is tonight comforted still, and throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity will remain comforted. There are a number of lessons that I want to suggest to you. Jesus teaches us some lessons from life. Jesus lifts the vail in death, then he further lifts the vail from life's other side and from this we learn some sad, sad lessons as they pertain to the fate of the rich man. Some of the saddest lessons that you will ever meditate upon are set forth in this story as pertain to the lost man, the rich man. If you are not a child of God, or if you are an erring child of God, if this sermon does not move you to obey the Lord, I freely admit that I do not know what could be said to move you to obedience. I say that in that case your heart is indeed hard and your rebellion great.

One of the lessons we need to learn from this story is that no man can serve two masters. There may be some lukewarm members of the church in this audience who are attempting that, but you are in for a disappointment if you are. Christ said in Matthew 6:24; "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." The rich man could not serve two masters and neither can we.

We further learn that outward appearance avails nothing. It is fine to be dressed in style, provided the style is not immodest. At the same time, just because a man dresses well does not mean that he is a better man than the poorly dressed man. Just because a man is wealthy does not mean that he is a better man than a poor man. I would also point out that poverty within itself does not always mean that such an individual is righteous. I recall that while Samuel was at Jesse's house to anoint one of his sons to be king that it is said, "And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the Lord's anointed is before him" (I Sam. 16:6). The Lord, however, was not so impressed with Eliab's outward appearance, but the Lord looked "on the heart" (I Sam. 16:7). Had you come into the community of the rich man and Lazarus, no doubt many of the citizens of that community would have told you that the rich man was a great man, and would perhaps not have given the second thought to Lazarus. At least the rich man cared little or nothing for Lazarus. But our Lord looked on the hearts of these two men.

It is not said that the rich man abused Lazarus. It is not said that he gave Lazarus a kick, cursed him, or even that he laughed at him. The only accusation that one can bring against the rich man is that he failed to do good to Lazarus. The rich man neglected his opportunity. There are many members of the church who have not yet been convinced that they will be lost simply for a failure to do good. At the judgment scene, to those on the left hand we have these words recorded in Matthew 25:41-46; "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not min-

ister unto thee: Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. . . And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." There are many members of the church who have a false sense of security. Someone may ask, "Do I need to make a confession of my neglect?" If it is public you do need to make a public confession of your sins. If it is known only in a private way then you need to make a private confession. Sin should be confessed as widely as it is known. One of the finest examples of public confession of public sins is in Acts 19:18-19; "Many also of them that had believed came, confessing, and declaring their deeds. And not a few of them that practised curious arts brought their books together, and burned them in the sight of all: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver." It is certainly not surprising that the next verse says, "So mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed."

Someone says, "What about my pride? Someone will wonder, what has he done?" We should be far more concerned about the Lord's estimate of us. Even if someone were not kind about it, as far as our spiritual welfare is concerned, that is not nearly so important as what the Lord thinks of us. I would like to have your respect, and as long as I preach the truth I believe that I shall have it. I am not a man pleaser. You need to decide that you are going to please God instead of man. The outward appearance doesn't avail anything.

We learn still another lesson. We may have many possessions here but it will avail nothing over there. In fact, the getting of many possessions here has its dangers. I think that it is possible for a man to become exceedingly wealthy and to do it honorably. I know of men like that. Evidently this has been the case with brother A. M. Burton. Some men who are rich in dollars and cents are "rich in faith" and

“ready unto every good work.” Abraham was a wealthy man. Job was very wealthy. There is nothing wrong with riches within themselves. The danger is in the way of accumulating them, and in whether or not we use them for God once we possess them. The rich man had much. He “was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day.” It certainly, though, must be pointed out that there are many dangers connected with riches. Listen to I Timothy 6:6-10; “But godliness with contentment is great gain: for we brought nothing into the world, for neither can we carry anything out; but having food and covering we shall be therewith content. But they that desire to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil: which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” As a Christian we are admonished, “But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness ” (I Tim. 6:11).

The rich man was guilty of neglect in life but he remembered over there. Friends, if there were no fire in hell, which there is, but just the fact that throughout eternity I remembered that through neglect I had lost my soul, that is more punishment than I am capable to fully comprehend as a human being. Yet not only will we remember, as did the rich man, but also the fire of hell will be present. We read of “a furnace of fire” (Mt. 13:42): “the fire is not quenched” (Mk. 9:44-45): “everlasting fire” (Mt. 25:41): “fire and brimstone” (Rev. 20:10): “unquenchable fire” (Mt. 3:12): and “the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:10).

What are you sowing? These words are in Galatians 6:7-8: “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal

life." The comparison here represents us as we go through life, being sowers of seed. By our attitudes, deeds, actions, and conduct we are sowing to either the flesh or the Spirit. The all important question is, "how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" The answer is, we shall not escape. The rich man neglected in this life but he remembered after death.

I also emphasize that we must obey in this life if we are to be saved after death. It is now or never as far as this life and eternity are concerned. You will obey while in this life or you will never obey. After this life you will have no further opportunity. Paul said, "for he saith, at an acceptable time I hearkened unto thee, And in a day of salvation did I succour thee: behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2). Hebrews 4:7; "Today if ye shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts." And in Hebrews 3:12, 13 the writer warned; "Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God: but exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called To-day; lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin."

From Lazarus we can learn that poverty is no sign of God's disfavor. One of the marks of identification that Christ was the Messiah was the fact that he preached the gospel to the poor. (Lk. 4:18). The church of Christ is the Lord's church, but to be faithful as his church, among other marks of faithfulness, is the necessity to "remember the poor." James says, "Hearken, my beloved brethren; did not God choose them that are poor as to the world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he promised to them that love him?" Lazarus was a very poor man, but his poverty was no sign of God's disfavor. He was God's faithful child. When he died he went to the place of rest in the intermediate state and after the judgment he will be in heaven.

But in death we see some things. We learn that God's child is not left alone in death. Listen again to Luke 16:22 "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried." The angels were Lazarus' pall bearers. It isn't said whether Lazarus was buried or not, but the rich man was buried. I used to wonder how long I would live and how and where death might come. But I do not devote much thought to these things anymore, but rather I seek to devote more time in attempting to live the very best life that I can. My prayer to God is, Lord, let me die while I am faithful. If I can be of greater service here let me live, if not, then take me home. It takes much longer to wear out than it does to rust out anyway. Suppose you are well preserved when one hundred years old but have not served the Lord, it will be of no benefit to you. I would prefer to die before I reach forty while faithfully serving the Lord and therefore go to be with him, than to live to be a hundred and forty and die lost. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (Ps. 23:4). Paul made an encouraging statement concerning the faithfulness of the Lord in II Timothy 4:16-18; "At my first defence no one took my part, but all forsook me: may it not be laid to their account. But the Lord stood by me, and strengthened me; that through me the message might be fully proclaimed, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen." When a man has that degree of faith, the sword is not going to hurt him very long. He may feel some pain when someone cuts his head off or when somebody shoots him, but in many ways he is better off for Paul said, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). Paul also said in verse 23; "But I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better." God's child is not left alone in death.

From this story we learn that deathbed friends avail nothing. If the rich man was as are most prominent people, he could have had scores of friends there. I have been in the room with the dying and have seen them die. Such an experience will certainly cause one to search his own life to see whether or not he is practicing what he preaches. Such experiences cause our hearts to be tendered and impress upon us the need to do a better job of living the Christian life.

I have gone into the dying room in an effort to comfort the dying and the bereaved. I have prayed to the Lord that I might have the wisdom to handle the situation correctly. I have never been asked, "What are you politically, a Democrat or a Republican?" I have never been told by a dying man or his relatives how many farms, stocks and bonds, and bank accounts the man has. Rather, the thoughts of all are on God, Christ, the Church, the Bible, and heaven and hell. And if the relatives can find anything to talk about at all, they want it to be about spiritual things. They know that at the dying hour material things are, at best, secondary. Deathbed friends cannot prevent death. This solemn statement is made in Ecclesiastes 8:8; "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it."

Further, a big funeral is not necessary. I think it is wonderful that we can have funerals and thus pay our respects to the memory of the dead and seek to instruct and comfort the living. I heard people complimenting the good job that brother Mathis did in a funeral. It is possible to do much good in a funeral but it is also possible to do much evil. Much false teaching is done at some funerals. Some preachers teach everybody is going to be saved. They might deny that, but from their funeral talks you would think that they think everybody is going to be saved. I heard a preacher

make remarks at the funeral of a man who claimed to be an infidel and was reported to have died while drunk. The preacher affirmed that the man had gone to heaven. A friend of mine who worked with a funeral home for twenty years said that he had heard only one sectarian preacher who left the slightest impression that the dead would not go to heaven.

We learn that no priest is needed at death in order for the child of God to be saved. When the Roman Catholic priests teach and practice extreme unction, they are teaching and practicing extreme false doctrine. After a discussion with a Roman Catholic priest recently, I am even more convinced that truth has everything to gain and absolutely nothing to lose in conflict with false doctrine. The truth has nothing to fear.

Death is not the end - it is only the beginning. I asked a so-called Jehovah's Witness what was the difference between a man and a dog and he said "there is none." They believe that when one dies "he is like the little dog Rover, he is dead all over." The Bible teaches that death is not the end but only the beginning. In Matthew 22:32 we learn that God is the God of the living. But God is also the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Therefore, the necessary conclusion is that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are still alive in yonder's world. No one can overthrow that argument. The Bible being true, death does not end it all. Both the rich man and Lazarus continue to live and they are alive in Hades tonight.

The Bible teaches there is something worse than death. You think death is bad, and even the most righteous have a certain dread of death. Even Christ prayed "if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me" (Mt. 26:39). Some of you will remember that here in Tennessee a man allowed two young men to ride with him. As they were riding along they said to him, "we are going to kill you." He

begged and offered them everything he had and told them about his wife and children and how he wanted to live but they were unmerciful. They stopped his car in a deserted area where there was much woods. They tied him to a tree and filled him full of bullets while the man pleaded for his life. Soon they were arrested. When the sheriff asked them how it felt to kill a man one of them asked, "did you ever kill a chicken?" That's how hard-hearted that man was. He was just as willing to kill a man as a chicken.

That incident was one of the most pitiful things ever to happen in our state and I am sure that many of you remember it. Friends, there is something worse than that. That man died without mercy, while begging for his life. Listen carefully to these words from Hebrews 10:28-31; "A man that hath set at naught Moses' law dieth without compassion on the word of two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be judged 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? For we know him that said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." This passage should cause every unfaithful member to repent. It almost moves me to tears to think of how the man begged for mercy, but friends the time is coming when the wicked will beg for mercy in hell but it will be too late. We sing "The Gates of Mercy May Close." Not only may they close; the day is coming when they will be closed. The rich man begged for mercy, "And he cried and said, Father Abraham have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." When time ends mercy ends. "behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2).

From the other side we learn a number of lessons. We

learn there is another life; there is a conscious existence. We will forever and ever remember. Abraham said to the rich man, "Son, remember." I know the devil doesn't want you to let this sink in but you should say, "Get thee hence Satan." Satan knows I am stating the truth.

We also learn there are two places prepared. Both are not in heaven. Christ said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." There are two places and we must spend eternity in either heaven or hell.

We learn that a child of God can fall. These two men lived and died under the Law of Moses. The Lord said the rich man referred to Abraham as "father" and Abraham referred to him as "son." Abraham was the father of the Jewish nation. The rich man was a child of God under the Old Testament law. Therefore, not only may a child of God fall, but this man did fall and will be an example throughout eternity that a child of God did fall. Therefore, he will be in a lake of fire and brimstone for ever. There are hundreds of passages in the Scriptures that either say or imply that it is possible for a child of God to fall and yet many deny the truth taught in these passages.

Then, there is no hope of a second chance. "And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence" (Lk. 16:26). This passage explodes the Catholic teaching of purgatory. If you die lost, when you have been dead for five seconds you are as much lost as you will ever be, for you will never have another opportunity. If we were lost for a while and then given another opportunity, we would certainly get ready. But, my friends, there will be no second chance. If you are in a lost condition, then you have no hope in this

world (Eph. 2:12) and if you die in that state you will be without hope throughout eternity.

Another lesson we learn from this story is that no heavenly messenger will be sent to warn us. It is altogether possible that there is someone in torment right now who would very much like to have someone like Lazarus to come and warn you not to come into that awful place of torment; but that will not be permitted. We read of the rich man's request in Luke 16:27-28; "Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." If our lost friends and relatives were permitted to either come back or to send us a message they would say, "don't come into this awful place of torment." No heavenly messenger will be sent for "Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them" (Lk. 16:29). Now if someone who had died in a lost condition during this, the Christian dispensation, besought some great man of God like Paul, while in the Hadean world, asking that one be sent from the dead to warn his lost relatives not to come into that place of torment, he would be told "They have Christ and the apostles; let them hear them."

But the rich man tried again, "And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent" (Lk. 16:30). Give careful thought to Abraham's reply, "And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead" (Lk. 16:31).

Friends, if you will not accept the written word of God, you would not repent, as Abraham said, though a man came here from the dead and told you. The power is in the gospel of Christ to save the soul of a man. (Rom. 1:16). If you fail to respond tonight, it could be that never again will you have an opportunity to obey. Brother Gus Nichols told the story of

a gospel preacher, who, after coming to a certain town to preach in a gospel meeting, asked the brethren to give him the names of some good prospects. He approached an executive, a man in a rather high position in the business world. Some of the brethren thought it folly to even attempt to convert that important man, but not the preacher. He asked the business man if he might have five minutes of his time. The man finally agreed but told the preacher he was a very, very busy man. The preacher then made an effort to convert the man to Christ. The business man began to react unfavorably, so the preacher said, "all right, since that's the way you feel, go on and die lost and burn for a billion years, and burn for another billion years, and burn for still another, and see if you then wish that you had become a Christian in life and had lived a faithful Christian life." Brother Nichols said this so sobered the man that he allowed the gospel preacher to baptize him into Christ.

Too many of us are playing at religion. We should not be ashamed to talk to any business man, whether he be just an employee in the business or the president of the business. These men have souls and they are lost apart from Christ. I am doing everything I know to do or say to save souls. Yet all of us need to seek ways and means of doing even more, if possible. We will be with the rich man throughout eternity if we do not make a determined effort to take the gospel to the entire world. Those who know not and obey not are lost. "And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (II Thess. 1:7-9).

What is the message that the lost dead would send if they could? It would be "please don't come here." I am tenderhearted and feel very sympathetic to those whom I

visit in the hospitals and other places. However, if I were forced to stay in a room a month with one that was screaming, crying, and gnashing his teeth, I am sure that it would be very trying. If you think that would be distressing, then think about your listening to that for a billion years and you yourself doing a part of it. Christ said, "And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Mt. 25:30). Jesus lifts the veil and lets us view these things.

Now here are some sad lessons that the rich man learned, but the sad part of it is that he learned them too late. All of these truths are involved in the passages already given. The rich man prayed. He made request. He believed in Hades. Those who ridicule God and make speeches against him need to read Jude 14, 15: "And to these also Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their works of ungodliness which they have ungodly wrought, and of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

The rich man was awakened to truth and he knew there was something to do. Satan has sought for many years to eliminate the activity from the religion of Christ. He says that you don't have to do anything to be saved. Then he works harder than the Lord's people, but always in an effort to convince people to follow him and his false doctrine. The rich man heard Abraham speak. Babies that die will spend eternity in heaven. They are as pure as the driven snow. But wouldn't it be terrible to die lost and in a place of torment lift up your eyes and see your baby, your wife or husband, father, or mother, sister or brother, along with Paul and others, in a place of comfort while you were tormented. And besides all of that there would be the great gulf fixed so you could not go to them and they could not come to you.

The rich man now had a concern for souls. He did not want his five brothers to come there. He could have perhaps, prevented it while he lived and most certainly could have kept himself from going there, but he had waited too late.

He also had a great desire to go to heaven. He had a literally burning desire to escape hell. He wanted so much to get out of the flames of torment in the Hadean World.

These are the lessons our Lord wants us to learn. Jesus has lifted the veil. As I conclude the lesson I point out the absolute necessity of faith (Heb. 11:6); you must repent or perish, you must turn or burn (Lk. 13:3); you must make the good confession (I Tim. 6:13) (Rom. 10:10); and you must be baptized (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16).

The unfaithful child of God must repent and pray and confess his sins (Acts 8:20-22; I Jno. 1:9; Jas. 5:16).

Our Lord's invitation is extended to you and we urge you to accept it.

So Near and Yet So Far

Persons Concerned	Near What?	How Near?	Hindering Cause	Result
Moses	Canaan	Could See	Wrong Words	No Entrance
Rich Ruler	Eternal Life	One Thing	Coveteousness	Sorrow
Foolish Virgins	Marriage Feast	Door	No Entrance	Unprepared
Felix	Faith In Christ	Trembled	Convenient Season	Lost
Agrippa	Being Christian	Almost	????	Lost
Ananias & Sapphira	Being Saved	Converted But Fell	Greed	Lost
Many	Heaven	Judgment	Wrong Name	Depart



CHAPTER 14

SO NEAR AND YET SO FAR

Friends, I hardly know whether to bid you good-bye tonight or to invite you to come back tomorrow evening. That is of course the way life is; we know not what shall be on the morrow. Our life is even as a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

Thus it is on a day-to-day basis that this gospel meeting is being conducted, something similar to extra innings of a ball game. But a ball game is unworthy of comparison with what we are doing - both for time and for eternity. Paul says in I Timothy 4:8; "For bodily exercise profiteth little; but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

We have thus far had a wonderful meeting. Sixty precious souls have already responded to our Lord's invitation and a number of others will respond, I am convinced, even tonight. We thank God for the increase. Paul said on one occasion, "I planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase." We are "God's fellow-workers," and to God be all the glory, praise and credit. Remember the power is in the Gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16). I deeply appreciate every fervent prayer uttered by righteous people, every word fitly

spoken, and all of the good influence. All activity on behalf of Christ during this gospel meeting has been invaluable.

I have thought that tonight might be the last night of this gospel meeting. However, I am going to leave that decision to the brethren and while I preach, pray to the Lord that His will be done.

Tonight we discuss the subject; "So Near and Yet So Far." I emphasized in the first sermon of this meeting that Christ said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Christ also said in Matthew 7:13,14; "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life; and few there be that find it." The way to heaven is a narrow way. It isn't enough just to be near this way. We must be in the Way. Six times in the book of Acts the church of our Lord and those disciples of the Lord are referred to as "The Way." I will not take the time to repeat these six passages but I did quote them in the first sermon of the meeting. I do want to strongly emphasize that it is impossible to separate the church from Christ. There are those however, who try. We have this record in Acts 8:5; "And Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ." Then in Acts 8:12; "But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." Now I call attention to the three points of Philip's sermon. First, when Philip preached the way he preached the truth concerning the kingdom of God. He, therefore, preached the truth concerning the church of Christ, for the church of Christ is the kingdom of Christ. The idea that the kingdom is one institution and the church a different institution is foreign to the teaching of the New Testament. The reference is to the same institution. Christ used the words "church" and "kingdom" interchangeably in Matt. 16:18, 19; "And I say also

unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Secondly, he preached "the name of Jesus Christ." This simply means the authority of Christ. The third point of Philip's sermon was baptism. "They were baptized both men and women." No preacher preaches Christ as he should be preached unless he includes these three points.

I have said these things before coming directly to the lesson to keep before us the necessity of Christ, His church, His plan of salvation, and His way of life.

Our lesson has to do with the idea of being so near and yet so far. A friend of mine, the former manager of our radio station, was wounded in South Vietnam. He said if he had been eight seconds nearer the blast he would have been killed. Others who were killed were only eight seconds away from life. "So near and yet so far."

We are especially interested in spiritual matters so I call attention to Mark 12. I call attention to the fact that our Lord had discussions with the Pharisees, the Herodians, and the Sadducees. When he had completely routed all of them, the record states, "And one of the scribes came, and heard them questioning together, and knowing that he had answered them well, asked him, What commandment is the first of all" (Mark 12:28). Jesus answered him and then the record says: "And the scribe said unto him, Of a truth, Master, thou hast well said that he is one; and there is none other but he" (Mk. 12:32). Following the words of the scribe the Bible says, "And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question" (Mk. 12:34).

Christ had not yet established his church; it was only in the preparatory state. But the point here is that this man had the qualities that caused our Lord to say, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." It is possible to be far from God. Christ said: "Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, This people honoureth me with their lips; But their heart is far from me" (Mt. 15:7,8). But the scribe of Mark 12 was not very far from the kingdom of God.

We sing "I've wandered far away from God: Now I'm coming home." There are unfaithful members of the church in this audience who need to return home tonight. There are accountable people in this audience who are in their alien sins and they need to become Christians.

Sin will separate a man from his God (Isa. 59:1,2). Sin is the transgression of the law of God. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4). John also says, "All unrighteousness is sin" (I Jno. 5:17). James further adds, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (Jas. 4:17).

The lesson tonight involves various persons. What were they near? Some were near a physical possession. Some were near eternal life. Some were near to being Christians. Some were near one thing and some near another. How near were they? Some were so near that they "trembled." Some were so near that they were "almost persuaded." Some were so near that they were actually children of God. They had been converted but they fell from grace. We note there was a hindering cause in every case. Finally, we have the result. These people were so near and yet so far away.

There are many people who are seeking to enter heaven but they will get no nearer heaven than the judgment. Their hindering cause is that they are doing things without the sanction of Christ. False doctrines and churches of men are

not recognized by Christ. In other words, they are doing what they do in religion by the wrong name or authority. If the sheriff were to come to your house tonight and knock on the door and command you to open the door in the name of the law, that means by the authority of the law. The thought of authority is connected with the name of Christ in Colossians 3:17; "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." If a man does a thing in religion by a name other than Christ, he does it by some other authority. When a man works in religion by some name other than that of Christ's, he cannot be saved. There will be some who will argue with Christ even on the day of judgment that they worked in the name of Christ, but Christ will tell them that he never endorsed what they did in religion. Listen to Matt. 7:21-23; "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Christ tells them, "I never knew you," I never recognized, by way of approval, what you claimed to do "in my name." After a careful reading of this passage, it should be perfectly clear why we seek to persuade men to leave sects and creeds of men. All such are unauthorized by the name of Christ. Why is it that we seek to convince men to become members of the church and not to encumber themselves with any organization that rivals the church? Simply because Paul said in Colossians 2:10: "and ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power." Paul also said in Ephesians 1:3; "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." To the young people and to all others who really want to do God's will, let me encourage you to enter the church and to stay in it. Stay out of the Masonic Lodge and every sect of men for "ye are complete in him."

Incidentally, someone says "the Masonic Lodge doesn't rival the church. I have the Tennessee Craftsman or you might call it the Masonic textbook for the State of Tennessee. The Tennessee Craftsman is described as "containing instructions and ceremonies for the use of Lodges of Free and Accepted Masons, as authorized by the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of the State of Tennessee." One error of Masonry is the false impression that Masonry is enough to get one into heaven. Listen to their prayer. "Grant, O God, that our conduct may tend to Thy glory, to the advancement of Freemasonry, and finally to our own salvation in that blessed kingdom where the righteous shall find rest. Amen." The Tennessee Craftsman refers to the candidate's having been brought "from Darkness to Light." To the Christian, the Bible, with Christ as the center, is the "true light" (Jno. 1:9). In Masonry a man is referred to as "Worshipful Master" but the Bible commands "Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ" (Mt. 23:10). Calling a Catholic priest "Father" violates Matt. 23:9, but calling a man "most worshipful master" is as much a violation of verse 10. The "common gavel" is described, then it is said, "but we as Free and Accepted Masons are taught to make use of it for the more noble and glorious purpose of divesting our minds and consciences of the vices and superfluities of life, thereby fitting us as living stones for that spiritual building, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Let us now consider a couple that was converted to Christ. How near were they? They were near being saved in heaven. If they had lived for ninety years that would not have been very long as compared to eternity. Had they lived faithfully as long as they lived, heaven would have been theirs. Time passes so rapidly. It seems that this meeting has just begun and yet it is almost ended. How near were they? They were Christians but they fell from grace. We have this record in Acts 5:1-11: "But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a cer-

tain part and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias, hearing these words, fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: And the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things."

If you are an unfaithful member of the church, God will not slay you miraculously. However, do not deceive yourself into believing that you can escape the judgment of God. Ananias and Sapphira were members of the church. Had they been faithful through life, heaven would have been theirs, but they were not faithful. They therefore, though converted, fell from grace. What was the hindering cause? It was greed. There are many members of the church today who are as greedy as Ananias and Sapphira. There are those who live exceedingly well in their own affairs but who give the Lord the scraps. Though untruthful, they plead their poverty. A preacher said, "When I look at the congregation I say, Where are the poor? But when I look at the contribution, I say, "Where are the rich?" If the Lord made some of us as poor as we really pretend to be when the contribution basket is passed, we surely would do some complaining. Sometimes a

well-to-do farmer will say, "I cannot give very much because I do not receive a stipulated salary." But this same man on an average for the year makes more than some other Christians who are paid each week, but do not even have their houses or cars paid for, while the farmer owes nothing on his farm and has many fine livestock and sometimes his wife also has a job away from home. Remember, "God loveth a cheerful giver." I heard of a prosperous farmer who objected to the amount of money that the preacher received for his services. He said, "That's too much money for thirty minutes work." Sometime later the farmer sold several cattle and the preacher happened to be there and saw the amount of the check that he received for the cattle. The check was for hundreds of dollars. The preacher said, "That's a lot of money for thirty minutes work." He answered, "you don't understand, there's a lot that went into this before I could receive this money for the cattle." The preacher replied, "Yes, and there was a lot of effort on my part before I preached, too." Some brethren are stingy and covetous.

We read in Acts 4 of Barnabas who sold his field and gave it all to the work of the Lord. Ananias and Sapphira wanted the honor of giving everything they possessed but they were not liberal enough to do so. They "lied" unto God about the amount given. Do you suppose that you know any member of the church who does that? Do you? They were not forced to sell their property or to give all their money. The decision was theirs to make. Peter said, "whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?" Peter, in substance, said, "You could have kept it. You didn't have to sell it, and once you sold it you did not have to give all of it." This does not teach communism. They were not killed for not giving all of it but rather they were killed for lying about it. Now a question: Suppose on next Sunday the Lord decided to slay everyone who does not tell the truth both in word and actual giving. Do you think many would die? Ananias and Sapphira died while telling a lie but according to Revelation 21:8; "All

liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death." Therefore, these two "born again" children of God will spend eternity in hell. There is not a Baptist preacher living who can deny that without denying the Bible. Not only can Christians fall from grace, here are two that were converted and actually did fall from grace. Therefore, they will spend eternity in hell with the rich man that we discussed last evening.

At this point, let us go to the Old Testament and discuss Moses. Moses was near Canaan. When reading about Moses not being allowed to enter Canaan I have shed tears. I would have made many more mistakes than Moses. Moses was one of the best men ever to live. For forty long years he endured the unfaithfulness of the Israelites. When God said to Moses about them; "Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation" (Ex. 32:10), Moses pleaded for their forgiveness in the words; "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sins; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written" (Ex. 32:32). On still another occasion his own brother and sister, Aaron and Miriam "spake against Moses." When Moses saw that the Lord had smitten Miriam with leprosy it is said; "And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee" (Num. 12:13). In fact, of Moses it was said, "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Num. 12:3).

The only recorded mistake of Moses is in Numbers 20: 7-12; "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. And Moses took the rod from before the Lord, as he commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said

unto them, Hear now, ye rebels: must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them."

Listen to Deuteronomy 3:23-28; "And I besought the Lord at that time, saying, O Lord God, thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness, and thy mighty hand: for what God is there in heaven or in earth, that can do according to thy works and according to thy might? I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon. But the Lord was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the Lord said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter. Get thee up into the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold it with thine eyes: for thou shalt not go over this Jordan. But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him: for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see." The final words concerning Moses are in Deuteronomy 34:1-7; "And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And the Lord shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan. And all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea, And the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar. And the Lord said unto him, This is the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither. So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord, And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of

his sepulchre unto this day. And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." Moses is the only man I recall that the Bible says God buried. The history of Moses is concisely stated in the New Testament in Hebrews 11:23-29; "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months by his parents, because they saw he was a goodly child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. By faith Moses; when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to be evil entreated with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked unto the recompense of reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. By faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of the blood, that the destroyer of the first-born should not touch them. By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were swallowed up."

Moses was near Canaan. How near was he? He was so near that he could see it. Why was he not permitted to enter? What was the hindering cause? - wrong words coupled with wrong action. "And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?" (Num. 20:10). The Lord states the reason he did not permit him to enter Canaan in these words, "And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them" (Num. 20:12).

Most of us would not have done as well as Moses. He was so near to the promised land that he could see it. But, as a result of this one act of disobedience, no entrance was granted unto him.

Do not misunderstand me; God forgave him. On the Mount of transfiguration it is said; "And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him" (Mt. 17:3). Moses, along with all of the redeemed, will be in heaven. In fact, it is said of the redeemed, "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints" (Rev. 15:3).

The Lord forgave Moses and he will be in heaven. However, the point is this; Moses committed one sin and God would not permit him to enter earthly Canaan. The lesson for us is that one sin can keep us out of heavenly Canaan, heaven itself. Paul compares the passing of the Israelites through the sea to baptism, and says the Israelites were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. Hear his words in I Cor. 10:1-4; "For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant, how that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them: and the rock was Christ."

Stephen refers to the congregation of Israel as the Old Testament Church, the church in the wilderness, which could only refer to those Jews that came from Egypt and traveled through the wilderness toward Canaan. In the comparison, Egypt would represent the world, the congregation in the wilderness the church. Stephen said, "This is he that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received living oracles to give unto us" (Acts 7:38). Jordan is compared to death. And, according to Hebrews 4, Canaan, or the promised land, refers to the eternal rest for God's people in heaven. If you are not a child of God you are in the world. Through baptism you enter the church. Although you are in the church even as Moses was in the wilderness, as one sin prevented his entering earthly Canaan, even so, one sin can prevent your entering heavenly Canaan. We must be prepared

when our Jordan of death arrives.

The rich young ruler is another example of one "So near and yet so far." He was near eternal life. How near was he? So near that he lacked only one thing. What was the hindering cause? It was covetousness. What was the result? He departed from Christ in sorrow. The record of this young man is in Matt. 19, in Mark 10, and in Luke 18. This young man was one of the most remarkable young men about whom I have ever read. Matthew says that he was a young man. Luke records that he was a ruler and all three say that he was rich. In fact the record says "for he was very rich." This young man was eager: "There ran one to him." He showed reverence: he "kneeled to him." He was brave. He came to Christ at a time when Christ was quite unpopular with many. He came not with a foolish or trivial question, but the question, "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Further be it said to his credit that he came to Christ, the proper person, with his problem. This rich young ruler lived under the Law of Moses so the Lord told him "but if thou wouldest enter into life keep the commandments." The young man asked "Which?" Jesus enumerated them. The young man then replied, "All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?" It is not surprising that Mark says, "Then Jesus beholding him loved him." How near did our Lord say he was to eternal life? "And he said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: And come, follow me." What was the hindering cause? It was covetousness. Our Lord did not demand that he sell all of his possessions and give the money to the poor because wealth is wrong within itself. It is not wrong to have money if we use it correctly. But if it becomes our god, then it becomes sinful. This young man needed to learn the lesson that Christ taught in Luke 12: 15; "And he said unto them, Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Paul tells us that a covetous man is an idolator. Ponder carefully the words

of Col. 3:5; "Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry." If there is a covetous person in this audience, then he is an idolater according to Paul. It is not necessary to bow down to images to be an idolater. What was the result? The major result was that he departed from Christ in sorrow. Of him it is said, "But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions." We have a great respect for this young man. Although he did not love Christ enough to follow him, yet his departing hurt him to the point that he went away sorrowful. Has it ever occurred to you, friends, that had he gone away laughing he would have been no more lost. We respect him more for his being grieved, but the real tragedy was that he departed from Christ at all. This young man was so near eternal life, so near that he lacked only one thing, but covetousness separated him from Christ. Therefore, he departed from Christ lost.

In Matt. 25 we have the story of the ten virgins. They were near the marriage feast. "Five of them were wise and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves." The foolish went to do so but when they returned they could get no nearer than the door. "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us." What was the hindering cause? They were unprepared, "and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage." From a child, the words

of the song, "Careless soul, why will you linger, wandering from the fold of God, hear ye not the invitation, O prepare to meet thy God," has touched and sobered me in every fiber of my being. We read in Amos 4:12 "prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." These five foolish virgins were not prepared. It is written in Ephesians 5:15-17; "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." What was the result? There was no entrance granted unto them. "Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not." Our Lord then added this note of warning; "Watch, therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

Felix was "so near and yet so far." What was Felix near? He was near faith in Christ. It is written in Acts 24:24; "But after certain days, Felix came with Drusilla, his wife, which was a Jewess, and sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ Jesus." Paul, of course, did a commendable job in every way. How near was Felix to obedience to the faith in Christ Jesus? The Bible says that he "trembled." What would you have preached if you had been in Paul's position on that occasion? Reliable history says that Felix was living in adultery with Drusilla, who really belonged to another man. It is easy for some of you to sit in an audience and to criticize a gospel preacher. However, if you knew the weight of responsibility that rests upon a true gospel preacher, a man who preaches the truth at all times, under all circumstances, regardless of who may be in the audience, you would not be so eager to criticize. Paul expressed my sentiments when he said, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel." As Paul spoke of the faith in Christ, it is recorded; "And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (Acts 24:25). Paul's sermon had

three points. (1) He reasoned of "righteousness." This referred to all of man's heavenly responsibilities. (2) He reasoned of "temperance." This word means self-control and would refer to all human responsibilities. (3) He reasoned of "judgment to come." In the judgment he must give an account of his relationship to both God and man. Felix made the mistake of waiting for a "convenient season." It is never convenient to leave sin and to obey Christ. After all, it was not easy for Christ to die for us, yet it is written in Galatians 1:4; "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us out of this present evil world, according to the will of our God and Father."

Our Lord said, "So therefore, whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." Felix was not willing to do this. Felix was near faith in Christ Jesus, so near that he trembled. The hindering cause was his waiting for a convenient season and the result was that he was lost.

The final example that we shall study tonight is that of King Agrippa. He was so near and yet so far away. Agrippa was near being a Christian. Paul was a Christian and that is what he sought to persuade King Agrippa to become. "And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds" (Acts 26:29). Paul was not seeking to persuade Agrippa to become a Catholic, a Baptist, or a Methodist. It was hundreds of years after both Paul and Agrippa died before any of these sects arose. Paul was trying to persuade Agrippa to become a Christian only - and - only a Christian. How near was Agrippa to becoming a Christian? He was almost persuaded. Listen, please, to Acts 26:28; "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." We sing the song "Almost Persuaded." How near was Agrippa? He was "almost" persuaded. What was the hindering cause? The Bible does not say. He may have been like Felix, waiting for the convenient season but

the Bible does not specifically say.

At this point I extend our Lord's invitation. To be a Christian you must hear the gospel and believe (Acts 15:7); repent (Lk. 13:3); confess Christ (Rom. 10:10; Acts 8:37); and be baptized (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38). To be restored as an erring child of God you must repent and pray to God (Acts 8:20-22) and confess your sins (Jas. 5:16; I Jno. 1:9). Don't be "so near and yet so far away." Don't just be almost persuaded but rather be altogether persuaded to obey. Friends, why not now? Indeed, why not tonight? Let us stand and sing while our Lord awaits your coming and angels wait to rejoice.

Isa. 12:3 **Water of Life** Jno. 4:10

MODERNISM

They Deny Mirac.
V. Birth Blood
Arose. Resurr.
Bible
Hell

Num. 20:1-24

Jno. 19:33-34

1 Cor. 10:2 Ps. 46:4

Smitten

MORALITY

Rom. 3:23
Rom. 10:3-5 Ac. 10:1-3
Mk. 14:15-16

Pentecost

Word like Water Amos 8:11
Flowed from Apostles Jno. 7:38-39
Good News Pr. 25:25 Ac. 2
Watered By 1 Cor 3:6

Thirst — Come!

Ps. 63:1; 42:1-2

Isa. 55:1

Matt. 5:6

Jn. 7:37

Johs 6:35

Ac. 2:37

Lk. 16:19

Rom. 22:17

DENOMINATIONALISM

Mt. 16:18 Ps. 122:1 Jer. 2:13
Mt. 15:13 Jn. 17:20-21
Isa. 46:13 Heb. 22:22-23
1 Cor. 1:10 2 Pet. 2:17

WORLDLINESS

Tit. 2:11-12
Rom. 12:2 2 Cor. 6:17
Jas. 1:27 Eccl. 7:29
Jas. 4:4 Jer. 2:13
1 Jn. 2:15

CHAPTER 15

THE WATER OF LIFE

*F*riends, it is indeed a genuine joy to have the privilege of greeting the second largest audience of this entire effort. I certainly rejoice in the wonderful interest that still characterizes this gospel meeting. As stated last evening, I do not know whether to bid you farewell or to invite you to return tomorrow night. We have already extended the meeting twice, thus the meeting may come to a conclusion tonight. We have just finished singing, "I Am Bound For The Promised Land." I sincerely believe that I am bound for the promised land, along with many of you. Of course, any or all of us could fall from grace. We haven't fought our fight, finished our course, and kept the faith to the end yet. We are, however, in the process of doing that. I need your prayers.

Weighty indeed is my responsibility as I stand before audiences, this evening included. My favorite passage as related to my responsibility as a preacher is in I Corinthians 9:16; "For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; for woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel." When a man becomes a gospel preacher, he assumes a tremendous responsibility. However, all the responsibility does not rest upon the shoulders of a gospel preacher. The audience has weighty responsibilities as well.

The preacher is admonished to "Take heed to thyself" while the audience is admonished by Christ to "take heed what ye hear" and to "take heed how ye hear." You have as weighty a responsibility as do I.

I am praying for you, not that God would save you in rebellion, for that would be an unscriptural prayer. But I am praying that if you be subject to the gospel call you will be receptive. Also, I am praying that you will do what you know to be right. No man has ever done wrong when he did right. I am trying to persuade you to do right. We have so many things for which to rejoice. There have been ninety-two responses in this meeting thus far to our Lord's invitation; forty-six baptisms and forty-six restorations.

I am speaking tonight of the water of life. Our greatest need is for salvation. In Revelation 22:17 we have our Lord's invitation to the water of life in these words: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." In John 4:10, "Jesus answered and said unto her, if thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." Our Lord here, of course, is using the word "water" to teach that Christ himself is necessary for the quenching of our spiritual thirst. We have this statement from Christ recorded in Matthew 5:6: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled."

I want to use a few passages that bear out the fact that Christ offers unto us the "Water of life" and that he wants us to accept him. In I Corinthians 10:1-4 we read: "For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant, how that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual food and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of a spiritual rock that

followed them: and the rock was Christ." Paul is simply pointing out that Christ was the source of their blessings. Just as he is the source of our salvation, Paul says in II Timothy 2:10: "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." Paul affirms in the previous chapter, verse 10: "but hath now been manifested by the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." And so salvation comes from Christ, the source of salvation. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3). Note that every or all spiritual blessings are "in Christ." That is the reason we plead so fervently for your souls. Christ said, "for apart from me ye can do nothing" (Jno. 15:5). And in Ephesians 2:12: "that ye were at that time separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world." Jesus wants us to come to him. The necessity of God's word for the spiritual needs of man as related to the need for food and water for the physical man is stated in Amos 8:11: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord." If we ever fall under the brunt of Catholicism or Communism, although we hope and pray that it shall never happen, then there will be a famine of hearing the words of God. It will be "precious" indeed as stated in another passage.

Note that the Bible teaches that we should thirst for God. Listen to Psalms 42:1 & 2: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: When shall I come and appear before God?"

The water brook is absolutely necessary for the hart, but David said, "So panteth my soul after thee, O God."

In John 7:37-39, "In the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believed on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

The Holy Spirit was given to the apostles on the day of Pentecost to guide them into all truth. Acts 2:1-4 records, "And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." The will of the Lord is revealed for us here in the New Testament. Peter tells us that, "seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and viture" (II Peter 1:3). Note John 7:37 again, "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." Tonight, he still extends that invitation. We come through the process of being taught, hearing, learning, and coming (John 6:44-45). So, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6). Our cup can run over even tonight.

We observe that water to a thirsty soul is compared to good news from a far country. Hear these words, "As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country" Prov. 25:25. The good news from the far country of Heaven concerning salvation from sin was first fully revealed on the day of Pentecost, and we have this truth in the New Testament tonight if we will only accept and obey it. So we must thirst. Then with a thirst in our hearts for the word of the

Lord, that word will prick the good and honest heart. "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?" One of the reasons why I have been so frank and direct in this meeting is that the truth might prick the heart. I have diligently sought to teach the truth in love. The Lord knows my heart, and he knows that it has been done in love. It was Paul who said, "Having therefore such a hope, we use great boldness of speech" (II Cor. 3:12).

The preaching of God's word by one gospel teacher and still further teaching by another is compared to a "planting" and a "watering." This is stated in I Cor. 3:6: "I planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase." Paul came to Corinth and preached the gospel. "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).

Paul says in II Cor. 4:5: "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake." He also stated in I Corinthians 2:2, "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." But after Paul taught and converted the Corinthians, another preacher by the name of Apollos came to Corinth, and did some more teaching, which Paul refers to as "watering."

The splendid success of this gospel meeting is the consumation of the efforts and prayers of many interested persons. Many have helped to lay the foundation for this meeting, some of whom, such as brother Jesse Sewell, are now dead. A number of others who helped to make this meeting possible are in the audience tonight. Others have planted. I have come to plant, but also to "water" that which has already been planted. Brethren, I have often pointed out that if we are willing for God to receive the praise instead of

ourselves, then we can do much good. Otherwise, we will do much harm. One of the reasons that we have this "anti" problem is that there have been too many chiefs and not enough Indians. There are some people who are determined to get into the limelight and if they cannot do so by righteous means, they will do so by unrighteous means. Observe this and you will see it to be so. Paul said in Phil. 1:15-17: "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: the one do it of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel: but the other proclaim Christ of faction, not sincerely, thinking to raise up affliction for me in my bonds." In Luke 16, we have the story of the rich man and Lazarus. As you know, I preached an entire sermon from this text a few nights ago. However, I refer to the rich man briefly again. Here was a man who lived under the Old Testament dispensation. He had "Moses and the prophets." This man had opportunity to be taught, to allow the truth to be planted and watered in his heart, but he paid little attention to his duty. Let us note Luke 16:19-24: "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores. And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried, and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." The rich man cried in Hades, then he begged for mercy; he also begged for water to cool his tongue. All such efforts on his part were forever too late.

There are preachers in every part of this country who ridicule the necessity of preaching to the sinner in order to

convert him. They claim that the Holy Spirit operates separate and apart from the word upon the heart of the sinner. The Bible says that the Holy Spirit uses his sword. Listen to Eph. 6:17: “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” There is another false doctrine taught which says that the word of God can save only after the Holy Spirit has operated. Those who teach this doctrine claim that the word of God is like dead cotten or corn seed, and if the Holy Spirit doesn't infuse some miraculous power, then it could not save the sinner. Remember that James says the word is able to save. “Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls”(James 1:21).

The same preachers make light of the necessity of water baptism for the remission of sins. There will be many people crying out in hell for someone to bring a little water to cool their tongues, due to the fact that all of their lives they sought to eliminate water baptism from God's plan of salvation for the alien sinner.

The rich man, under the old law, failed to do his duty and is now in torment. Those who fail to do their duty under the new law will share his fate.

I am not just making a speech tonight. I am discussing things of utmost importance. Many things are important--but the things of supreme importance are those which we have discussed throughout this effort. Throughout this gospel meeting we have discussed the things that will face us on the day of judgment. These things when obeyed mean eternal life, but when rejected, mean eternal condemnation.

Revelation 22:17 is a beautiful passage indeed, “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” We should rejoice

that we do not have to be rich and give a great sum to buy our salvation, for then many of us could not do so. It is true that salvation is a gift, but a gift implies three things. (1) A giver. (2) A gift. (3) A receiver. Suppose I had something of value in my hand which would be given to you if you would only come and take it. It is only an offer until you accept it. It becomes a gift only when you accept it. Many of the people who talk so much about salvation being a gift do not know what a gift implies. The truth is, salvation is a gift, but it is a conditional gift. The very people who contend that salvation is a gift and that one does not or cannot meet any conditions to obtain salvation, contradict themselves by contending for "faith only." They say "we don't believe in works." Well then, they couldn't have "faith only" for even faith is a work. "Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (Jno. 6:29). You must do your own believing, no one can do it for you. Faith is a work. There is less human work on the part of the alien sinner in his being baptized than there is in his faith, repentance, or confession. Can anyone else do your believing for you? He cannot! Heb. 11:6, Rom. 10:10, Acts 15:7.

Can anyone make the confession for you? The answer is no. Matt. 10:32, Acts 8:37, Rom. 10:10.

But in baptism, you are passive. You do not baptize yourself. Someone else baptizes you so that you might enter into Christ. There is less human work on the part of the alien sinner in baptism than in faith, repentance or confession, and yet the devil tries to tell people "Don't believe in baptism, because there is work involved."

Let me at this time point out that faith is used in at least three senses in the New Testament. (1) Sometimes the word faith refers to that system of faith, the whole gospel of Christ (Gal. 3:23-24, Jude 1:3). (2) Sometimes the word faith refers to the first step in the plan of salvation after the sin-

ner hears the gospel, that is, to his believing the gospel (Acts 15:7). (3) Sometimes it is used in the comprehensive sense to embrace all of the steps of obedience. The American Standard version of John 3:36 shows this usage: "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Note the following: (1) "He that believeth on the Son." "Believeth" you will notice--not faith only--but a continuous belief; Faith that continues to walk, to work, and to obey. (2) "hath eternal life." This is the positive side, now observe the negative side; "But he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." The positive--"He that believeth." The negative--"He that obeyeth not."

This shows that "believeth" is used in the sense of complete obedience. As further proof, I call attention to the words of Romans 4:12, "And the father of circumcision to them who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham which he had in uncircumcision." Belief is a step of faith, repentance is a step of faith, confession is a step of faith, and baptism is a step of faith. Friends, when the alien sinner is baptized, he takes a step of faith.

Someone may say, "I still don't believe it." All right, listen to Col. 2:12: "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." Paul points out that in baptism an operation is performed. This operation is performed by God--"the operation of God." But note "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." If one denies this, he denies the Bible. One of the reasons some preachers take refuge behind the microphone and attack the necessity of baptism is that they know what they teach will not stand investigation.

Let us continue to the second phase of our lesson. Hear the pathetic words of God as stated in Jeremiah 2:13: "For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." "They have forsaken me the fountain of living waters." That was a terrible thing, but they were not content to stop with that. So, they "hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns" that could hold no water.

In the religious world of today there has developed the error of Catholicism and almost every shade of sectarianism. Jeremiah in describing the condition of his day has also well described the folly of denominationalism of today. Denominationalism is described in the expression "broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

When a man depends upon his morality to take him to Heaven and detours around the blood of Christ which is contacted in the waters of baptism (Rom. 6:3-4) and which cleanses only in the church of the Lord (Acts 20:28), he is depending upon "broken cisterns that can hold no water." Sometimes a man may say words like these: "Brother Elkins, I am such a fine man." It is a wonder he does not break his own arm in bending it so far behind his back to pat himself. He says that he is so good; he does not harm anyone; he does not lie, steal, murder, commit adultery or a number of other things. When you approach such an individual about obeying the gospel, he usually says, "Well what have I done?" If we placed a number of zeros one under the other, what would we have when they were added together. The answer is nothing. Now, you are to be commended for being moral.

You must be moral to be a Christian. In fact, you need

to strive to be a good moral citizen even before you become a Christian. But if your good morals could save you, then Christ died for nothing; he died in vain if you can be saved without his precious blood that was shed on the old rugged cross. You wouldn't want your life's history flashed up here on a screen before this audience and let them see it. A young lady once said to me, "I don't think that I have ever done anything wrong." I then asked her if she would be willing for everything in her life to be flashed before me and let me see it. She said "I certainly would not." I pointed out that she was not as good as she thought she was. She later obeyed the gospel. Now the devil has a way of encouraging people to form an exalted opinion of themselves. To those who may be depending on their morality to get them to heaven, I suggest a test. Compare yourself with Cornelius. Listen to Acts 10:1-2: "Now there was a certain man in Caesarea, Cornelius by name, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always." Then in Acts 10:22, "And they said, Cornelius a centurion, a righteous man and one that feareth God, and well reported of by all the nation of the Jews, was warned of God by a holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words from thee." In spite of all his fine traits of character he was, nevertheless, a lost man. Peter explains in Acts 11:13-14, "And he told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, and saying, Send to Joppa, and fetch Simon, whose surname is Peter; who shall speak unto thee words, whereby thou shalt be saved, thou and all thy house." I know he was not saved before his obedience to the gospel for it was necessary for Peter to "speak unto thee words; whereby thou shalt be saved, thou, and all thy house." So friends, morality apart from Christ is a broken cistern.

I now call your attention to the fact that modernism is a broken cistern. Modernistic preachers do not believe that Christ wrought miracles. They do not accept the virgin birth of Christ. They do not believe in the blood of Christ, the

atonement, the resurrection, or that there is a hell. In short, they do not believe the Bible. Modernism is a "broken cistern that can hold no water." The majority of young denominational preachers do not believe the Bible is inspired. Both Peter and Paul believed the Bible to be verbally inspired. In II Peter 1:21, Peter said: "For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spoke from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." And in I Cor. 2:13, Paul says: "Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." Now friends, that is word-for-word inspiration; the words and the thoughts were inspired. To the twelve, Christ said, "But when they deliver you up, be not anxious how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak" (Matt. 10:19). One of the reasons so many preachers subscribe to the so-called "social gospel" is that many of that type do not believe the Bible to be inspired and so they just seek to rise to a higher plane socially. These preachers no longer believe the Bible to be the inspired word of God. It is fine for a man to be lifted up socially but I want to see him lifted up to a much higher plane. Christ said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself. But this he said, signifying by what manner of death he should die" (John 12:32-33). Christ died that he might eventually lift men up to heaven. It has been well said, "The gospel professed will lift one to heaven, but the gospel possessed will lead one into heaven." I want to go to Heaven, and I want you to go there. Modernism is a broken cistern that can hold no water.

But another broken cistern is worldliness. We have quite a bit of this, even in the church. I have already spoken to the young people and have also preached a sermon during this meeting having to do with problems of the home--such problems as divorce and re-marriage. Brethren, this problem of worldliness is like the poor--we have it with us always. Worldliness is like water which drips and drips and drips upon a rock; finally it will wear the rock away though it may

be slow in so doing. We must keep in mind Titus 2:11-14: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." And in Philipians 1:27, "Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ; that, whether I come and see you or be absent, I may hear of your state, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the gospel." An aged gospel preacher told me the following story. Two members of the church were talking and one of them asked the other if he had any problem with the opposite sex pushing themselves on him. The man replied "No." At which point the first man replied, "Why do I have that problem and you do not?" The other man replied, "I always keep myself in a Christian gentleman's place." An evil woman sought to force herself on Joseph and he fled from her and that is what a Christian man should do. Joseph lost his coat, but he retained his honor. Listen to James 1:27: "Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Other passages along this line are I John 2:15-17, and James 4:4. Worldliness is a broken cistern that can hold no water.

Denominationalism is a broken cistern that can hold no water. In Matt. 16:18 Christ said, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Christ built only one church. Almost everyone in America agrees there is just one God, but argues there are many churches. Friends, the same passage that says there is one

God also points out that there is one church (Eph. 4:4-6). After the bombing of the school building and rebuilding of it in Clinton, Tennessee Billy Graham was asked to speak on the day of dedication. About a month before Mr. Graham came, a lady sent me one of his newspaper columns entitled, "My Answer." Many times they are his answers, certainly not God's. Sometimes he will give a correct answer. This particular one was "his answer" and not God's. A lady wrote this question to Mr. Graham: "Dear Mr. Graham, In my town there are thirty-five different denominations. By reading the New Testament, I cannot find where God authorized more than one church." Mr. Graham replied, "Dear Madam, One church is as good as another; just join the church of your choice." As I have said, a lady sent that clipping to me and for a month before Mr. Graham arrived, I read that question and his answer every day on our daily radio program. Then, I would say this, "Suppose the lady had said: 'Mr. Graham, in my town there are thirty-five different Gods worshipped. By my reading of the New Testament, I cannot find where God authorized the worshipping of more than one God.'" I would then say, "Suppose Mr. Graham had replied, 'One God is as good as another; just worship the God of your choice.'" He would lose most of his followers if he said that. He is just as wrong in contending for many churches as he would be contending for many gods.

He stayed in a hotel in Oak Ridge and the newspaper ran an article about him. They said that on Sunday morning he sometimes attended a local religious service or sometimes he just stayed in his hotel room and worked on his sermon, but that if he didn't go to church anywhere he listened to a religious broadcast over the radio or television. I called the hotel to see if I might speak to Mr. Graham with the intention of inviting him to come hear me preach the next day which was Sunday. Had he come, I intended to preach on unity. I intended to show that the church of Christ is the Lord's church. I got in touch with one of his secre-

taries and I asked to speak with Mr. Graham. I think he thought I was beside myself to think that I could just call and talk with Mr. Graham. He informed me that I could not speak with Mr. Graham. I then told him I had the article about Mr. Graham in the paper and that it said he sometimes attended a local religious service, and if not that he stayed in his hotel room and worked on his sermon. Incidentally, he claims to have the Holy Spirit. If he did, he would not have to work on his sermon. Further, if he had believed and obeyed the teaching of the New Testament, he would be in the church of Christ, and would believe and know his duty not to forsake the assembly. Since I could not speak with Mr. Graham, I asked his secretary if he would take a message for Mr. Graham. He said he would, so I told him to tell Mr. Graham that we would like for him to attend the services of the Highland View Church of Christ, and if he did not, would he please listen to the "Herald of Truth" over the local radio station. The gentleman promised me he would tell him. Whether he did or not, I do not know. Denominationalism is a broken cistern that can hold no water.

We have this statement in Psalms 127:1: "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." What is the house of God? Paul said, "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Tim. 3:15). So, unless the Lord has built the church you are in, all of your effort in that church is in vain. Unless the Lord plants a religious plant, then that plant will be rooted up. We hear Christ speaking of the false religious plants that were under the Mosaic Law, and the same principle is applicable under the Law of Christ. "But he answered and said, Every plant which my Heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up" (Matt. 15:13). So, with love and kindness in my heart for your eternal welfare, I urge you to leave man-made churches while you have time and opportunity. It will be too late if you wait

until the judgment. Observe, please: "There is one body" (Eph. 4:4). There is "yet but one body" (I Cor. 12:20). There is to be "no schism in the body" (I Cor. 12:25). By the gospel we are "called into one body" (Col. 3:15). All the obedient are "reconciled in one body" (Eph. 2:16). Christ is "the saviour of the body" (Eph. 5:23). All are "baptized into one body" (I Cor. 12:13). And "The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." (Acts 2:47). In conclusion, I beg you to come to Christ that you may enjoy the water of life. Remember that modernism, worldliness, and denominationalism are broken cisterns that can hold no water.

If you were playing baseball and you hit the ball far enough so that you reached third base before you were put out, it wouldn't benefit you as far as scoring is concerned anymore than if you had struck out. Likewise, erring member of the church, if you have in days past lived the Christian life for many years, but have become unfaithful, as far as your salvation in heaven is concerned, your past faithfulness will not help you a particle. In fact, you are now in a worse condition than before you became a Christian. These words are recorded in II Peter 2:20-22: "For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the last state is become worse with them than the first. For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered unto them. It has happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog turning to his own vomit again, and the sow that had washed to wallowing in the mire."

John said, "Look to yourselves, that ye lose not the things which we have wrought." (II John 8).

It is fine to begin a race, but the only way you can win the race correctly is to begin the race. But if you sit down, you will never win the crown. Every passage in the

Bible urges us to continue. We must "walk in the light." We are to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. The Bible demands obedience and faithful activity on the part of the Christian in order to enter Heaven. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

To be a Christian, the alien sinner must hear the word and believe (Heb. 11:6; Acts 15:7-9). Repent (Lk. 13:3; Acts 17:30). Confess faith in Christ (Matt. 10:32; Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:10). Be baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3; Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; I Pet. 3:21).

As an erring child of God, you must repent, confess your sins and pray to God for forgiveness (Acts 8:20-22; James 5:16; I Jno. 1:9). Won't you come while Heaven pleads and while the privilege is yours?
