

# A FAITH TO LIVE BY

By

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**“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shall say, I have no pleasure in them.” Ecclesiastes 12:1.**

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## You and Christianity

“I THOUGHT I was all done with the question of religion,” a young man confided to me, “but I am in a greater muddle now than ever before. I guess if I hadn't come home, I would have been all right. But now I don't know what to do.”

The young man in question was one of my former students. His grades had been about average. He could have done better had he applied himself, but he wasn't much pleased in being compelled to attend a religious school, and had shied clear of all religious influences. He had joined the Army Air Corps, had done well, and was now on a trip home before being called elsewhere, probably overseas. But it was at home that his troubles about religion had been renewed.

“You know,” he continued, “I was never much for religion. My parents made me go to church with them when I was a boy, but I did not get much good out of it. When I joined the Army, I made up my mind that I was through with all religion. And I was as

far as I was concerned. But there was a boy in my outfit-I guess the only one-who was a Christian. He would read his Bible every night and kneel for prayer before going to bed. Some of the fellows made fun of him, and I got into an argument with one of them. . The result was that we had a fight about this boy, as this fellow simply would not leave him alone. I guess I got the better of the fight, all right, but it made me mad to think that I was fighting for religion when I didn't have any myself and didn't want any. So I just left religion alone, and I was all right until I got home.

"I guess mother was kind of proud of me, and dad also, though they tried not to show it. I went with them to church, though I would rather not have gone; but on the other hand I had no objection to meeting my old friends again, and that was the place to meet them. Jane was there also, the girl I used to be interested in. We corresponded for a while even after I entered the Army. But then we stopped. I knew why. She had been brought up a strict Christian and had been taught from childhood to beware of any marriage with an 'unbeliever,' and I guess I am one of them. I had a little private talk with her, but didn't get much out of her. I think she still likes me, but her religion is in the way. I felt pretty blue when I got done talking, but I guess there is nothing I can do about it.

"But I had my worst time with mother. She didn't say much, either, but I knew exactly how she felt. Here I am going away, and she might never see me again. It struck her pretty hard. I know that she has prayed a great deal about me, but so far it has not done any good. You know a fellow cannot turn. Christian just because some good woman is praying for him, even though that woman is his mother. But I admit that I have been brought to consider the whole matter again. What is really bothering me now is this, that if I should try to become religious now, it would be because of mother-and Jane also, I guess -and I have no intention of letting anyone influence me in the matter of religion. If I become a Christian, it will not be because of some woman. I want to settle that for myself, without anyone else butting in.

"Do you know what brought me to my first distaste for religion? It was an old hypocrite in the church at home. He has just died, so I suppose I should not worry about him. But he was a mean old fellow, though a good church member, He tried to give me a whipping once for something I hadn't done, but I got away all right. I have hated him ever since, and don't feel any too good about it even now. I would hate to get to heaven and see him there. And then several other things happened. When I look back on it now, I can see that I was not entirely blameless myself. But anyway, I got a strong distaste for all things religious that has lasted till the present time.

"Well now, what shall I do? You have helped me before. What shall I do in the muddle I am in now? Give me some good advice."

And so we sat down and had a good talk, as man to man. I told him a little of my own experiences, and the outcome. And I thought that it might not be amiss to acquaint a larger audience with some of the good reasons for Christianity, reasons that appeal to a young man or a young woman. They may help others.

## The Riddle of Life

WHAT is it all about?" a student once asked me. "What do you mean?" I countered; "what is what all about?"

"What is everything about?" came the answer. "It seems to me that life is a strange proposition. I don't know where I came from, and I don't know where I am going. I am here; that is about all I know. I don't seem to get the hang of things. I am puzzled. I don't know what it is all about!"

This young man is not the only one who is puzzled about life. A good many, both old and young, would like to know what life is all about. Is there any meaning to it? Is there any solution to the puzzle of existence? To this the answer may be given that apart from religion, apart from God and a belief in a hereafter, there is no meaning to life.

Look at life as it is, without the illumination which belief in a hereafter gives. One generation comes into existence, lives a few years, learns a few of the lessons of life, and then passes on. A new generation appears, goes over the same lessons, and is gone. A third generation takes over, makes the same mistakes, learns the same lessons, and then is no more.

Will the following generations learn from the previous ones and avoid the mistakes of the past? They will not. They will bump their heads as the others have done, learn their lessons in the same hard way, and just when it may be presumed that they have learned to adjust themselves to life, they, too, will pass off the stage of action. The lessons that one generation learns from another are almost negligible. Someone has likened life to a sewing machine running without thread. There is motion, but it is the motion of a treadmill-much movement, some noise, but little accomplishment.

This is aptly illustrated in the attitude of men toward war. A nation finds what it considers a justifiable excuse for attacking another nation, and both fight to the point of exhaustion. Win or lose, they are both tired of the conflict and come to the conclusion that war does not pay; so a peace is negotiated. They resolve that there shall be war no more. But this state of mind lasts only till another generation are in the saddle. The new generation find good reasons for believing that their fathers bungled things, and that one more war is needed to put things right. And so they go at it. When they are through, they have fought what they believe to be the last war. Now they, too, have learned the lesson that war does not pay. They may not fight again, but the next generation will. They have learned nothing from past experiences. And so history records wars in every generation since the dawn of history; and even this enlightened age is no exception. We, of course, are fighting our particular war to end war. So have all past generations. What is the meaning of all this? What is it all about?

As with nations and generations, so it is with individuals. A young man receives his degree and is ready to begin to live. But he soon finds that he has hard work ahead of him to make his mark in the world. It takes him another fifteen or twenty years to reach the top in his profession; but at last, at the age of forty-five or fifty, he feels that he has “arrived.” He has come to the place where he can devote his time to the betterment of the world. But, alas, his life is more than half gone; in fact, only fifteen or twenty years remain until he is retired whether he wants to be or not, and his life’s work is considered done. He has acquired a store of knowledge, but now he is “on the shelf,” and others are hard at work repeating his experience.

We might well ask if all this pays; if it is not a disproportionate outlay of effort to acquire what at best can be retained for only a little time. Again we are led to inquire what it is all about, and if anything worth while is being accomplished. And again we are brought to the conclusion that life is meaningless, and often hard and cruel, to those who are without a belief in and a surety of a life hereafter.

If, on the other hand, there is a life hereafter; if this present life is but a preparation for a better and larger life to come; if this life is given us that we may show what we will do with it, whether or not we purpose to use it rightly and abide by the rules laid down; if the intent is that we may give a demonstration of our appreciation of life-then every moment becomes of supreme importance, every day and every experience takes on new meaning. Then life ceases to be merely a sewing machine running without thread. Through all its devious, mysterious ways is seen an underlying purpose and philosophy, and man becomes a worker together with God, working out the destiny of a soul created in His image.

### **Does a Friendly Power Control the Universe?**

Two travelers stood near the Sphinx in Egypt, that massive stone carving of a recumbent lion with the head of a woman, which popular superstition believes will answer any question that may be put to it by a human being. One of the men said to the other: “If you had only one question to ask the Sphinx, what would it be?”

After a moment’s hesitation, the man answered, “I would ask this: ‘Is the universe friendly?’”

This may seem a strange question; but this is what he meant: We are all facing powers in nature which are stronger than we are and with which we are unable to cope. A boat is on the ocean. The day is beautiful; the water is calm. Suddenly a storm comes up. The waves dash the boat to pieces, and precious lives are lost. But in a little while the storm is over, the sun is shining again, and all nature smiles as though nothing had happened.

We are walking in the streets of a large city. The mighty, towering skyscrapers proclaim the power and skill of man. Suddenly the earth shakes. Buildings reel to and fro, come tumbling down. In a few moments’ time the city is leveled, and thousands of lives are lost in the earthquake.

We are on a beautiful tropical island. The air is balmy and mild, and every prospect pleases. Suddenly a rumbling is heard; an “extinct” volcano belches forth lava and poisonous gases, and tens of thousands of human beings lie dead.

A thunderstorm approaches, lightning strikes, and a loved one is cut down. A hailstorm ruins the prospect of a bountiful harvest, a dust storm devastates a prosperous community. Scorching sun and wind burn the ripening grain, a plague of grasshoppers lays low fields of promise. A river overflows its banks, property and lives are lost, and man stands helpless before the oncoming destruction. We are surrounded by forces over which we have no control.

It was things such as these that the traveler had in mind when he wished to know whether the universe is friendly. If the universe is not friendly to us, if it is bent on our destruction, there is not much we can do about it.

Perhaps we should change the question, “Is the universe friendly?” to “Is God friendly?” It is probable that this is what the traveler had in the back of his mind. We might well ask, “Is God friendly?” for there can be no greater question. If God is friendly to mankind, all is well. If God is not friendly, we have no hope. . The real question, the first and final question for anyone, old or young, is the question of God. When that question is settled, every other question is settled.

### **The Question of God**

We are now coming to the crux of the question in regard to the meaning of life. This question can be settled only as the question of God is settled. If we settle first the question of God, the riddle of life is solved.

Note what the Bible says in regard to approaching God. “Without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He rewards them that diligently seek Him.” Hebrews 11:6.

Evolution destroys faith in a personal God. To an evolutionist, God may be a mighty, impersonal force, but not a Father, not a personal Being, in whose image we are made.

Years ago I attended a series of seven lectures on evolution in a certain university. The lecturer, a professor of biology, examined the different theories which claim to account for the existence of the universe as we know it. One of the lectures dealt with the creation theory as recorded in Genesis. When the time came for questions, one of the students asked:

“Does the theory of evolution admit of a fall such as is mentioned of Adam and Eve when they sinned in the garden?”

The professor answered that the very nature of the theory of evolution prohibited the idea of a fall. Evolution is an upward march. There can be no fall in the Bible sense.

The next question came quickly: “If there were no fall, would there be any need of a Savior?”

The speaker hesitated. Slowly he answered, “I do not wish to destroy the faith of anyone. But honesty compels me to admit, that if there were no fall, there would be no need of a Savior.”

No man can consistently believe in evolution and also believe in a Savior. Some evolutionists would like to retain faith in God; they do not like to be classed with the “godless,” and so they substitute for the Christian idea of God an impersonal force, powerful but cruel, a god whose chief creed, whose working policy, is the survival of the fittest. There could be no more anti-Christian conception than this.

He who would come to God “must believe that He is,” that He exists. That is the first condition and qualification of one who wishes to arrive at a satisfactory conception of life and duty, and his own place in the scheme of things.

Is there any way in which we may be assured of the existence of God and of His care for us? Any way in which we may know whether He is “friendly”? Note these words: “I know the thoughts that I think toward you, said the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.” Jeremiah 29:11.

These words were addressed to the Jews in captivity. It was natural for the people to think that God was angry with them, and that His thoughts toward them were far from being thoughts of peace. They were suffering for their sins, and it doubtless did not occur to them that under these circumstances God was planning for their future and was thinking kindly of them. But this very thing God Was doing. If they would only turn to Him, all would be well. “You shall go and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you. And you shall seek Me, and find Me, when you shall search for Me with all your heart.” Verses 12, 13.

This scripture is not the only one in the Bible which stresses the fact that God is our friend and that we can fully trust Him. In fact, it may be said that the prevailing message of the Bible is that of God’s interest in and love for men. There is not anything that He is not willing to do to help us.

God demonstrated this when Jesus was here upon earth. Remember that memorable evening when Christ instituted the Lord’s Supper. Remember how the Master knelt down and washed the disciples’ feet. Why did He do that? Why did He thus humble Himself? He wished to show that there is nothing, however lowly, that He will not do for anyone, however humble and sinful that person may be. That night Christ washed the feet of Judas and Peter. Did He know that Judas would betray Him? Did He know that Peter would deny Him? Yes, and yet despite this, He knelt before these men, washed their feet, and thus told them that He would do anything for them, that He would hold back nothing that would be for their good. It would seem that God could do no more than He has done to show us that He cares for us, that He is thinking of us, and that He is planning a future for us. God is our friend.

### **The Maker of the World**

The Bible begins with the simple statement of fact, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” It probably never occurred to the writers of the Bible that anyone could doubt God’s existence. Had not Moses talked with Him face to face? Had not Isaiah seen Him “high and lifted up”? Had not Ezekiel seen him in vision again and again? To those who had thus seen the Holy One of Israel, it would seem superfluous to present arguments for His existence. They knew Him, they had seen Him; they were eyewitnesses of His power and majesty.

The situation is not the same today. Millions of human beings do not know God, and see little, if any, of His handiwork. They live in cities in which they have small opportunity to become acquainted with nature, and consequently it holds no message for them. Thousands and even millions of city children have never seen a field of waving grain, or the majestic mountains, or the outstretched prairie. Incredible as it may seem, other millions have never seen a sunset a rainbow, or a falling star.

I shall never forget the thrill I experienced when for the first time I saw a star fall. Having been reared in a city, where the nightly illumination of the streets obscured the heavens, I had never seen much of the stars. But the summer I was twelve years old I spent in the country; and for the first time I really saw the heavens and the stars. And then one evening I saw star fall! I came home greatly excited. I had seen miracle. But no one else was excited. My family had all seen many a star fall. They did not seem to appreciate the feeling of wonder and awe that came to me as I saw what I had never seen before.

Some years ago I attended a series of lectures on mathematics in Washington, D.C. I remember that one of the teachers, a learned man, told of the possibilities of mathematics, and of the advances that had been made in science. He stated that it was possible to plot the exact path of two heavenly bodies as one revolved about the other. He illustrated this by the sun and the earth, which problem was comparatively easy. But mathematics could do more than this, he told us. Not only could science determine the paths of two such revolving bodies, but it could compute the path of a third body, like the moon, as it revolves about the earth. Then he added the significant statement that—at that time at least—science did not know enough to compute the path of one more body, a fourth. That caused me to think. There are a great many bodies in the universe. What a wonderful problem in mathematics they present! As one man put it:

“Whoever made the heavens and started things going, knew something about mathematics.” We agree with this. “The heavens are crystallized mathematics.”

What is made argues a maker. I am sitting before a table as I write. I do not know who made the table, but I am sure that somebody made it. If anyone should tell me that the table is made of wood, and that this wood grew somewhere, I would agree. But if I were told that the table grew as I see it before me, with four legs and a drawer, I would know better. In fact, no amount of argument could convince me that the table just “happened” to grow into a table, with legs, and drawer, and glue, and screws, and varnish, and polish, all complete. If my very life depended upon it, I would have to maintain that somebody put it together.

A manufacturer of meat grinders who had become a Christian decided that he would conduct an experiment concerning the theory of evolution. He had heard men say that God did not create the universe, but that in some way it evolved and came into its present form by a process of evolution. This did not seem reasonable to him; for as he considered the heavens he saw system, order, and exactitude everywhere.

He did not know much about theology, but he decided to try an experiment with his meat grinders. If the whole universe got together by chance, why might not the same thing happen to his meat grinders? So he decided to take the eighteen parts composing the meat grinder, put them separately in a bucket and shake the bucket, and see if the pieces would ever get together to make a meat grinder. But the moment he thought of that, he knew that his attempt would be useless. He knew that he could shake that bucket till doomsday and that a perfected meat grinder would never come forth. Somebody must put it together.

There is a great deal of good sense and good theology in that statement: Somebody must put it together. When we look at the heavens above, we can come to no other conclusion than that somebody must have put them together. And the Somebody must be a being of infinite power and wisdom and knowledge. No mere human being, however mighty or wise, could ever accomplish such a task. While a belief in God presents problems, there are more problems for those who do not believe in Him. In fact, though God cannot be accounted for through mere reasoning, and though He may not be fully understood, He is the only satisfactory explanation of the things we see all about us.

### **Mysteries Unsolved**

A young man once said to me, "I cannot believe in the things you preach. To me infinity and eternity are terms I do not understand. For instance, how can anyone believe that the universe is infinite?" I answered that even in view of Einstein's theory I had no more difficulty in believing it to be infinite than in believing it to be finite. To this he protested that if a person should start off into space and keep going in the same direction forever and ever, he would sometime come to the end, however large the universe might be. To this I answered, "When you come to the end, what then? What is there beyond a certain point? Is there a wall at the end, or an abyss, or what is there? Can you have space or anything end, and not have something beyond?"

The truth is that we are unable to conceive the infinite; we are just as unable to conceive the finite. And so with eternity. There is no way that the human mind can fully comprehend the problem of eternity. Some will assert that they can believe in an eternity to come, but that they are unable to think of an eternity in the past. A little thinking will make it clear, however, that there is no more difficulty in a past eternity than in a future eternity, and that there is no more difficulty with eternity than there is with time. Both are alike mysteries to the human mind.

There are those who affirm that they will not accept or believe anything which they cannot understand or prove. This is not a wise position; for there are so many of the common things of life that we know little about, yet take for granted. Take such things as life, death, space, matter, time, eternity, personality, and a thousand others. Who can define them? Who knows what they are? Some will answer that these words are all in the dictionary, and we need only to go there for definitions. I have a dictionary before me, and turn to "life" and read: "The quality or character which distinguishes an animal or a plant from inorganic or from dead organic bodies." That is, life is the fact of being alive, not dead. I turn to "death" and read: "Cessation of all vital functions without capability of resuscitation." That is, death is the fact of being dead. I remember the definition of life I learned in school: "Life is internal adjustment to external conditions." This was doubtless a good definition at the time, but it did not throw much light on the nature of life. The fact is that while we all know what it is to be alive, no one really knows what life is, or is able to define it.

The difficulty is a deeper one than that of mere definition, however. We really do not know what life is, nor can we explain death, or matter, or space. We are ignorant of many of the things with which we are in contact daily. To define death as the opposite of life, and life as the opposite of death, is merely reasoning in a circle, and is not very enlightening. While science has made great advance in late years and seems about to solve the question of what matter and life really are, we are still waiting for the final definition.

Indeed, if we were to believe only the things we know and can define, we would not get very far. Faith is needed in even the small things of life. In fact, without faith it is impossible to please either God or man; more than that, without faith it is impossible to carry on normal existence.

### **Faith to Believe**

At this I can hear someone say: Faith has no part in practical life. It is all right for Christians to have faith. But for me, I want something more solid; I believe only in what I can see and prove. No mere faith for me."

Consider this for a moment. No faith? Didn't I just see you hurrying to catch a train? You had faith that the train was coming, and that if you got there too late, you would miss it. I saw you go into a restaurant. You had faith that the cook had not poisoned the food. You gave the cashier a dollar bill for a fifty-five-cent meal and had faith that she would return to you the change. You boarded a streetcar marked "Main Street," and had faith that it would take you in the direction you wanted to go. You needed an operation and had faith enough in a surgeon to permit him to make you unconscious while he made a delicate and dangerous incision to remove an obstruction. You saw the X-ray photograph which had been taken; you also saw the place where the obstruction was said to be. To you it did not mean much. But you had faith in the doctor's diagnosis; you gave your life into his hands; it cost you many dollars, much suffering. And all this was grounded in faith in a man's opinion and skill.

And yet you say you have no faith? You would not drink a glass of water without faith. You would not take an automobile trip without faith. In fact, you would do nothing without faith. Without faith the bank would not take your check; without faith you would not accept a check from anyone; without faith you would not even accept a ten-dollar bill for services rendered. The bill might be counterfeit. Without faith business would cease, even life would cease.



If we thus live by faith in all our daily transactions, would it not be well to exercise at least a reasonable amount of faith in the matters which most intimately concern us and our spiritual welfare? Is it reasonable or good sense to exercise faith in all life's ordinary activities and omit it in the most important ones? We believe this to be neither sensible nor right.

### **Doubters Unconvinced**

Are there any arguments that will convince a man of the existence of God, if the man will not be convinced? To this I answer that I do not know of any arguments that will convince one of God's existence who does not wish to believe it, or who does not already so believe. This, to some, may seem to admit too much, but I believe it to be the truth. No one is so blind as the person who will not see.

I read a story once of a lawyer who was very cautious in expressing any view of which he was not absolutely convinced by personal investigation.

A friend was discussing religion with this lawyer as they were riding on the train. The friend was eager that the lawyer should accept Christianity, but the lawyer refused to believe in the existence of God because it could not be proved beyond a doubt. They were just passing a flock of white sheep. Said the friend, "You will at least admit that these sheep are white, won't you?" "I do not see that I need to admit this," answered the lawyer; "all I know is that they are white on the side nearest us. I do not know that they are white on the other side."

There is no hope of convincing a man who takes such an attitude on the existence of God. The preponderance of evidence, of course, is in favor of the fact that if a sheep is white on the right side, it is white also on the left. Though the lawyer perhaps was technically correct, the common opinion of mankind will not support such reasoning.

And so it is with the arguments for God's existence. There are many of these arguments, and they are valuable, but if a man will not believe them, we know of nothing that will convince him. However, not many persons take the attitude of the lawyer. We may therefore conclude that some of the arguments for the existence of God may be helpful to some.

A man sees protruding from a brick wall a revolving shaft which turns a complicated piece of machinery. He is greatly impressed with the wonderful power of the shaft, and marvels at its performance. Reason tells him that there is a motor or something on the other side of the wall that causes the shaft to revolve. But, being skeptical, he refuses to speculate on that which he does not know and cannot prove. He cannot see through the brick wall, and hence cannot affirm that there is anything beyond it. In order to be logical, he must therefore ascribe the power of the shaft to the shaft itself, though reason tells him that this cannot be so.

Technically this man may be correct. He cannot penetrate the wall, and does not know what is on the other side, but sound reasoning would tell him that there must be something there adequate to produce the effect he sees. Any other reasoning would stultify the intellect and limit its capacity for knowledge.

It is admitted that no one has ever seen God, and therefore it may be reasoned that He does not exist. We do not believe, however, that this reasoning is correct or logical. The man may not know what is on the other side of the wall of which we spoke; but it is evident to him that something is there. For him to assert that because he has not been on the other side of the wall and cannot see through it, therefore there is nothing there, is not sound reasoning. In like manner, for a man to contend that there is no God because he has not seen Him, must be classified as reasoning having no adequate ground.

### **Knowledge Is Not Character**

The words recorded in John 7:17 announce a principle that applies to this discussion: "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself."

This text states that if any man will do God's will, he shall know of the doctrine. An unprincipled man may study music and become very proficient in it. A man with low personal standards may study chemistry or any of the other sciences and gain a profound knowledge of his subject. A surgeon may be highly skillful in his profession, and this skill be entirely out of proportion to his own personal rectitude. Ordinarily speaking, a man's knowledge is not dependent upon his private character or upon what he believes about God.

With religion, however, it is different. God does not subject Himself to the test-tube method of examination. He does not propose to reveal Himself to such persons as are merely curious or interested in research. He states that unless a man intends to do His will, he shall not know of the doctrine or of God. No man by mere reasoning can find out God. "Can thou by searching find out God? Can thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" Job 11:7.

If we accept the principles here enunciated, we understand clearly why some men are unable to find God by the methods they use. Only the man who intends to do God's will can ever find God. This may be the reason why so much that is written about God is untrue. Men have tried to find out about Him without wishing to do His will. God says that this is not possible.

Only the Christian is a competent witness for God. Only he who is willing to do God's will can be a competent witness or should be accepted as such. He who refuses to comply with the conditions governing a knowledge of God must be ruled out where any question of God is concerned.

### **Support for Faith**

The Christian everywhere finds evidence sufficient for His belief in the existence of God. He sees exhibited on every side wonderful power which speaks to him of a Creator. He sees evidence of marvelous design in the smallest thing as well as in the greatest, and concludes that there is an Intelligence behind the universe adequate to its creation and preservation. He sees a

wonderful adaptation of means to an end, and the most reasonable conclusion to him is that a God exists who has planned and created all things and upholds them by the word of His power. A short time ago I visited the Mesa Verde Park, where the cliff dwellers lived centuries ago. Our party climbed down the steep ladders to the almost inaccessible places in which these people had carved rooms and caves out of the rocks where they might dwell in peace and security. They had apparently been driven to this by stronger tribes who had taken possession of the lands that belonged to them. To escape complete destruction, they fled to the mountains, where they hoped to live in safety and tranquillity.

However, even there they were not left alone. Something happened; we do not know what. It was probably an attack of their enemies; for suddenly the cave dwellers left, and no further trace of them has been found. Their pots, pans, and crude furniture are intact, apparently in the same condition as when they were in use by the inhabitants centuries ago.

As we looked at these holes and caves and passageways, we wondered what kind of people had lived there. Reckoning from the new science which men have discovered by which the particular time in the world's history in which a tree lived and grew can accurately be determined, we know just when these people lived and the year when the trees were cut down which they used in their building operations. We saw samples of their pottery and weaving, some of which exhibit a rather high degree of skill. But who the cliff dwellers were or what became of them, we do not know.

It does not occur to anyone, however, to deny the existence of such a people. We, of course, did not see them, nor did those who first discovered the cave dwellings. Centuries have passed since they lived there; yet the evidence of their existence is so convincing that no one questions it. We know that a people with sufficient intelligence to construct what we saw before our eyes, once lived there. It would be folly to argue otherwise.

### **God Is the Explanation**

By parity of reasoning, I am compelled to believe in the existence of God. Man can do mighty things, but no man is capable of making a single star, not to speak of the system of worlds, innumerable and infinite in extent. Man is not capable of making a mountain or an ocean. He cannot make even a lowly blade of grass. Creation is a closed field to him. The greatest miracle of all would be to believe that these things had created themselves and that the wonderful arrangement and laws through which they function are accidents of nature. Such reasoning violates all laws of evidence or common sense. God is the only explanation of what we see.

The, highest evidence, however, of God's existence is not found in nature or in anything created. It is found in man himself. If any man will do His will, he shall know Him. The man who has had his sins forgiven; the man whose whole attitude toward life has been changed. The man who has found a power available to him, not only for the forgiveness of sin, but for victory over it. The man who has felt in his own being the power of the life to come and has seen in the transformation of lives round about him evidence of a power superior to anything that man can produce, needs no further proof of the existence of God. To him all reasoning regarding whether God exists or not seems superfluous. He knows, because he has in his own life experienced a power that only God can supply.

To those who may read this who are not sure of the existence of God, we would say that no intellectual proof will ever be fully satisfying. Only the man who will do God's will can really know Him. As this is the condition for knowledge, we know of no better way to prove God's existence than to invite those who do not know God experimentally to lose no time in finding Him in the only way in which He can be found, by doing His will. Thus we can have the blessed assurance in our own hearts.

## **A Message From the Unknown**

GOD has revealed Himself in nature. , In mountain and plain, in sea and sky, in rain and sunshine, in storm and earthquake, in heaven and on earth-wherever he turns, the discerning student finds evidence of an overruling providence.

God's revelation of Himself in nature is one of three great revelations. Important as this revelation is, the others are still more so. At this time we shall discuss the second of these disclosures of God, the one He has made of Himself in His Word, the Bible.

Much has been written about the Bible-in fact, more than about any other book in existence. It is loved and hated, exalted and despised, defended and attacked, above any other book. This in itself makes it outstanding among literary productions; and whether one believes or disbelieves its message, no intelligent person can afford not to be conversant with its claims.

### **The Bible Cannot Be Ignored**

The claims which the Bible makes for itself are high, so high indeed that if they are not true, they amount to blasphemy. The Bible claims to speak for God, to be God's voice to man, to interpret God to man. It claims to point the way to heaven, to be an infallible guide to man here on earth, and to present the only solution to the riddle of existence. It claims inspiration for itself; it claims the power to judge men's thoughts and actions, and the right to correct and punish those who disobey its precepts. It sets itself above the opinions and judgment of mankind, claims superiority over the conscience, and professes the right to decide the eternal destiny of every human being.

A book such as this cannot be dismissed with a shrug of the shoulders. If it had been popular for a few years only and had then gone into the discard, it might perhaps be ignored. But this Book has existed for centuries and millenniums, and is still a vital force to be reckoned with. It is not merely the ignorant and the superstitious who cling to it. It can truly be said that the most intelligent among men revere it highly; that the nations who have accepted its teachings are the most progressive and humane; and that whatever civilization still remains among men is a result of its influence. There is no worthy human endeavor that is not traceable to its teachings, whether it be prison reforms, hospitals, schools, liberty of thought and expression, humane legislation,

position of women, consideration for the weak and unfortunate-all stem from and have their ground in this Book which claims to come from heaven.

The Bible cannot safely be ignored, nor does it admit of compromise. It must either be accepted for what it claims to be, or rejected for the same reason. A man cannot, may not, must not, remain neutral on the issue of the Bible.

What, then, is the Bible? A collection of writings from many authors, including priests, prophets, kings, and ordinary people. It was not written at any one time or in any one age of the world. The time of its composition covers a period of considerably more than a millennium.

Despite these conditions, the Bible presents a remarkable unity of viewpoint and purpose; and a deep, consistent philosophy underlies the work of its many authors. It does not cater to the weakness or frailty of mankind. From its opening pages sin is condemned, righteousness is exalted, and no man is given any hope of future bliss who does not harmonize his life with the rules of conduct clearly laid down therein. The rich are not exalted, nor are the poor despised. A man is not judged by his wealth or his position or by his lack of either. The only things that count in the sight of God and the Bible are a pure heart, honest intention, and a willingness to follow the light as it is revealed. Not to be ministered unto, but to minister, is one of the great lessons it inculcates.

Not many people have an intelligent knowledge of what the Bible contains. There are young people who have grown up in Christian homes who know but little of the Book of books. I attended a university once where the teacher asked the students to look up certain facts about Adam and Eve. The class was composed mostly of graduate students, with a few seniors in attendance. Out of about forty students eleven had no knowledge of where to look for the information. When they were told that they would find the facts they wanted in Genesis, they were no better off. Where and what was Genesis?

Some of those who have little knowledge of the Bible are nevertheless very positive that they do not believe it. Such knowledge as they have of the Book is often derived from remarks concerning it which they have heard or read. I am convinced that if such persons would give the Bible a fair chance to prove itself, would intelligently and discerningly read it, they would find that whatever claims have been made for it are amply justified by its contents.

As a boy I sang in a large boys' choir of one of the state churches in my native country, Denmark. The structure was of imposing appearance, built in the Gothic style of the medieval churches. The choir loft was at the rear of the church, high above the congregation, mostly out of sight. But we boys were not out of sight or hearing of the minister as he mounted the stairs leading to the pulpit, which was fastened to one of the massive pillars some ten feet above the people, near the middle of the church. Here the minister would expound the Scriptures at length, and in the course of a few years we boys gained a somewhat clear conception of the contents of the Bible.

On many occasions we were permitted to leave as soon as the preliminary hymns were ended and the sermon had begun-and oh, how quietly we tiptoed down the long, narrow, winding staircase to the ground. But we had to be back in good time for the closing hymns. To ensure our return in time, one of the boys who was acquainted with the routine and could tell from the "firstly," "secondly," "thirdly" just how the minister was progressing, was left as a lookout to notify us, so that we would be back in our places in time when the "finally" was expounded.

Altogether too often I was chosen to be the one to remain. While that was considered a position of trust and thus had a certain honor attached to it, it did not make up for the loss I sustained in not being able to be out with the rest of the boys doing exploits in the hour or more that the sermon lasted. As a kind of revenge, occasionally I called in the boys earlier than was strictly necessary. But most of the time I gave them the benefit of my experience in judging the length of sermons, and thus they escaped having to listen too long to that which some of them did not understand and in which few of them were interested.

During those years I gained a considerable general knowledge of the Bible that stood me in good stead later on. Not that I had any special faith in the inspiration of the Scriptures-those were the days of Ingersoll, and infidelity was especially attractive to young minds-but I did get an idea of the contents of the Bible, so that I could talk reasonably intelligently about it with others. I am recounting this as a background for some experiences that came to me later, which I shall give with the hope that they may be of some help to others who may be passing through a difficult way.

### **A Bible Believer Cornered**

I spent a few years of my young manhood in Canada near the border line of the United States. Having considerable leisure time, I read a great deal, especially atheistic literature. I was greatly delighted whenever I found something that might be used to puzzle or disturb the primitive faith of some of the good people in the neighborhood. Among them was a young minister in whom I was particularly interested. I believed him to be honest and sincere. He was a great stickler for the inerrancy of the Scriptures.

I well remember when I first noted in the Bible that God not only fed the Israelites manna during the forty years they were in the wilderness, but also preserved their clothing and shoes so that they did not wear out. The reading is:

"I have led you forty years in the wilderness: your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot." Deuteronomy 29:5.

Some such arrangement would, of course, be necessary; for there was no opportunity in Israel's forty years of wandering to replenish their wardrobes. But I had never known of this arrangement before, and it seemed an excellent opportunity to harass my young ministerial friend.



It did not take me long to get to his residence. I led the conversation around to the Bible, which was always a welcome subject to him. I then stated my new “find” and asked him whether he believed that. He was a little taken aback, for neither had he read it.

“Does it say that in the Bible?” he queried.

We read the statement.

“Well,” he said, “I do not know anything about how this was done, but whatever the Bible says, I believe.” “You really believe that neither the shoes nor the clothes of the Israelites wore out for full forty years?” I asked, to make sure I had an unqualified statement, from him.

“Yes, I believe all that is in the Bible,” he came back. “I cannot understand it all, but I believe it.” Then came my crowning argument. I had conceived a bright idea, and out it came.

“Do you mean to tell me that you believe that their clothes did not wear out for forty years? What happened to the clothes of a baby newly born? Am I supposed to believe that as he grew older, and his clothes did not wear out, they grew as the boy grew? You don’t really mean that the garments grew with the boy? Tell me, do you believe that?”

“I suppose so,” he answered weakly, his faith dimming a little.

I went away happy. I had gained a great victory. I had shown the fallacy of unquestioned faith in the Bible. I was a hero.

Then, as I began to think, a queer, sinking feeling suddenly overpowered me. I remembered how it had been in my home. When the older boys outgrew their clothes, we smaller ones inherited them. Might the Israelites not have followed the same custom? Instead of the clothes growing with the boy, were they simply handed down to the next smaller one? My “smartness” which I had so much admired did not look so smart now. Had I simply made a fool of myself? Apparently.

I was not as happy as when I started out. But I had learned a lesson, an effective one that I would not forget. And the solution to this particular problem was so ridiculously simple! Perhaps in the future I had better not be so sure of my own smartness; perhaps it would be better to do a little thinking before speaking.

### **Unsolved Problems**

There are some things in the Bible not easy to understand. This is as it should be. If there were no problems in the Bible, men would be likely to underestimate its value, thinking it to be for children only. As it is, there is enough simple, plain instruction to satisfy the child and at the same time there is also that which will tax the greatest minds in the world.

Most young people pass through a stage in their experience in which they feel perfectly confident of successfully attacking any problem. They have an idea that the world began about the time they were born, and that while there were people living in earlier ages, they had accomplished very little, but that now the time has come for action. This feeling is not an unmixed evil. It would be too bad if young people felt that everything worth while had already been done before they were born and that there was very little for them to do. Far better that they should have a desire to tackle and solve some of the problems that have remained unsolved for generations than that they should rest satisfied with things as they are. And the uncomfortable thing about this for older people is that some of the young people actually do find a solution to things their elders have given up. They bring to the task a fresh viewpoint, new energy, and unwearied optimism. We need to thank God for young people.

This does not mean that young people are always wise; and especially in the later teen age do they need to watch themselves. They begin to earn money, they become increasingly independent; they learn for the first time that there are things that need attention, problems that call for solution, and they are willing to try their hand at them. It is at this age that they are most susceptible to religion, and it is also at this age that they are likely to take up with all kinds of isms and radical movements unless they are balanced by religion and good sense.

It was at this age that I engaged in a number of discussions with religious people. Some of these experiences I am not very proud of as I think of them in retrospect. Nevertheless, in certain ways they helped me later on; for some of the problems with which I came face to face in my ministry were really the same old problems that I had considered years before. When some young man would come to me with some “smart” question, and I recalled that it was the same that I had propounded years before, I knew a little better how to answer him. It is not hard to tell the difference between questioners who are in earnest and those who just wish to quibble. They need different treatment, and a little experience will prepare one not only to answer certain questions, but also to help those who really want help.

It is a good thing to learn that there are things we do not know, and that no one should be ashamed to confess ignorance when he really does not know. I have known teachers who would never admit to their students that there were questions to which they had no solution. They seemed to think it incumbent upon them to explain everything, and that if they did not do so, they had failed.

Young people are not fools. They know when a teacher knows, and when he is just “stalling.” It is far better at times to say plainly, “I do not know.” Those concerned will have greater respect for the one being questioned when an honest answer is given. The young people know that the teacher does not know all things, and make allowance for it. It would be well if the teacher knew as much and was willing to admit it.

The truth is that there are questions in the Bible which are really hard, and which generations of thinkers have had to leave unsolved. We want hard problems, and do not want a book from heaven in which every problem has been solved. We want something to work on.

It may seem to some that all problems should be capable of a simple answer; but that is not the case. There are some things that are so involved that they require more than a simple yes or no.

## **Not Always a Simple Answer**

A young married man once came to me with a question of the kind here mentioned. He demanded a straight answer, yes or no. I told him that I could not answer it that way. He was insistent, and at last became almost abusive when I refused to answer him as he wanted.

“That is the way you preachers do,” he said; “when we get you in a corner and demand a definite answer, you try to crawl out of the predicament you are in. Why don’t you answer me either yes or no? You can do it if you want to.”

I tried to explain to him that his question was of such a nature that it did not admit of being answered in the way he asked. But he was insistent.

At last I decided that he was one of those to which the statement in the Bible may be applied: “Answer a fool according to his own folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.” Proverbs 26:5. He might not have been a fool, but he acted like one, and I thought I would try that text on him.

He had insisted that I answer him in his own chosen way; so at last I asked him, “If I ask you a question, will you answer yes or no?”

“I certainly will,” he said; “ask me anything you wish.”

I then asked him the old question which I had read somewhere years before.

“Friend,” I said, “answer me yes or no: ‘Have you stopped beating your wife?’ No evasion now, yes or no.” He hesitated. If he answered yes, he admitted that he had beaten her. If he answered no, he admitted that he had not stopped doing so. He learned a lesson right there.

It always pays to be modest and not presume to know too much. We will be far better off if we admit that there are things which we do not know, and that we ourselves are looking for answers to certain things. I used to think that I must solve every question put to me. Then I suddenly came upon the good advice that every man should have a compartment in his brain into which he can put things that he cannot understand, instead of worrying over them. There they may remain until light is received on them. I immediately arranged for such a compartment, and oh, what a relief it was not to feel under compulsion to settle all matters immediately! I had the quaint idea that as I grew older the compartment could decrease in size; but to my amazement I find that it is still growing. Once in a while I take out a few things that have been solved; but I have a new problem, or perhaps more than one, to take the place of every one solved. My compartment is still growing.

We sometimes take it for granted that people know more of the Bible than they do. The truth is that while a Bible is found in most homes, it is often the least read of all books.

At one time I was visiting a home in Chicago in which the people were interested in religion. I picked up the family Bible, and was astonished to find a twenty-dollar bill in it. The wife made the simple explanation that they kept their money in the Bible because it was the safest place in the house. Nobody ever opened that Book. I have heard other ministers tell of similar incidents. This particular one was a personal experience.

## **Why Does the Bible Attract Men?**

What about the Bible? Why do men cherish it? Why do men hold on to it? Why is it still the most popular book? It is not because it is easy reading or pleasing to men’s vanity. It is not because it flatters men or nations, not because it presents its heroes as faultless, or even nearly so. It is not because its writers were great and learned men; for while some of them were indeed great, most of them were just common people, unlearned fishermen, common shepherds, even publicans and tax gatherers. Its popularity and the reverence in which it is held are based upon different grounds.

There is no book that deals so harshly and fearlessly with sin as does the Bible. It may picture to us David, full of courage and valor, successfully challenging the mighty Goliath. It may picture him as a good and wise king, who extended his rule from one sea to the other. But it will just as faithfully record his failings, and will not in the least minimize his sins.

It will present Peter as eminent among the apostles, through whose preaching’ three thousand were converted in a day, but it will just as faithfully tell of his failure, his cowardice, his base denial of the Master in the most critical hour of earth’s history. This is not the way in which writers are wont to present their heroes. Such portrayal does not please human vanity. Yet, despite this, the Bible has retained its popularity through these many centuries.

We can account for the hold which the Bible has had on succeeding generations only by the fact that it perfectly fills man’s needs, answers to his conscience, and is a guide to the solution of the deeper mysteries of existence and of the soul. In the final analysis man comes to realize that the Bible knows more about him than he knows about himself; that it faithfully tells him the exact truth to which his own conscience gives witness; that it condemns him when he is at fault and commends him when he does well. That it is a perfect mirror of the soul, which, without flattery or distortion, lets him see himself as he is in reality; and his whole being bears testimony to the truth of the revelation. Man’s own experience throughout the centuries has proved the Bible’s estimate of him to be true, and man in his inmost self is convinced of the truth of the estimate.

The Bible agrees with man’s best conscience. As the mirror reveals the physical features, so the Bible reveals man’s inmost nature. And he knows the revelation to be true, even though the picture is not flattering. Also, it holds before him the perfect standard of conduct. This, we believe, is the real ground for the Bible’s hold upon man throughout the centuries. This correspondence between man’s own conviction of righteousness and the Bible’s condemnation of sin, explains the hold which the Bible has on mankind. Man’s best conscience and the Bible agree.

## Through Darkness to Light

WHEN God made man, He also prepared a home for him. This was the Garden of Eden. God Himself “planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.” Genesis 2:8, 9.

It must have been a wonderful experience for Adam and Eve suddenly to find themselves in existence. They had had no childhood, but with all the delight of children they went from place to place, rejoicing in the wonderful things that had been made for them. Flowers exquisite in beauty, trees laden with luscious fruit, birds flitting from branch to branch, singing the joy of their existence, animals, large and small, playfully running about eager to serve their masters-how wonderful life must have seemed to our first parents!

After six days’ work “the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.” Genesis 2:1. But one thing remained to be done: the Sabbath had not yet been made. As the sun was setting slowly and splendidly on the wonderful sixth day of the week, the seventh day, the Sabbath of the Lord, was about to begin, the day which the Lord was to sanctify and to bless and then give to man. There have been thousands of sunsets since that first Sabbath sun set on earth, but never one so glorious. With what awe Adam must have watched as heaven joined earth in Sabbath keeping. God deigns to dwell with man, and together they observe His holy day from sunset to sunset.

God must be a lover of beauty. On what other ground can we account for the beauty of a sunset? There is no reason why God should tint the heavens with all the glory of Paradise, just to have the sun go down. He could have merged light into darkness as prosaically as we do when we turn off an electric light.

But instead of doing this, He causes the light gradually to fade, paints an ever-changing display of most gorgeous cloud formations, illumines the heavens with His glory, and sends man to sleep filled with awe at the wonderful artistry and love of His Creator. Only a lover of beauty would ever conceive of doing such a simple thing in such an exquisitely beautiful way.

Only a lover of beauty would think of having a million flowers bloom unseen, of putting pearls in the ocean and amethysts among the rocks. God loves’ beauty. God loves flowers. And God loves men.

Man’s introduction to life was God and the Sabbath. His first full day of life was spent in holy rest with God. What an impression this must have made on his mind! As long as Adam lived, that first Sabbath was ever fresh in his memory.

### A Test of Obedience

This first man had been given life on condition of obedience. While God had given Adam life arbitrarily, its continuance depended upon his own decision. He had been afforded a taste of what life held for him, and now he was told the conditions on which he might have it continued. As God had created him with freedom of choice, it was necessary to test him, that he might have an opportunity to make known his choice.

In the midst of the garden were two trees, one the tree of life, the other the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Of the first-as with all other trees in the garden-he might freely eat. Of the second, God said, “Thou shall not eat of it: for in the day that thou eats thereof thou shall surely die.” Genesis 2:17.

From these statements we learn that Adam might continue to have life if he obeyed God’s command, but that disobedience would bring sure and certain death. Obey and live, or disobey and perish, was the dictum.

When God gave man the right to think and to choose his own course of action, He thereby to a certain extent limited Himself. He could thenceforth not enforce obedience as He could of inanimate creation and the lower forms of life. He must wait upon man’s decision, and if man should decide to oppose God, He could not compel him to do right, but could only counsel and admonish him, as the very term “freedom of will” excludes compulsion. Under these circumstances many adjustments would be necessary, should Man decide to go contrary to God’s expressed will.

It would not be fair, however, to hasten man’s decision unduly. Much was at stake, and Adam must be fully instructed so that he would know the full consequences of whatever choice he might make. This instruction would take time. We do not know how long Adam was in Eden before the climax came, but some little time must have elapsed.

It must have been with infinite sadness that heaven witnessed the fall of man. Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, disobeyed God’s command, and thus rebelled against Him. God and the angels had done all that could be done to help and instruct them, but man chose to go his own way.

### No Reason for Rebellion

We are at a loss to understand why Adam and Eve disobeyed God’s direct command. There were hundreds and probably thousands of trees in the garden of which they might freely eat, and there was only one that was forbidden them. Why, oh why, must they choose to eat of that one forbidden tree? It seems so unreasonable. Indeed, there is no reason.

If there had been a thousand trees in Eden’s garden and God had told Adam that he might not eat of the nine hundred and ninety-nine, but only of one certain tree, we see no reason why Adam should not have been perfectly happy in doing as God said. Or if there had been a thousand trees and God had told Adam that he might eat of the nine hundred and ninety-nine but not of one certain tree, it would seem utterly inexcusable for him to seek out that one tree and deliberately eat of it. But this is exactly what he did. In doing this, Adam was in effect telling God that while he wanted life, he wanted it on his own conditions.

Did Adam know the result of the choice he was making? Or had he not been fully instructed? Did Eve know that the tree of which she ate was the forbidden tree? We must admit that they both knew full well what they did. Eve, before eating, told the serpent that "God had said, You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die." Genesis 3:1 She knew what she was doing when she ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

"And Adam was not deceived." 1 Timothy 2:14. He also knew what he did. There was no excuse for either of them. With their eyes open, they transgressed.

This transgression on the part of our first parents clearly demonstrates that they were not convinced of the need of unquestioned obedience. If they could not stand this most easy of all tests, it would not be safe to entrust them with life. They were evidently in need of some very pointed lessons, if they were to measure up to what God had in mind for them. Their protestations that they would henceforth be obedient would need to be buttressed with actual demonstrations of their willingness and ability to resist temptations of a severer nature than the one by which they had been confronted and overcome. Without such further tests their promises would have little weight or significance. God had told them that their transgression would bring death-not only or necessarily as a matter of punishment, but as a natural result of sin. This and many other things must be demonstrated to them in a way that could not be misunderstood.

It is doubtful that Adam and Eve fully understood the heinous nature of sin and the fearful consequences it would bring. It would have been hard for them to believe that their "little" sin of taking of the forbidden fruit would bring such serious consequences. Was it not a comparatively innocent thing they had done? They had not killed anybody. They had not taken the name of the Lord in vain. They had not broken the Sabbath. All they had done was to take a little fruit of inconsequential value. Was there any need of making a great ado over this? At worst, it was a little indiscretion for which they were sorry, and they would never yield to temptation and transgress again.

### **Human Nature Depraved**

But there was far more involved than this. They had sown a seed that would spring up and bear fruit. Something had happened to their character that could not be measured by the value of the fruit taken.

What had happened? To estimate this we must look at the fruits of their transgression. What were these fruits? There was murder in the first generation after the fall. Brother killed brother, Cain killed Abel. (Genesis 4:8) There was the complete corruption of the whole earth in the seventh generation. "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Genesis 6:5. "Only evil." What a condition! And only evil "continually." No hope. All that God could do was to blot men from the earth. Thus in seven generations one little sin ruined the whole earth! But even this was not enough. When sin reached its climax, man took the Son of God and hanged Him on a tree. This was sin come to full fruition.

Could Adam and Eve have believed this if they had been told? Could they have believed that in the little "indiscretion" which they committed was wrapped all the evil in the world, even the murder of the Son of God? Yet this was the lesson they must learn before it would be safe to admit them to the abode of bliss.

We need to learn the same lesson. The Bible from the very beginning seeks to impress the lesson that little sins are great sins in their consequences.

It was only a little sin that Eve committed. It was only a little sin that kept Moses out of the Promised Land. He smote the rock instead of speaking to it. (Numbers 20:11) It was only a little sin that caused Lot's wife to turn into a pillar of salt. All that she did was to look around. (Genesis 19:26) It was only a little lie that caused the death of Ananias and Sapphira. (Acts 5:1-10) But all these little acts had the seed of death in them. Little rattlesnakes are also snakes. The plea of the horse thief that all he had done was to pick up a rope-and how was he to know that a horse was attached to the other end of the rope? Will not do. Whoever takes the first step in sin is responsible for what follows. We need to be careful.

Satan never plays fair. He always attacks a man when he is down, or weak, or unable to defend himself. He will sneak up from behind and stab a man in the back. He will attack the helpless Christ child and attempt to kill Him; he will attack Christ in the wilderness when He is emaciated and weak from hunger; he will torment Christ on the cross when He hangs there helpless. He is evil and only evil, and neither he nor his friends can be trusted in the smallest matter.

At one time I was preaching on Fullerton Avenue in Chicago. We had a string quartet in which I played the cello-not very proficiently, it must be confessed, especially in view of the fact that two of the other men were music teachers.

One night after we had played, a man came to the platform, partly under the influence of liquor. With some difficulty he inquired of me, "Did you ever play that thing before?" referring to the cello. I admitted that I had not played much. "Let me have it," he said. I invited him to come back when he was sober, and I would try him out.

He came back. And how he could play! He played till tears ran down the faces of those not ordinarily affected by music. He kept coming back to our meetings again and again, and at last accepted Christ.

Then one day I received a hurry-up message. The man had committed suicide. The bottle had been too much for him. He had taken a drink, and the shame and disgrace of what he had done overwhelmed him. It was one of the saddest funerals at which I ever officiated. Talents, money, reputation, heaven, all gone! In a weak moment

Satan had attacked him. And now Satan gloated while heaven wept. No, Satan never plays fair.

### **A Fence or an Ambulance**

Some time ago I attended Sabbath school in a small church. It was children's day, and the children were speaking "pieces," singing songs, and conducting the exercises usual on such occasions. My mind was far away, for I was not particularly interested in what was doubtless of supreme interest to them.

After a while a group of little ones appeared on the platform and began a discussion regarding whether they should buy an ambulance or build a fence. I began to pay attention, for I thought that that was a most unusual subject. An ambulance -or a fence! There did not seem much sense in buying either; and what did this have to do with Sabbath school, anyway?

As the story unfolded-and I am sure that I do not have it correct in detail-I began to understand that there was a deep philosophy behind the apparently irrelevant subject. I had not heard the first part of the story, as I have said, but when I became aware of what was going on, the youngsters were discussing what to do with the children who were hurt.

It seems that the boys and girls of whom they were speaking played on some high cliff that had no protecting fence around its edge, and that occasionally some of them would fall down and be hurt, more or less seriously. Good people in the valley had been taking care of the victims of such accidents, but they felt that they needed an ambulance in order to get them to the hospital as soon as possible. That raised the question of whether it might not be better to erect a fence at the edge of the cliff, so that no more children would fall down, rather than merely to help them after they had fallen.. Now, this story may have been used in a hundred Sabbath schools, but it was new to me. And though I did not get the details, I have the point in mind clearly; and it is this that I wish to emphasize, for there is good sense and theology in it.

Too many people think that God's plan of salvation consists merely in picking up men after they have fallen, cleaning them up, and healing their wounds. This is indeed a part of the plan, but it is far from being the whole plan. That is merely getting an ambulance after the damage is done. God's full plan includes the erecting of a fence so that man will not fall and that hence no ambulance will be needed. That is, His plan is not merely one of forgiveness of sin, but also one of its prevention.

Too many people are satisfied to have their sins forgiven and rest right there. They are glad for, and rejoice in, the ambulance. They think it is wonderful that God will pick up a man after he has fallen, put him in a fine, clean ambulance, and take him to the hospital for complete restoration. They thank God for the ambulance, and rightly so. But something more is needed. A good strong fence would save many from becoming cripples.

When Adam and Eve sinned, they "fell." An ambulance was needed, and it was promptly provided. Forgiveness was graciously extended by God, and their lives were spared. But God well understood that more than forgiveness was needed. Something must be done to prevent further falls, or the whole plan would merely become one of picking up human wrecks after they had fallen; and nothing would be done to prevent recurrences.

It is evident from this that the plan of salvation, to be complete, must include two things: it must provide forgiveness for those who have fallen, and it must include some arrangement that will keep contrite sinners from falling again.

Forgiveness of sin is a wonderful thing. What could be greater or more soul satisfying than to know of a surety that our sins are forgiven, that all is right between us and God! Such a thought brings peace and, happiness to a heart weary of sin, and fills it with joy and gladness. It is heaven itself.

But as surely as forgiveness of sins is one of the greatest joys of a Christian, it may easily become a snare and delusion unless rightly used. And the trouble is that forgiveness is often more abused than used. Perhaps an illustration will make clear what I have in mind.

### **Forgiveness Not Enough**

The pastor of a large church is visiting his members in their homes and in due course calls upon Brother Doe. To his astonishment the pastor finds Mr. Doe under the influence of liquor. "Well, brother," he exclaims in astonishment, "what are you doing Drinking?"

"Certainly," answers Brother Doe, "and I have been doing it for a long time. It is a great comfort to me." "But don't you know that you ought not to do that?" the pastor asks. "You have been a member of the church for years and ought to know better."

"Pastor," answers Brother Doe, "I have had-great light since you were here last. Some of you Christians act as though you have never heard of God's willingness to forgive sin. Does the Bible not say that we ought to forgive each other even seventy times seven? And if we are to forgive, will not God do the same and more? Some of you are not using the forgiving power of God. In fact, some of you preachers say that we of the congregation should live in such a way that God would have little chance to forgive us. I believe that God loves to forgive. Why should I not give Him a chance to do this for me? I tell you, pastor, I believe in the forgiving power of God more than you do."

The pastor looks in astonishment at Brother Doe. "I am afraid that you are on the wrong track," he responds. "It is true that God will forgive, and it is true that God will forgive seventy times seven if need be. But you are misusing His grace. God will not only forgive, but He will also keep you from falling. What you need, Brother Doe, is the keeping power of God, as well as His forgiveness.



Do not presume on God's forgiveness. Ask God to forgive you your transgression. It is a grievous thing you have done. But He will even now forgive you, if you will thoroughly repent. But do not fall back into your evil habits. The same God that forgives can also keep you from falling. Ask God for power to save you from the wicked habit you have acquired. He can and will help you."

"Thank you," answers Brother Doe, "but I have been doing this a long while, and God has continued to forgive me. I think I will stick to my bottle and trust to His forgiveness."

This story illustrates what we have in mind when we say that forgiveness, wonderful as it is, may be misused and become a snare and a delusion. Too many Christians trust to the forgiveness of God, when His keeping power is right at hand. These persons are deceiving themselves and making of none effect the grace of our heavenly Father.

### **Kept From Sinning**

By a sovereign act God can forgive; but if He is to keep a man from sinning without violating the man's personal freedom of choice, a change must take place in the man, a change that can be brought about only by the power of God coupled with the lively cooperation of the man. I stress this point, for too many have come to think that salvation is merely a negative experience which demands yielding to God as the chief and only thing on man's part, while God does all the rest. This theory is indeed true, but only up to a certain point. We must not forget the texts that demand striving, fighting, agonizing of man in order that he may gain the victory.

There is a positive as well as a negative side to Christianity, and each has its definite place. Some ministers stress one aspect, some another, often to the confusion of the hearers. Let no man believe that yielding is all there is to Christianity. That is the negative aspect, which must be balanced by the positive. We are still to resist the devil, we are still to gain victories on our own account through the grace and power of God. Life is a battle, Christianity is a battle. Christianity is forceful, dynamic, progressive, positive, as well as yielding, surrendering, negative. Let us give the rightful place and time to these needed virtues. Only thus will we have a balanced character, a balanced religion, a balanced experience.

God's plan of salvation is not exhausted in forgiveness. There is more to salvation than that. There must be complete restoration of man to the original purpose which God had in his creation. He must be restored through the wonderful power of forgiveness to the estate which Adam had before his fall, and then the power of God must be applied to keep him from falling again. He must be tested as was Adam, and he must stand the test. This alone will satisfy God. His plan is to develop a people who will at last stand upon the sea of glass, fully conquerors, having the palms of victory in their hands. They will "keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Revelation 14:12.

### **Object Lessons in Salvation**

Throughout the ages God's people have only occasionally risen above the conception that forgiveness of sin is all that God's plan comprehended or man's sinfulness permitted. When the sacrificial system was instituted, its chief concern was the forgiveness of sin. Every day men brought their offerings and went away with the assurance that their sins were forgiven and their record was clear. Every day the priests went into the first apartment of the sanctuary, sprinkled the blood, and obtained forgiveness for whatever sins they carried. Daily Israel's praise ascended to the God of heaven who forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin. The sacrificial service, though it was a "ministration of death," was glorious. (2 Corinthians 3:7)

But there was something still more glorious. This was clearly indicated in the yearly service on the Day of Atonement. On that day sins were not merely forgiven, they were blotted out-in type, it is true, but nevertheless prophetic of that time when sins shall be no more and the instigator of sins shall perish miserably, together with those who still are his followers. Not till this is accomplished is the plan of salvation completed. God will at last have a clean universe, from which sin and sinners are forever banished.

The One appointed of God to carry this plan to a successful completion is our Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus. His is no little task, for it has involved His incarnation, suffering, and death. But it involves more than that. It involves the changing of men's hearts, it involves winning men back to the paths of righteousness. God could give Himself; God could give His Son. By an act of will this could be accomplished. But not so easily-we say it reverently-could God change men's hearts. That could not be done by divine fiat, as was creation. God has given men freedom of will, freedom of choice, and should they choose to exercise this freedom to thwart God's plan, He would stand helpless, unable to cope with man's perverseness till man himself decided to co-operate. God can persuade, He can counsel, He can appeal. But if man decides to go his own way, God has so limited Himself in giving man freedom of choice that He cannot compel man against his will. While we may not fully understand why God has done this, we must recognize that there is something exceedingly precious in freedom of will, or God would never have consented to the limitations that it puts upon Him. God so values freedom of the will that He gave His Son that men might have life. This measures its value.

### **When Is a Person a Christian?**

I was reared in the state church, attended the public schools, in which, aside from the ordinary subjects taught, instruction in religion was given, went for further religious instruction to the priest, learned the catechism, and was duly confirmed on a certain Sunday at the age of fourteen. Then I appeared at the office of the priest the following Monday, handed him the money which W parents' standing in the community indicated, and in return received a certificate of confirmation as necessary proof that I had satisfactorily passed the test. I was now a full-fledged Christian according to the custom of the day, and my name was inscribed as one who had publicly covenanted to forsake the devil and all his ways. Confirmation was the dividing line between school days and the more stern realities of life. It was an important occasion.

We had a great celebration in my home that night, as was the custom. It was hardly a Christian celebration. Not a few had to be assisted to their places of abode when it was ended. But I was a Christian! Had not I and all the other boys who had been confirmed in my class promised to forsake the devil and all his ways? And did we not have our certificates?

Yet I had my doubts. Was I really a Christian, a child of God? I had my doubts myself, but the state and the church evidently had none; and who was I to doubt their wisdom? The priest was a good man, and he had confirmed me and certified to the fact. I was probably a Christian without knowing how it was brought about.

I recalled an experience of some years before, which also had puzzled me. Some relatives desired to have my parents with others stand sponsors for a little babe who was to be christened, and they wanted me to come along. Mother explained to me the responsibility of sponsorship, which meant little to me. I was more interested in the celebration which was to follow the christening. But when the day came, I marched to church with the sponsors, and was greatly interested in the proceedings.

I shall never forget my astonishment when we gathered about the baptismal font in the little country church, and the priest, after having made a few preliminary remarks, turned to the little babe less than two weeks old and asked, "Do you forsake the devil and all his ways?" etc. He looked as though he expected an answer, and with mouth open I wondered what the babe was going to do about it. Was a miracle about to be performed, and would the babe answer? No answer came. The suspense was terrific. Somebody ought to do something about it. At last somebody did. I suppose it was the father who answered for the child, but in the excitement of the moment I also piped up, "I do." This was evidently a mistake, as a quick jerk promptly made me realize. But I had done my duty. I did not understand what it was all about, but something had happened to the child apparently. It was now a child of God.

Perhaps a similar thing had happened at my confirmation. I was a full-fledged Christian, but I did not know how it had come about. I had not acted as a Christian before my confirmation, and I was no different now from what I had been. And yet I was a Christian. The whole thing did not make sense to me; but then, perhaps boys were not supposed to understand. It might be best to accept the situation without asking too many questions. It might be if I thought it all through more carefully I would find that after all I was a Christian. I had joined the boys' department of the YMCA at the age of twelve, mostly because other boys of my acquaintance did so. We had gymnasium privileges, there were good pool tables, beer was served with meals, and smoking was permitted. We had a good place to meet where we were not under too strict supervision, and our club meetings were interesting occasions. I could not testify that this had helped me in my Christian experience, but in some way I had now become a Christian, and in attempting to find out how it had come about, I thought that perhaps every\* little thing counted. The whole thing was a mystery to me.

### **What Kind of Christian?**

Some time after this I moved with my parents to Winnipeg, Canada. There entirely different religious conditions prevailed, and I received another religious shock. By that time I had decided that religion was not for young people to understand, that the best they could do was to accept what their elders said without question. I was a Christian, and I had been confirmed, and that was the end of all controversy.

But in Winnipeg I suddenly found myself confronted with several denominations, no one of which had any use for the others, but believed them to be heretical. This was news to me. I had known of only one Lutheran Church, and now I found that there were a dozen different kinds. It was no longer merely a question of being a Lutheran. The larger question was, What kind of Lutheran? The church I sometimes attended permitted laymen to preach, and they had testimony meetings. In the opinion of some, nothing could be worse.

I had thought that my religious difficulties were over. But I saw now that this was not true. Whatever denomination I should decide to join, somebody would be sure to warn me that I was making a serious mistake. I wondered myself how a boy and a mere layman could decide upon the right church, when learned men differed.

At this time I made the acquaintance of some Baptists. When I casually mentioned this to my consulting priest, he was visibly horrified. Bad as were some of the branches of his own church, their error was as nothing compared to the Baptist heresy. Their whole religion, he assured me, centered in the amount of water used in christening. They believed that much water would assure salvation in baptism, while mere sprinkling would avail little. What good purpose could such a "water religion" serve? It was the rankest of heresies.

That closed this avenue for me. Baptists would not do. They believed too much in water. And yet, as I heard their side, they seemed right to me. But then, they were probably wrong. The priest had much more education than the Baptist minister. I had better be careful.

Then there were the Methodists. They seemed to have solved the question of baptism. In that church a person could be sprinkled with a little water or baptized in much water. That was a happy solution.

But, no! My adviser did not see much light in joining a denomination which did not have strong convictions on such an important Bible subject and which felt that one method of baptism was as good as another. And, anyway, there were many kinds of Methodists and which of these would I join? I was in a dilemma. I knew not which way to turn. At last I decided that I had better leave religion alone, and stay away from all churches. This I did.

Nearly two years went by, and then came an awakening. This happened in the following manner. I was not satisfied with my way of life. I was not satisfied with the way I was living, which indeed could not be considered very reputable. I was not happy. I began reading my Bible in a new way; I began to pray. I wanted light on how to find God. I decided that if God existed, He would not leave a person to perish who really wanted to find Him, and that if I would pray, He would send help.

## Following Christ

The answer to my prayer came in the form of the statement found in John 14:6: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes unto the Father, but by Me." Like a flash from heaven came the revelation that Christ is the answer to every question of theology as He is the answer to the deep longings of the human heart. He is the way, the truth, and the life. When the cry rose from my heart, "Which way, Lord, is the right way?" the answer came back, "I am the way." "Lord, I want to know the truth"; and immediately came the response, "I am the truth." "Lord, I want more than light; I want life;" and quickly came the voice, "Son, I am not merely the way and the truth, I am also the life. Follow Me, and all will be well."

This text became my guiding star. In its light every doubt was dissolved, every question answered. If Christ is the way, all I need to do is to follow Him. He will lead me to the truth, He will lead me to life.

This seemed so simple that it was a matter of wonder that it had not occurred to me before. What mattered now what the church fathers believed, or what the great "divines" of the present day taught? All sank into insignificance with the pronouncement of our great Exemplar and Pattern, Christ Jesus. He only "counted."

As I look back over my life, it is not easy to estimate the influence which this text has had upon me. I was suddenly released from dependence upon any man, however great he might be. Luther was a great man, Wesley was a great man, but Christ was greater. I needed no longer to lean on any human being. Christ had settled every question. And I was content.

If I wanted to know about baptism, the question was not one of Lutherans or Baptists any more. It was simply, "What did Christ do; what did Christ teach?" If I wanted to know about the Sabbath, all I needed to do was to look to Christ and follow Him. If I wanted to know about tithe paying, or the second coming of Christ, or the hereafter beyond the grave, or a thousand other things, I had one unailing source of information, Christ Jesus.

I am convinced that the life and teachings of Christ have a deep significance for the perplexed soul who is doubtful regarding what he shall do with reference to life and doctrine. Christ came to this world to give us an example of applied Christianity. A practical demonstration, an object lesson, is always more effective than mere precept and theory. Christ came to this world to give that demonstration. We are merely to follow Him. Some practical questions now confronted me, as they will confront all who decide to follow Jesus. Just what is a young person to do who decides to turn from the world? How may he obtain forgiveness of sins and be sure that they are forgiven? If he has done something wrong, if he has lied or stolen, what is he to do about it? Must he confess? Must he pay back? Or what is he to do? What does Christ, what does the Bible, teach about this? Just what are the steps a person must take to make sure of salvation? I wanted to know, and I am sure that other young people want to know. Let me trace these steps. They are not all easy. Salvation is no child's play. It is serious business. But it brings blessed results and a peace to the heart which no one can take away. Let us look at these steps to Christ.

## Seven Steps to Christ - A

MOST young people wish to do right and would gladly be Christians if they only knew how. I well remember the difficulties I encountered when I first decided to become a Christian. Just what was I expected to do? I did not know. I knew in a general way that I ought to be good, that I ought to follow Christ, and that I ought to confess my sins. This I did, or tried to do, but I was still perplexed. I did not know whether I was a Christian or not.

I attended meetings in a certain church in which the people went through strange contortions to "get religion," as they called it. Some would moan, others would shout, and some would roll around on the floor. Instead of attracting me, this disgusted me. I said to myself that if that was religion, I would have none of it.

I noticed that preachers in general had a kind of "cry voice- which they used when praying, and some even while preaching. This seemed strange to me, for I could hardly conceive of God as being affected or moved by such tactics. Why couldn't I talk to God as I did to a man? It seemed to me that God would appreciate having me talk to Him as man to man.

In one church I attended I found that it was not expected that the members of the church should pass through the experience ordinarily called conversion. They believed that when a child was sprinkled he became a servant of God, and that thenceforth he was a member of the church and assured of salvation-unless by some outrageous act he severed himself from God. In another church the minister had constant "altar calls," and people were admonished to "come to Christ." This seemed reasonable, but at no time did I have any definite understanding of what it meant to "come to Christ."

Since there are many who do not know just what to do to come to Christ, it might be well for us to discuss certain steps that are necessary. I believe it is due young people to make the way so plain that there can be no misunderstanding in regard to what we are to do to be saved.

## Christianity Is a Life

Christianity is more than a creed, more than mere agreement with certain doctrinal beliefs, more than adherence to a set of rules. It is first of all a life, a changed life, a life dedicated to the service of God and humanity. The Christian does not merely spend his time being good; like his Master, he goes about doing good. His Christianity is positive, forceful, dynamic. His influence is felt wherever he goes.

Such a life does not happen. It is not brought about by the unaided will of man or by the desires of the flesh. It is, rather, a life lived contrary to natural inclination, a miracle wrought by the co-operation of divine forces with human will. In its God ward aspect it is spoken of as a new birth, a work wrought wholly by God in which man can have no active part any more than he can assist at his

own natural birth. In its man ward aspect, it is spoken of as conversion, in which a man has a definite part of willing and doing, aided by the Spirit of God. As God and man thus work together, a new life is formed, man is re-created in the image of God, and a soul is born into the kingdom of God.

At the time of Christ few among the Jews had any real conception of what religion means. The Pharisees observed rules and ceremonies, and many of them were doubtless men of honor and integrity; yet something was lacking in their experience. Nicodemus is pictured to us as an honest and upright man; yet he knew little of the new birth. When Christ said to him that he needed to be born again, Nicodemus was almost offended. He was a teacher and a ruler in Israel. He knew the law and the prophets. What more could possibly be needed? And yet Christ told him that he needed to be born again, and that “except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” John 3:1

This was the most astonishing doctrine to Nicodemus. How dared Christ, a young man, speak thus to a ruler in Israel?

### **Like a Little Child**

On one occasion Christ said to His disciples, “Verily I say unto you, Except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 18:1

At this time His disciples had been with Him for some time. Yet He spoke to them as though they were not converted. He also told them they were not only to be converted, but were to become as little children, and that unless they had this experience, they could not enter the kingdom of God.

A little child is trustful and believing. I well remember walking with one of my little girls along a board sidewalk. She was running ahead of me, and, as there was no special danger apparent, I had let her do so. I had not noted, however, that the sidewalk suddenly stopped, and that there was an excavation perhaps five or six feet deep right ahead.

From the time she was quite small, I had taught her not to be afraid to do anything I asked her to do. At times I had placed her on high steps and asked her to jump down into my arms. She had done so without hesitation, and I had caught her each time. She was perfectly confident that no harm would come to her from jumping. When she came to the end of the broad walk on this particular day, she saw the excavation before her. As she had often jumped before, she saw no special danger in jumping now, if only daddy was there. So she turned around, called out, “Daddy,” and started to jump. However, she hesitated a moment. That gave me a moment to catch her just as she jumped off. To her, this experience meant nothing at all. It was the most natural thing in the world that I should be there to catch her, even though at this time I caught her clothes from behind. Her confidence was unbounded that daddy could help her in any emergency.

As stated, a little child is trustful and believing. Tell the little one a true story and he will believe it. Tell him a fairy story and he believes that. Tell him that Santa Claus exists, and there is no doubt in his mind concerning the actuality of such a person. It is only in later years that doubt arises. He finds out through sad experiences that not all stories told him are true.

When Christ says that unless we become as little children we shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven, He means that we should be trustful and believing, have unbounded faith in Him and in His word.

How happy I would have been if someone had told me when I was a young man just what I was to do to become a Christian. I simply did not know. I tried very hard to be a Christian, but had a most miserable time. I got tired of “being good,” for I did not seem to get anywhere. I had the idea that a Christian could never play, could never take a day off for recreation or anything else. I “enjoyed a miserable experience.”

It would have been a tremendous relief to me if I could have gone out in the woods, crawled up in a tree, and let out some unearthly yells, but a Christian, of course, could not do that. In fact, he couldn't do anything that he wanted to do.

It would be a mistake, however, to believe that I did not get a certain satisfaction out of my unsatisfactory experience. I believed that I was doing God's will, and that in the end all would come out well. I did not have an enjoyable time, but neither did the early Christians, I philosophized. It was simply part of the program, and it would be good for the soul to go through with it. And this I did.

It is ordinarily understood that there are seven definite steps in conversion. While we speak of them as seven steps, we do not mean that they come or must come in just the order in which I shall give them. The seven steps are in some respects more like seven spokes in a wheel, which indeed bear a definite relation one to the other, but of which no one can be said to be first and another second. Rather, they all go together, and are all necessary, though in some cases the order varies. It should also be borne in mind that when we speak of seven steps, we are speaking of the part which man has in this plan of God, aided by the Spirit of God. As already stated, the new birth is entirely God's work, conversion being merely the steps which man must take in order to conform to God's will.

### **The First Step-Conviction**

There can be no recognition and conviction of sin unless there be knowledge of what sin is. Unless a man knows sin, he cannot avoid it. This does not mean that he needs to know sin by experience, but he must be able to recognize it and know what to do about it. When God placed Adam, in the Garden of Eden, He told him, “Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shall not eat of it: for in the day that thou eats thereof thou shall surely die.” Genesis 2:17. This definite statement was necessary if Adam was to know of which tree he must not eat. It was necessary for God to say to Adam, “Of all the trees in the garden you may freely eat; but this one tree is forbidden. Do not eat of it.” With this information, Adam was without excuse. He now knew what he must do and what he must not do. It is this we mean when we say that there must be a knowledge of sin in order that man may avoid it.



It is not safe to take for granted that man, by nature, knows what is right and what is wrong. Even Paul says, "I had not known sin, but by the law." Romans 7:7. Again he states: "By the law is the knowledge of sin." Romans 3:20. If Paul did not know sin except as he was guided by the law, neither do we. There is indeed a general conception of sin which nearly all men have. Ordinarily, men know that they should not steal, murder, or commit adultery. Few, however, know that covetousness is sin unless God illuminates the mind. Paul himself confesses, "I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shall not covet." Romans 7:7.

It may be presumed that Paul was a good moral man even before his conversion. Like all the Pharisees, he thought he was keeping the law. Doubtless he, in common with the rest of his sect, was very careful in his outward behavior. He would never think of committing any of the grosser sins, and felt that he stood approved of the law.

Then suddenly conviction and condemnation came to him. He discovered that not only was the outward act of taking something that did not belong to him sin, but that coveting was sin as verily as the act itself. This was a new revelation to him, for he confesses that he would never have known that coveting is sin unless the law said so.

The law has a definite part not only in convincing of sin, but in making known to us what sin is. "Sin is the transgression of the law." I John 3:4. We have known some who object to this as a definition of sin, but we take it as a clear statement of God's meaning. "Sin is the transgression of the law."

Thus the law serves a definite purpose in salvation. It points out sin and helps us to avoid it. It serves as a warning sign that points out danger. In Yellowstone National Park there are geysers sending out large volumes of steam or boiling water. Some of these geysers are in continuous eruption; others erupt only at intervals. Some of them appear "dead," but it is not safe to go near them, for they may suddenly become active, and tons of boiling water may fall on the luckless person who presumes to go too near. For this reason signs are posted which warn of the danger.

I witnessed a near catastrophe once. A danger sign was posted with the information that the geyser in question had no stated time of eruption, but that it might erupt without warning, and therefore people were forbidden to go near it. Around the geyser was a little one-rail fence that was easily climbed. As the natural wonder looked perfectly "dead" and inactive, two young men ignored the danger notice, stepped across the fence, and began to investigate. Suddenly a rumble was heard, and they scrambled away as fast as they could. It is doubtful whether they would have escaped had not the wind at that particular time blown the water away from them rather than in their direction. As it was they got a good scare, and it is to be hoped that from this experience they learned to have a more wholesome respect for the sign "Danger."

God's law is such a sign. It tells us to beware. It is our friend. There may not seem to be any danger, all may look well, but only at great peril can we ignore the warning.

It is strange indeed that men do not regard the law with more respect than they do. They ought to be thankful for it; they ought to love it rather than to flout its warnings. Of all people the Christians should respect and honor the law. It is their safety; it is their friend.

It would certainly be most reprehensible if some evil-minded person should go through Yellowstone Park and remove the danger signs. Instead of being a benefactor of mankind, he would be considered an enemy; for disaster would certainly come if there were no warning signs. Severe punishment would be and ought to be meted out to such a man.

What, then, shall we say of those who speak lightly of the law of God, who ignore it and seek to have it abolished? They are not friends, but enemies, of mankind, and their evil work will certainly mean the loss of many souls. A man, be he minister or layman, who speaks against the law is a dangerous person. His work is evil and only evil.

### The Work of the Holy Spirit

In the work of convincing men of sin, the law is not God's only instrument. The Holy Spirit is also a vital factor. The law supplies the general knowledge; the Spirit applies this knowledge to the individual person. David knew, on a certain occasion, that he had done wrong. The full conviction, however, did not come until Nathan, the prophet, said, "Thou art the man." As soon as those words were spoken, the Spirit sent conviction to David's heart. He had known before that lust is wrong, but now he was convinced and convicted of his transgression in a most direct, personal way. (2 Samuel 11, 12)

The work of the Spirit is to convince of sin. This is the meaning of John 16:8: "He, when He is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." RV.

There are many people who are convinced that stealing is not a good practice, that hatred of God and men is not laudable, and that they ought not to break the Ten Commandments. This general knowledge, supplied by the law, is altogether different from a personal conviction of sin. The law furnishes the knowledge of what sin is, but only the Spirit of God convicts of sin. The two work together, and when their work is finished, the man not only knows what sin is, but he knows that he is a sinner and in need of help.

This matter of the recognition and conviction of sin is the first step to Christ. As a man understands the full meaning of his transgression, he is led to cry out in anguish for the help which only Christ can furnish. In this way the law may be a schoolmaster to lead him to Christ. It cannot save him; it can only condemn him; but this condemnation may result in his conversion and salvation. Thus the faithful law serves the purpose which God intends it should serve, that of convincing men of sin and of leading them to Christ.

### The Second Step-Sorrow

The second step in conversion is sorrow for sin. It is possible for a man to know that a certain thing is wrong and that he ought not to do it, without being sorry for what he has done. There are those who when convicted of crime in the courts on earth freely



admit that they committed the crime, without showing the least sorrow or repentance for their deed. In God's order, however, it is not only necessary to be convinced and convicted of sin, but repentance must necessarily include sorrow for it.

It is to be noted that there are two kinds of sorrow: godly sorrow and the sorrow of the world. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, says, "Though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent"; and then he adds reflectively, "Though I did repent." 2 Corinthians 7:8. Paul knew that the letter he sent would cause them sorrow, and he almost repented; but, "Now I rejoice," he says, "not that you were made sorry, but that you sorrowed to repentance: for you were made sorry after a godly manner." Verse 9. Then states the principle, "For godly sorrow works repentance to salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world works death." Verse 10.

The sorrow of the world is mostly a sorrow for the results of sin rather than for the sin itself. Such pretended sorrow ordinarily manifests itself only after there has been an exposure of the sin. When the sin has become known and the person, and perhaps the family, disgraced, there is a certain sorrow exhibited which concerns itself mostly with the result of the exposure, and frequently terminates in hatred of the persons who have been instrumental in bringing the sin to light. The sinner forgets that he alone is to blame for his transgression. He forgets the disgrace he has caused his loved ones and perhaps the cause he serves, and becomes critical of those who have been instrumental in rescuing him from the mire into which he has fallen. He is likely to consider himself a martyr, and to feel that he has been unjustly treated. He feels that his questionable act has been greatly magnified, and reasons that he is not evil at heart, but that his brethren are treating him harshly.

I was working in a store once in which we had an old-fashioned coal stove. The janitor was making a fire one morning, putting kerosene on the wood to hasten the process of getting the fire started. Evidently some coals had been left over from the previous night's fire; gas was generated as the kerosene was poured on, and a blinding explosion followed. Instantly the janitor was sprinkled with kerosene and was ablaze from head to foot. He started running toward the exit, a sheet of flame. I ran after him as fast as I could, for I knew that in a few moments he would be burned beyond hope of help. On the way I grabbed one of the large counter covers with which the goods were protected during the night. I caught the man, who fought violently, threw the cover over him, and extinguished the flames. After a long period he recovered, though he was disfigured for life. He had swallowed some of the flames, and the inside of his mouth was burned severely. The one thing that stands out in my mind, however, is the reproaches he leveled at me for handling him roughly. He felt that there was no need of my doing what I had done, that I should have treated him more gently. Years after, he referred to the incident, and assured me that he still felt that I had been altogether too rough.

This incident illustrates the reaction many people have to sin and its discovery. They are not as sorry for the sin as they are for the exposure. They are likely to think more of the mistakes others make in exposing their wrongdoing than of the sin for which they should be sorry. They are sorry for being caught more than they are for what they have done.

Godly sorrow is altogether different. Such sorrow leads to repentance. It seeks no shielding of oneself. The person takes full responsibility for his act, is willing to take his punishment, and is happy that his sin was found out, so that he would not continue in it.

Godly sorrow for sin is the only safe basis of forgiveness. The one who makes light of his transgression, who does not feel sorry for it, who perhaps denies it, has no right to ask for forgiveness. He cuts himself off from the mercy of God. He is like the Pharisee who did not ask for forgiveness and did not receive it. He merely thanked God that he was "not as other men," or as "this publican." Sorrow for sin, to be acceptable with God, must be deep and heartfelt. It must never at any time be confused with sorrow for self or sorrow for consequences. Sorrow for sin includes being thankful to God and to the persons who saw the evil and realized its consequences should it ever become fully fastened upon the person, and made it known. Sorrow that savors of appreciation for having the sin brought to light is genuine.

### **The Third Step-Confession**

Genuine sorrow for sin will lead to confession. It is of little use for one to say that he is sorry for what he has done if he is unwilling to make the necessary confession. It may rightly be said that the nature of the confession is a measure of the sorrow for wrong doing. For one to say he is sorry for what he has done, but be unwilling to make confession, is to belie his expression of sorrow. No man is really sorry unless he is willing to confess his wrongdoing.

Confession is not an easy matter, at least not for the natural heart. It takes courage to admit that one is wrong. It takes humility to ask for forgiveness. It is harder for some, but not easy for anyone.

The Bible makes confession necessary to forgiveness. Says John, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9.

Note the "if." Confession is a condition of forgiveness. Only if we confess our sins will they be forgiven. Only if we confess will we be cleansed from all unrighteousness. If we fulfill the conditions, the promise is ours; if we fail to confess, we need not expect mercy.

It has always been necessary to confess sins in order to receive forgiveness. This confession is not to be general, but specific. "It shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing." Leviticus. 5:5. The man was to confess that he had sinned in that thing. It was that thing that counted. Paul sums up confession in these words: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Romans 10:9, 10.

"He that covers his sins shall not prosper: but who confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy." Proverbs 28:13. Here the covering up of sins and the confessing of them are placed in contrast. Not to confess is to cover up. Such, God says, will not succeed. Those who confess and forsake their sins shall obtain mercy.

## **To Whom Shall We Confess?**

We are to confess our sins to God and our faults to one another. “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.” James 5:16. This text emphasizes the duty we owe to those whom we may have offended. We are to confess our faults.

We have already stated that forgiveness is conditioned upon confession, and that only as we confess our sins are we forgiven and cleansed from all unrighteousness. As all sin is primarily against God, we are to confess all sins to Him and obtain His pardon. When we sin against our brother, we sin against God, for God considers that whatever is done to the least of the brethren is done to Him. “The King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, you have done it unto Me.” Matthew 25:40. We are, therefore, to confess all our sins to God and ask His forgiveness.

This, however, is not enough. If we have sinned against our brother, we are to confess to him also. If we go to him with heartfelt repentance, he will forgive, if he is a Christian. If he does not forgive, we have done what we can and what we should. Whatever his attitude, we are to do our part, and, having done that, we are to rest our case with God.

Some make the mistake of confessing their sins to those who have no right to know the secrets of the soul. The sins which we have publicly committed should be publicly confessed. The sins that are not publicly known should be confessed only to those who are concerned in them. No one should bare his soul, to any other human being, except where someone else is a sharer in the sin, or has been sinned against, or in certain cases in which persons may be officially concerned and involved. Much wisdom is needed, lest confession do more harm than good.

Only very seldom should sins be confessed to a third person. Few are the men or the women who have wisdom and understanding to deal with confessions. The fact that persons are willing to listen to confessions that do not concern them is proof presumptive that they are not qualified to give good counsel.

We would not have anyone think that there are not times and circumstances when counsel should be sought on matters that seem too much for one to decide for himself, but in all such cases great caution should be exercised. It is not often that a third person need be introduced into a case in which only two are concerned. Very few of us have the wisdom necessary to be the third person. Ordinarily the only third person should be God.

Some people are anxious to confess other people’s sins. This work God has given no man to do. We have enough to do in confessing our own. I have been in schools in which students have felt a great burden to confess the sins of their fellow students or the shortcomings of their teachers. I have been in schools in which the attitude of certain teachers made it very hard for the students to make the needed confession. This should not be.

Just as there are persons who are too willing to hear confessions, so there are persons who are too willing to confess—that is, to a third person. We feel that we should sound a warning against indiscriminate confessions, for in them lies much potential harm. And we especially warn women, young or old, to be careful of making any confession to a man, a third person.

But as certain as we are that great care should be exercised in making confession to any third person, so certain we are that confession of the right kind and to the right person is necessary to salvation. There is no way in which forgiveness can be obtained other than that which is revealed in the Bible. The promise is definite that if we confess, God “is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

## **Are You Afraid to Back Down?**

Confession is good for the soul, but not all have the courage to make it. Some would rather “say it with flowers” than make an outright confession of wrong. It is hard for some people to “back down.” Having once committed themselves to a certain position, they hold on to it regardless of consequences. This is neither good sense nor Christianity. Few things are more conducive to harmony and peace than a confession of wrong, if wrong has been committed. We would all be better off if we were humble enough to ask forgiveness of the persons we have wronged, and back down when we have made statements that are not sound and cannot be proved. Some years ago we heard a speaker tell a story of a cat that was pursued by a dog. The cat took refuge on top of a telephone pole, where it was most uncomfortable, and gave vent to its feelings in no uncertain tones. Some children gathered at the foot of the pole and tried to coax it down, but to no avail. A good housewife brought a saucer of milk, hoping thereby to tempt the cat; but she failed to do so. During the night the cat kept the neighborhood awake with its lament. One man threw something at the distressed animal, but with no success.

When morning came, the neighborhood pooled all its wisdom and persuasive power to get the cat to come down, but the cat stayed atop the pole. At last the fire department was called, long ladders were erected, and pussy was brought safely to earth.

Why all this commotion about a cat? The cat wanted to come down. It was having an uncomfortable time. It was hungry, cold, and miserable, and was a definite nuisance. It had climbed up of itself and could have come down of itself, had it known how. The trouble was, it had never learned to back down.

Thus it is with many people. They are miserable themselves and make other people miserable. They have never learned to back down. They have never learned the important lesson of giving in. They hold tenaciously to their own opinions, and they and others suffer in consequence.

To learn to ignore wrong, to learn to admit error, to learn not to hold tenaciously to a precarious position, to learn to back down, gracefully or otherwise, is one of the most important lessons of life. Yet many people are like the cat in the story. They persist

in making themselves and others miserable. They are a nuisance to everybody. In all other respects they may have good sense, but they have not learned the important lesson of giving in, or backing down.

It is not an arbitrary decree of God that we are to confess. It is one of the lessons of life. It is character building. Without that trait woven into the character, we would be unfit for heaven. As we admit our own mistakes, as we ask for forgiveness, we become kinder to others. It is a most valuable experience to confess. Confession subdues the soul and makes us teachable. It fits us for communion with the saints and with God.

Society recognizes that there are certain rules to which all should conform. If one person accidentally jostles another, it is proper to express sorrow or ask pardon. It would be rude indeed to cause another inconvenience and ignore the incident, not putting forth any attempt to make amends. The least a person can do is to say, "I am sorry."

If such expressions and such conduct are considered proper in the ordinary relationships of life, is it not also proper to express sorrow when we transgress the rules of right conduct in other lines? If we express our sorrow as a matter of form or out of courtesy in the daily routine, should Christians omit these amenities in the weightier matters of life? No Christian can afford to do this.

Occasionally it is a good thing to make confessions publicly as in a testimony meeting. Things happen in church and in school that demand that public confession be made, not of compulsion, but of the person's own volition. We believe, however, that this should not be done often. Most of our sins are of a private nature, in which one person or perhaps two are involved. Under such conditions let prompt confession be made to those concerned. Only in exceptional cases consult those who are not directly involved.

## Seven Steps to Christ - B

THERE are those who are willing to make confession, but are not willing to make restoration. But

God demands this. Hear these words: "If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity, he shall surely live, he shall not die." Ezekiel 33:15. "He shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the lost thing which he found, or all that about which he hath sworn falsely. He shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertains, in the day of his trespass offering." Leviticus 6:4, 5.

Restoration is a vital part of confession. It is of little use that a man confesses that he has stolen and wishes to be forgiven, if he is not willing to pay back that which he has stolen. God demands that a man make restoration so far as he is able. In cases in which this is not possible, as when the person defrauded is no longer living, the law in the time of Moses demanded that the money be paid to a near kinsman, and if that was not possible, that it be paid to the priest. "Speak unto the children of Israel, when a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit, to do a trespass against the Lord, and that person be guilty. Then they shall confess their sin which they have done: and he shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed. But if the man have no kinsman to recompense the trespass unto, let the trespass be recompensed unto the Lord, even to the priest; beside the ram of the atonement, whereby an atonement shall be made for him." Numbers 5:6-8. While it is not contended that this law is in force now, the principle may be worth studying.

If a Christian did a little thinking before committing an act which he might later regret, it would often deter him from doing that which is not easily undone. A person buys something in a store, and the clerk, in handing back the change, gives him a dollar too much. It is easy to argue that the clerk is at fault, that it is his business to see to it that the right change is given. But the Christian will upon reflection decide that such reasoning is not sound. If he had received a dollar too little in change, he would not let the matter pass. He must no more let the matter pass when \* he gets a dollar too much. The mistake should be rectified immediately, for it is awkward at times to straighten up such things after considerable time has passed, without deviating from the truth. A person is then likely to state that he did not notice the mistake until he reached home and found that he had a dollar too much. If this is the truth, then this is what ought to be said. But if the mistake was noticed at the time of the transaction, the statement is not true. Thus, in rectifying one mistake, another is made, and this also must sooner or later be acknowledged. But this is awkward. There is no point in paying back a dollar and in the process of doing it telling an untruth which also must be confessed.

No Christian can contend that it is honest to ride free on a streetcar or a train because the conductor does not see him. Or to do many of the things that people do who have no regard for truth or honesty, and are willing to take advantage of every situation which promises profit or pleasure. When a Christian does any of these things, he will sooner or later decide that he must make the matter right, and this is embarrassing and inconvenient, and especially so if the wrong is not righted at once.

It does not pay to hide transgression. There is not only danger that it will be found out-which makes subsequent confession of little value-but there is also the surety that sooner or later the Christian will feel that he must make acknowledgment and amends. And, as we have said, this is most embarrassing and inconvenient to do at times. There is no explanation or reason given why an attempt was not made immediately to adjust matters. The only true explanation is that in addition to having done wrong an attempt was made to hide it, to lie out of it, or at least to appear innocent. Taking all things into consideration, by far the easiest way is to make matters right immediately, and not wait. Ordinarily the longer a person waits, the worse the situation will be.

Are we always to restore? Yes, wherever it is humanly possible. One should make every reasonable attempt to give back that of which he has defrauded someone else. Be the amount large or small, there is no other way. Confession must be made, and confession must include restitution.

The following incident is somewhat disguised so as to cause no embarrassment, but it is an actual occurrence. A certain young man with his companions one Halloween went into the formal garden of a doctor in town and removed numerous pieces of small statuary, some of them of considerable value. Years afterward he still had two of the pieces, which he had carefully stored away in his attic.

In course of time the young man became a Christian, and it so happened that he and the doctor from which he and his pals had taken these art objects met and their acquaintance grew into close friendship. The doctor was, of course, unaware that this friend was one of those guilty in the Halloween incident.

One night I spoke on the subject of restitution, and this man, who by this time had become somewhat prominent and an officer in the church, was in the audience. As I was speaking, he suddenly remembered the two articles which years ago, as a prank, he had stolen from the doctor. He came to me after the meeting and asked what he should do. To my mind there was no question: I told him that I believed he should restore that which he had taken.

At first it seemed to him quite humiliating, but as he thought the matter over, he decided that there was no other way. He went to the doctor, who had never forgotten the incident. When the doctor was told what had happened, he laughed and called the brother "a fool" forever mentioning it. He said he did not know who had done it, and that it had happened so many years ago that there was no occasion whatever for bringing it up. The Christian, however, felt that he had done the right thing, and that his conscience was clear.

In another instance the transgressor did not get off so lightly. Years ago a young woman came to talk with me after I had spoken on the subject of restitution. She was much perturbed and wanted advice. She had been employed in a five-and-ten-cent store before she was married, and had not always been careful to "ring up" the money she received from the customers. In those days there was not the strict supervision that is a routine practice today, and it was easier than now unlawfully to appropriate money. The question which perturbed this young woman was this: Should she pay back the money that she had taken?

I knew what this would mean to her. Corporations are not generally merciful. There was some likelihood that they would demand not only that the money be paid back, but that sterner measures be taken. I asked her how much money was involved. She stated that she did not know, but thought it was several hundred dollars. Her husband, though not a Christian, was on the point of becoming one. Their income was small, and they had a little baby, and whatever money she had to pay back would have to come from her husband's earnings, which were barely sufficient to support them. Though there was perhaps no likelihood that she would be sent to jail, yet she had to consider that possibility, for her defalcations were serious enough to warrant this.

There were also other considerations; chief among them was the fact that her husband had always considered her a good Christian and was about ready to become one. If she should reveal to him that she had been a thief, if the money to be repaid had to come from his earnings, would not all likelihood of his ever becoming a Christian disappear?

We talked the matter over at some length, and I told her that as far as I could see there was only one thing to do, and that was to make the matter right, whatever the cost. I realized to some extent the responsibility that I was taking in so advising her, but I felt that there was no other way. She had come to me for counsel, and I believed that the Lord would help, and that some way would be found out of the difficulty. In my own mind I had a plan by which I might help if need be, as I felt deeply the responsibility of the counsel I had given.

I am glad to report that the matter came out all right in the end, though it took some time. There were occasions when I wondered just what the outcome would be, as new developments occurred that made the situation appear almost hopeless. But in the end all was well. The money was paid back, and the company took no action. The husband joined his wife in church membership. They both became better Christians and learned a valuable lesson which is essential for all of us to master if we are ever to enter the kingdom.

This experience left a deep impression upon my mind. The Bible statement is true, "The way of transgressors is hard." Proverbs 13:15. I have had other and more difficult cases to deal with in later years, but none that has caused me as much concern as this one.

It is a great deal easier to advise someone else what to do than to follow one's own advice. Great care should be taken by those who are asked to advise others, for I have known cases in which more harm than good was done by following the counsel given. In the final analysis, each one must be his own judge in regard to what shall be done in a given case. It is always well, however, for the one who has transgressed to consider that God requires restitution as well as confession.

In a certain school one of the students cheated in an examination and was not discovered. The result was a grade of "B," which was not deserved, of course. After a few years the student decided to confess his wrong, and wrote to the teacher, explaining what he had done. The explanation was received, and a grade of "Failure" was recorded where before there had been a "B." This was communicated to the student, who promptly remonstrated that he did not believe that he should be penalized for telling the truth. He would have had a "B" grade if he had kept quiet; now he received a "failure" for telling the truth. He thought he deserved a good grade for confessing his fault. He failed to see that no grade can be recorded that is not earned; he also failed to understand that if he confessed, he should be willing to abide by the results.

It is a mistake to believe that confession removes punishment. Such a procedure would unduly influence confession and make it less valuable. Confession must be based solely on the merits of the case, and must not be influenced by any reward or mitigation of punishment. He who confesses must do so entirely apart from any consideration that might be given him as a result of his confession. Only thus is confession of value.



## The Fifth Step-Faith in God

“Without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” Hebrews 11:6.

There are those who have taken the steps in conversion which we have so far mentioned, and yet do not have the peace of God in their hearts as they should have. They lack faith in God. They have asked God to forgive their sins; yet they do not believe that He has done the thing which they asked of Him. They know that they have confessed their sins, and that they have made restitution so far as they have been able; but, having done this, they are not sure that God has done His part. They know that they ought to believe that God does exactly as He has promised, but they do not feel any different from the way they felt before their confession, and they believe that a man should feel different if his sins have been forgiven. Hence, they draw the conclusion that their sins have not been forgiven.

In this position they are partly right, but mostly wrong. It is true that a person should feel “different” when he has his sins forgiven, but this feeling of assurance and peace is a result of faith, and does not come until faith has been exercised. God does not want a man to confess and renounce his sins and then sit back and wait for a feeling of contentment to come to him. Feeling has its place, but it is not a substitute for faith. If faith is exercised, feeling will come, but feeling and faith must not be interchanged. Faith comes first, then feeling.

God requires faith of us. This is a most reasonable requirement. To ask God to forgive our sins and then refuse to believe that He has done so is a most unreasonable attitude. It is in effect declaring that God is not telling the truth.

“He that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder.” Let us stop with the word “believe.” Whoever will come to God,” must believe.” You ask God to forgive you. That is an act of faith, for there would be no purpose in asking God to forgive sins if you do not believe that He can do so. In asking God to forgive, you begin in faith. You have done well, and God forgives you. As you fulfill the conditions laid down, He does exactly what you have asked. He forgives. It is your part to believe. You must believe that God has done that which you have asked and that which He said He would do. That is a most reasonable requirement. It shows your good faith. It shows that you did not simply challenge God to see whether He would forgive you, but that you really felt the need of forgiveness, that you had faith that He could and would forgive you. God does not care to have people come to Him and ask that certain things be done for them when they have no faith that He will do these things and will not even believe that He has done them when He assures them that He has.

### “At Thy Word”

One, time Simon Peter and his fellow fishermen had toiled all night and had caught nothing. When Jesus saw them on the shores of Galilee, He said to Peter: “Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draft.” Luke 5:4. Peter knew the uselessness of attempting to fish in the daytime when they had been unable to catch anything all night. Also, he was a fisherman and Jesus was a carpenter, and was not supposed to know much about fishing. Peter respectfully answered Him, however: “Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net.” Verse 5.

Peter could easily have reasoned that it would be useless to attempt to let down the net with the hope of getting any fish. In fact, as a fisherman, he knew it would be useless. We do not know whether he let down the net out of respect for Jesus, or whether it was a matter of faith with him. In any event Jesus immediately honored his act, and “they enclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.”

Suppose that Peter had refused to let down the net. What more could Jesus have done? There was an implied promise of success in His suggestion to Peter, but that promise was entirely dependent upon Peter’s action. When Peter moved, when Peter acted, results came. It is doubtful whether he would have received any reward if he had decided that he must see the fish before letting down the net. “At Thy word I will let down the net,” Peter said. From a fisherman’s viewpoint it was foolish to go fishing at that time of day, and Peter might have had in mind what his fishermen friends would think. They surely would laugh at him when he came back without anything. “Nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net.” And Peter was not ashamed of the results. God honored his obedience.

But how can one believe that he has been forgiven when he does not feel different? The answer is that feeling has nothing to do with the matter. God is greater than our feelings; His word and His promise must take precedence over our own reactions. When God says that we are forgiven, we are to believe Him regardless of how we feel. We doubt seriously that Peter felt that there were any fish to be had that morning. But Peter did not consult his feelings. They were not important. Jesus had said to cast down the net, and Peter said, “At Thy word I will let down the net.” So, feeling or no feeling, we are to believe God and do His bidding. Peter had a great deal of feeling afterward. When the net broke, when the boat began to sink because of the great catch of fishes, he “fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draft of the fishes which they had taken.” Luke 5:8, 9.

When a person has had his sins forgiven, there should be profound thankfulness on his part for what the Lord has done for him. To doubt God’s forgiveness under such circumstances grieves the heart of the Eternal One. He loves the sinner. He has forgiven him his sins. From the depth of the forgiven one’s heart should well up songs of praise for what the Lord has done.

But what if the person does not feel that his sins have been forgiven him? Let us repeat, feeling does not enter into the question. It is not how you feel, but what God has done, that counts. As in the case of Peter, feeling will come through obedience. The man who puts feeling first, who trusts to it rather than to God, dishonors God and lacks faith.



The difficulty with many is not that they doubt that God can forgive sin, but they seem unable to apply the promises of God to themselves. God can forgive, God is willing to forgive, but the difficulty comes in believing that God has forgiven them. We know of no better cure for such feeling than quiet meditation upon what God really is and what He promises to mankind.

Does God really forgive sins? Does God really love us so that He will forgive? There can be no doubt on that score.

Listen: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If you be willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land." Isaiah 1:18,19.

Listen again: "Seek you the Lord while He may be found, call you upon Him while He is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts. And let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." Isaiah 55:6, 7.

"I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto Me; for I have redeemed thee." Isaiah 44:22.

God will not only pardon, He will abundantly pardon. Even if our sins are like a cloud, a thick cloud, God will blot them out.

But what if the sins are not only many, but are really wicked, fearsome sins? Can and will God blot them out? Yes, though our sins be as scarlet, though they be red like crimson, God will forgive. What more can God say? What more can God do?

Let whoever is downcast or discouraged read these words: "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing." Zephaniah 3:17. Discouraged soul, know that God loves you and rejoices over you with singing. Know that there are no sins which God cannot and will not forgive. Your sins may be as scarlet; they may be deep red; you may have gone all the way into filthiness and consorted with swine. If you only turn to God, He will forgive, not grudgingly, not halfheartedly, but fully, freely, completely. Do not grieve God by refusing to believe Him. Accept, believe, act, and the rich blessing of Heaven shall be yours. Have faith in God.

### **The Sixth Step-Public Acknowledgment and Baptism**

After Christ had healed the man possessed of evil spirits, He told him: "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." Mark 5:19.

There is a responsibility resting upon those for whom God has done great things, to tell others of what He has done for them. The man who had been healed wanted to stay with Jesus; but this the Master did not permit. He wanted him to go home and there tell his friends and neighbors what God had done for him.

God has a work for everyone to do. None is so lowly that he cannot minister to some other soul. This particular man went home and did as he was told. He told "how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel." Mark 5:20. He thus became the first preacher to the cities of Decapolis, a half-heathen district on the other side of the sea.

No one can be a Christian and keep his light under a bushel. God wants us to tell our personal experience for the encouragement of others. There are some who seem to believe that their commission is to tell what great things they have done. They advertise themselves. This may not be blameworthy, some may even think it necessary, but it should be with fear and trembling that anyone ever permits his name to be used so that praise shall come to him. We are not called to tell what great things we have done. We are to tell what great things God has done. No man can exalt himself and Christ at the same time. It must be one or the other.

We are witnesses for Christ. We are to tell what we know, what we have experienced. A witness is to tell the truth. When he, therefore, gives his testimony, it must be of that which he has experienced, not hearsay evidence, not suppositions. If we speak to others of the blessing of liberality, it must be with a background of having experienced it ourselves. No sermon that has not first been lived is worth being preached.

"You are My witnesses, said the Lord." Isaiah 43:10. It cannot be too often repeated that the essential part of preaching is witnessing, telling, as does a witness, what one has seen and experienced, what one knows by firsthand knowledge. To the disciples Christ said: "You shall be witnesses unto Me." Acts 1:8. It was clear to the eleven that there "must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection," to take the place of Judas. Verse 22. When Peter and the other apostles were brought before the authorities because of their preaching, they merely stated, "We are His witnesses of these things." Acts 5:32. To Paul these words were said by Ananias: "The God of our fathers hath chosen thee. For thou shalt be His witness unto all men of what thou has seen and heard." Acts 22:14, 15. Jesus Himself said to Paul: "I am Jesus whom thou persecutes. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee." Acts 26:15, 16. Of John it is said: "The same came for a witness, to bear witness." John 1:7. When the gospel is preached, it is to be preached "for a witness." Matthew 24:14. "With great power gave the apostles witness." Acts 4:33. Texts can be multiplied that stress the point of witnessing. First and foremost, we are to be witnesses, telling what we know and what we have experienced.

To every redeemed soul Christ says, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.-"

### **Be Baptized**

There are other things, however, which God requires of those who have benefited by the grace of God. We have stressed the matter of faith. Whoever comes to God, whoever is to please God, "must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." But note what Peter says: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2:38. Here the remission for sins is connected with

repentance and baptism. Add to this what Jesus says: “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned.” Mark 16:16. Here baptism is mentioned as a definite requirement of salvation. It is put coordinately with faith, and that by Jesus Himself. Read it again, “He that believes and is baptized.” If faith is necessary to salvation, so is baptism. Note also what is said of John’s baptism: “He came into all the country round about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.- Luke 3:3. The remission of sins includes the forgiveness of sins. Baptism is therefore closely connected with the forgiveness of sin. This is explained to Paul in this manner: “Now why tarries thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins.” Acts 22:16.

When a sinner has his sins forgiven, he is cleansed, purified, justified. Before, he was unclean. Now he is cleansed, free, happy. Symbolic of this cleansing is baptism. As water cleanses from physical impurity, so the water of baptism is symbolic of the cleansing of the heart from sin. It is the outward symbol to the world that a cleansing has taken place; that a person has severed his connection with sin, the world, and the devil; that he has died with Christ; and that he has risen to walk in newness of life. It is the outward symbol of an inward act and state, of death to sin and a resurrection to life. The old man is dead; the new man is alive in Christ. It is a pledge of life. “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” Mark 16:16. These words stand. In the light of them, who dares to disobey?

We do not wish, however, to present baptism as a matter of duty only. It is a blessed privilege, one that should under no circumstances be omitted. To have the outward assurance as well as the inward witness of sins forgiven is the highest bliss conceivable. This is the heritage of everyone who goes down into the water. He may know of a surety that as surely as the water goes over him, so surely does the grace of God go over his soul; and as surely as he is raised from the watery grave, so surely will God raise him in that day.

Such an experience is more than a duty. It is a most exalted privilege, and one which all should highly prize. It is one of the seven steps in conversion, and a vital one.

### **The Seventh Step-Abstinence From Sin**

To the woman who had been a great sinner, Christ said, “Go, and sin no more.” John 8:11. Some Christians do not seem to have clearly in mind that the aim of the gospel is to save from sin, not merely to forgive it. There is a difference between forgiveness of sin and salvation from sin. Some do not make the distinction clear. It may be well, therefore, to consider it briefly here.

A gospel that merely provides for the forgiveness of sin is not a complete gospel. Indeed, if forgiveness only is the purpose of the gospel, it might be a detriment rather than a help. An illustration will make this clear.

If a man kills another, he is a murderer. Though his sin may be grievous, God can and does forgive him upon repentance. However, if the man does not repent to the point where he stops killing, forgiveness would not be a blessing, but a curse. For if the man were sure that every time he murdered someone, he would be forgiven, he would feel no concern to restrain his actions. He would know that if he only asked for forgiveness, it would be forthcoming. That kind of forgiveness would be a curse.

There must, therefore, be added something to forgiveness that will cause the man to cease his evil-doing. In other words, there must be certain conditions upon which forgiveness can be had. One of these conditions is the one mentioned to the sinful woman when Christ said that she was to “go, and sin no more.” This command to “sin no more” presupposes a power to keep from sinning; for we cannot conceive that Christ would ask anyone to sin no more unless He also provided the needed power to abstain from sin. To tell a person to sin no more would be mockery if it were impossible to obey the command. We therefore take it for granted that Christ provides the power to sin no more, and that that power is inherent in the very command to abstain from sin.

A little girl had done something wrong, a trivial thing, and yet something she knew she ought not to do. Her father asked her whether she was sorry for what she had done, to which she gave a noncommittal answer. He then asked if they should not kneel and ask Jesus to forgive her. To this she gave an emphatic “No” for an answer. The father, thinking that she had not understood what he meant, repeated the request that they together ask the Lord to forgive the mistake. Again she refused. The father asked, “Mid you not do it?” To this she made a clear answer that she was guilty. “And you don’t want Jesus to forgive you?” asked the anxious father. “No,” she answered, “not now.” “Why not?” he continued; “you did something wrong, and you ought to ask Jesus for forgiveness.” “I will,” she said, “but not now. I didn’t quite finish what I was doing. I want to do a little more before I ask forgiveness.”

We may object to what the little girl did, but the philosophy behind it is consistent. There is no use in asking God to forgive our sin if we are not done with that particular sin. To ask God to forgive us and then do the same thing again is not good logic. To say that we are sorry and that we want God to forgive us, with the intention of doing the same thing again, is not good Christianity.

In the abstinence from sin lies the real power of the gospel to save. If God forgives sin, and then furnishes the power to sin no more, a complete work has been wrought. The sinner is not only forgiven, but he is cleansed and given power over sin. To have sin forgiven is wonderful. To be kept from sinning is even more wonderful. To be dragged out of the mire of sin and have one’s feet put upon the solid rock is an experience ever to be thankful for. Not to fall into the mire, but to be kept by the power of God, is an experience far transcending the other. The keeping power of God is the climax of Christian experience. Without this no Christian must be satisfied. It is the seventh and last step in conversion. While there are other experiences for the Christian even after the keeping power of God has been experienced, the climax in conversion is reached when “the power of God unto salvation” is demonstrated in the life to the keeping of the individual from sin.

## **Symbol of Acceptance.**

WHEN men declare any ordinance or ceremony to be binding on the Christian, it is always well to inquire whether it is approved or commanded by Christ, and whether or not He Himself observed it. In the case of baptism the command is clear: “Go you

therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Matthew 28:19. As this command applies to “all nations,” none are exempt.

That baptism is not an ordinance that may be lightly regarded is clear from, Mark’s record of the words of Jesus. “He said unto them, Go you into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned.” Mark 16:15, 16.

### **Both Into the Water**

Baptism is an ordinance of the church, but it is more than a mere ordinance. It is a symbolic ritual with a deep spiritual meaning. The Greek word used to describe baptism is baptizo, which the lexicons define as “to dip, to plunge in, to immerse.” The symbolism used in describing baptism agrees with this definition. Thus Jesus was baptized in Jordan; John baptized where there was much water; and Philip, guided by the Holy Spirit, led the eunuch down into the water and there baptized him. (Mark 1:9; John 3:23; Acts 8:36-39)

An interesting story of baptism is told in the eighth chapter of Acts. Philip is talking with the eunuch, who is on his way back to Ethiopia after a journey to Jerusalem. Philip explains to the eunuch the meaning of certain passages in Isaiah, and as they go on their journey the eunuch becomes convinced of the

truth of the gospel and of his need of baptism. As they are passing a body of water, he says: “See, here is water; what does hinder me to be baptized?” Verse 36. To this Philip answers: “If thou believes with all your heart, thou may.” The eunuch replies: “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still; and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.” Verses 37-39.

Note how emphatic is the statement in regard to the mode of baptism. If Inspiration merely intended to convey the idea that the eunuch was baptized, all that would be necessary would be to say what the last three words of verse 38 state: “He baptized him. But God evidently intended to tell just how the baptism was performed, and this He proceeds to do. He wants all to know that the baptism was performed by both men’s going into the water. This could have been clearly stated by merely saying, “They went into the water, and he baptized him.” But God was not satisfied’ even with that statement, clear as it is. He wanted to make sure that there should be no doubt about both of them going into the water. So God puts the word “both” in, to make it still more emphatic, and the text now reads, “They went down both into the water; and he baptized him.”

But God is not yet satisfied. There must remain no doubt regarding the fact that the two went into the water; so He adds another phrase containing one more “both.” Note how it now reads: “They went ... both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.” The repetition seems almost superfluous. But God wants to make sure that it is understood that in true baptism both the administrator and the candidate go into the water. By the two boths this is made doubly sure.

But God has still another word which He wants added. He inserts the word down, so that the complete statement now reads: “They went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.”

God Himself could not make it clearer. When baptism is conducted under the direction of the Spirit of God, the administrator and the candidate both go down into the water.

### **Death, Burial, and Resurrection**

Baptism is spoken of as a death and a resurrection. “Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized unto Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.” Romans 6:3-5.

“Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead.” Colossians 2:12.

These texts state that baptism is a burial and a resurrection—a burial of the old man, a birth of the new. As a man in death is laid to rest in the tomb, so the believer goes down into the watery grave and there buries the old man, with all that pertains to him. What is raised is a new creature in Christ Jesus. The believer is “buried with Him by baptism into death.” Romans 6:4. When Christ “died, He died unto sin.” Verse 10. So “likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin.” Verse 11. We know that “if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.” Verse 5.

These texts are plain in their symbolism. They liken baptism to a death and a resurrection. The old man dies and is buried, and the new man lives by the power of God. If this figure is considered, we will have no difficulty in understanding baptism. It is a burial.

As in real death the person is buried face upward, so it is in baptism. As in death a man is lowered into the grave once, so it is in baptism. This effectively disposes of the arguments for immersing the candidate three times, or for performing the ritual by immersing the candidate forward. There is only one baptism and one mode of doing it, according to the Scriptures. Burial is a figure of it.

### **Sins Washed Away**

Symbolically, baptism stands for the washing away of sins. This is clearly taught in the statement of Ananias to Saul: “Now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord . Acts 22:16. We do not understand that there is virtue in the water as such to cleanse from sin, but we understand that baptism is symbolic of the cleansing power of the gospel; that even as water serves to cleanse physically, so baptism serves to cleanse spiritually.

If we inquire further into the meaning of this symbolism, it becomes evident that if baptism is to be an adequate symbol of cleansing from sin, it must be more than a sprinkling. Sprinkling, as it is ordinarily administered, consists in touching the head with water. It will not be contended that there is any statement in the Bible which enjoins baptism of the head. It is not a part of the man that is to be baptized, any more than it is a part of the old man that is to be buried. Indeed, if any part of the man should be baptized, and not the whole, many would prefer to have the baptism administered over the heart rather than over the head. It is in the heart rather than in the head that sin resides, and it is the heart above all else that needs cleansing. So if part of the man is to be baptized, we would suggest that the portion over the heart be sprinkled. But we are not recommending even this.

It is the man that is to be baptized, not a part of him. That is why the figure of a death and burial is used to give a picture of the death and burial of the old man. And that is why Titus 3:5, in which baptism is spoken of as the “washing of regeneration,” is translated in Young’s Literal Translation, “He did save us, through a bathing of regeneration, and a renewing of the Holy Spirit,” and in the Emphasized New Testament, “He saved us through means of the bathing of a new birth, and a new molding of the Holy Spirit.” With this agree the translation of Weymouth and An American Translation, and also the Danish Version. Dean Alford says that the word used in Titus could never be translated “washing, as A.V. [American Revised Version], which the word cannot mean by any possibility.” He contends that it should be “laver,” not washing, to which Lange, in his Critical Commentary, agrees, and says that it has “reference to baptism, which might all the more easily be exhibited as a laver, loutron, since it was originally performed by the entire submersion of the person baptized.”

The one adequate figure of complete cleansing by water is a bath. We are sinful. We need a complete cleansing, not merely a sprinkling. The only adequate symbol of what God does for the soul in cleansing from sin is complete submersion in water, complete cleansing, much water covering everything. Nothing else will do. Why should anyone be satisfied with having only part of the body baptized, when there is abundant provision for a complete work to be done?

We could continue this argument, but it is not necessary. God commands and demands baptism. “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned.” Mark 16:16. With these words before him, there is only one thing for the Christian to do. He must follow His Lord. But he should not be baptized as a matter of duty merely. It is a blessed privilege. He that is baptized may know of a surety that as certainly as he is baptized in faith, he will rise from the water with the assurance that every sin is forgiven, that he is a new creature, that all his sins have been cast into the sea, and that he is cleansed from sin. Such baptism is more than a duty; it is a blessed opportunity which none should neglect. We fail to understand how any can emit that which the Lord Himself has instituted and which is so full of promise. Sprinkling, pouring, or any other mode than the one which the Lord Himself approved and followed, is an inadequate and unworthy symbol of what the Lord will do for the soul.

## The Real Jesus

THOSE who picture Christ as a pale, emaciated person who seldom smiled, but generally wore a sad expression on His face, do not know the real Jesus. It is unfortunate that our ideas of the Master are taken from plaster casts that represent Him as being in the last stages of some wasting disease. The Gospels do not so represent Him. There He is presented as a personality radiating cheer and good will, taking pleasure in the society of men, partaking with them of their simple repasts, sitting with them at their feasts. He is in no sense a recluse. He seeks the company of His fellows and takes delight in mingling with them in the ordinary pursuits of life. His healthy body, His frugal life as a Galilean peasant, and His work at the ordinary trade of carpentry gave Him a common-sense, wholesome view of life. This is indicated in His public as well as His private utterances.

Jesus was a man; and though gentle and considerate, He was in no sense effeminate. How do we account for the fact that men of all kinds and stations in life were drawn to Him, except on the supposition that there was something in Him which appealed to them? No rough soldier, no man with the position and authority of a Roman centurion, no stern prophet such as John the Baptist, no Pharisee such as Nicodemus, no rough-and-ready fishermen such as His disciples, no personage such as Judas, would ever have been influenced by or led to follow Jesus had He been less than a man in every sense of the word. When the soldiers who had been sent to apprehend Him came back with the report, “Never man spoke like this man,” we know that something out of the ordinary must have taken place. They would have made short work of their task had Jesus been a fanatic or daydreamer. That they came back without having accomplished their mission is eloquent testimony to the power of His personality. Jesus was a man among men, or He could never have had such influence over men.

Nor must we think of Jesus as hard, cold, or distant. The children loved Him, and He loved them. The aged were attracted to Him; mothers sought His counsel and blessing; the sorrowing and sick found solace in His presence. All this can be accounted for only as we conceive of Jesus as being kind, courteous, considerate, but in no sense effeminate or weak.

We therefore hold that Jesus was every bit a man; that He could hold His own among men; but that He also had a peculiar grace which gave Him a strong hold on old or young, man or woman, Jew or Gentile, Roman, Greek, or barbarian. This argues a strong personality, an understanding spirit, and a wholesome view of life.



Jesus came to this world to reveal the Father, and to show us what God is like. God wants us to know that He is a friend of man, One who loves us and is willing to help and serve us in every way possible. Jesus came to this world to show us the Father, to help us get acquainted with Him, to assure us that there is nothing God is not willing to do for man, and to give us such a view of God that we will be willing to cast our lot with Him and share His home and happiness forever.

Let us sum up a few of the outstanding characteristics of Christ.

1. Manliness. To this we have already alluded. A man ought to be a man and not a woman, as a woman ought to be a woman and not a man. When a man is effeminate or a woman mannish, all dignity and charm are lost. The generally accepted standard that a man should not wear woman's apparel, nor a woman wear man's apparel, has a deeper foundation than merely that of clothing. Let a man be a man, and a woman a woman. Christ was in every sense a man.

2. Kindliness and consideration. Too often a man stresses the sterner virtues and forgets that a true gentleman is a gentle man. A true man is kind, courteous, considerate. He does not cringe before superiors, nor is he condescending or arrogant to inferiors. He is kind, dignified, self-possessed. Jesus was that. Children felt perfectly at home with Him; the common people heard Him gladly; but whether as king as He was acclaimed at His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, or as a prisoner when He was arraigned at the bar and later beaten with stripes, He was the same calm and self-possessed Jesus. Peter might cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest. Jesus quietly freed His hands and restored it, and then submitted to other indignities. Unperturbed, quiet, dignified, kind, Jesus was a true gentleman, everywhere and at all times.

3. Love of mankind. Jesus was more than kind and considerate. He had a genuine love for man. This is, affirmed in the Bible, and it is shown in His life on earth. "Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it." Ephesians 5:25. Paul makes this love personal when he says that Jesus "loved me, and gave Himself for me." Galatians 2:20. We may, therefore, confidently affirm that Jesus Himself loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood," and "gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world." Revelation 1:5; Galatians 1A. It was not as a matter of duty that Jesus came to this world. He came because He loved men.

Jesus' love of men was not confined to a single race or to a special few. His love embraced all, black and white, rich and poor, men and women, good and bad. It was not because men were good that He loved them and gave Himself for them. No. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8. The little child, the stern soldier, the outcast leper, the despised publican, the venerable Nicodemus, the sinful woman, the rich Zacchaeus, the possessed demoniac, the bereaved widow-all elicited His sympathies, and all shared in His ministrations. He made no distinction between those of his own nation and those from afar. He drew no racial lines of any kind.

Jesus loved the common people, and they heard Him gladly. (Mark 12:37) This does not mean, however, that He excluded anyone who was rich or held high position. He treated all alike. He did not love the poor because they were poor, nor did He hate the rich because they were rich. He loved rich and poor alike, regardless of their riches or their poverty. He was as quick to rebuke the poor for their covetousness as He was the rich, for He declared: "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much." Luke 16: 10. The only hope of the poor was to be faithful in the little with which they were entrusted. If they were not faithful in these matters, they would never be given the privilege of having greater responsibilities. "Because thou has been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities." Again Christ says: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou has been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." Matthew 25:21. God exhorts the poor to be faithful in their little, just as He exhorts the rich to be faithful in their much. He is not favoring the rich, nor is He prejudiced against them, but He makes it perfectly clear that they are not especially favored because of their possessions.

Jesus loved even His enemies. Hear those wonderful words that He spoke from the cross as men were driving the cruel nails through those blessed hands: "Father forgive them; for they know not what they do." Luke 23:34. Further than this love cannot go.

If there were one class of people Jesus would have difficulty loving, it would be the Pharisees. They did all they could to hinder Him in His work. Not only did they refuse to enter the kingdom of heaven themselves, but they also kept others from entering it. They were bigoted, self-righteous, proud, vindictive, cruel. They were always dogging the footsteps of Jesus, making the way hard for Him. They were the ones who plotted His death and aroused the people against Him.

Even though Jesus was aware of the determined and consistent hatred of the Pharisees, it is interesting to note that He received and accepted at least three invitations to be their guest and eat with them, one of those from a "chief Pharisee." (Luke 7:36; 11:37; 14:1) Nor must the long talk He had with Nicodemus be forgotten, for Nicodemus was "of the Pharisees," "a ruler of the Jews," apparently one of the leaders. (John 3: L) In this case, as when Jesus talked with the woman at the well, there were no others present at the interview. We therefore presume that Jesus Himself told the story to John and that He wanted this incident recorded. It should not be forgotten that it was in connection with this interview that some of the most precious statements in the whole Bible are recorded. We cannot be certain that the precious words in John 3:16, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son," were spoken to Nicodemus on this occasion; yet they easily might have been. But discounting this, we still have all the beautiful truths concerning conversion and the work of the Holy Spirit recorded as a definite statement of divine truth which Christ first gave to a Pharisee.

4. Honest, truthful, sincere. It seems almost superfluous to mention these as characteristic of Jesus. Yet it takes tremendous courage to exhibit these traits of character without being obnoxious or proud of them.

What courage, what honesty, what sincerity it must have taken, to tell Nicodemus that he needed to be born against The Master realized that it was perhaps the only opportunity He would have to talk with Nicodemus alone and that He must make the most of it. And so He spoke. If there had not been behind them courage, honesty, sincerity, would Jesus' words ever have made the impression they did upon the Samaritan woman at the well? The faith men had in Jesus was grounded in His absolute adherence to the love of truth, in His evident sincerity and honesty. Only such a life begets faith; only such a life inspires in others confidence and willingness to follow its lead, whatever the outcome. Without these traits Jesus could never have accomplished the work which He had set out to do.

5. His estimate of man. Jesus had a profound appreciation of the value of a human soul. He was as willing to minister to those whom men considered outcasts as He was to minister to the more favored and to the rich. A leper received as much of His attention as did a member of the Sanhedrin. He took as much time to help the flippant woman at the well as He did to help the rich young ruler. No one was beneath His notice. He was ready and willing to help all.

Who but Jesus, for instance, would have thought it worth while to spend time on the demented man "who had his dwelling among the tombs"? It has been written of him that "no man could bind him no, not with chains; because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones." Mark 5:3-5.

A man in this condition is probably as far removed from humanity as it is possible for a man to be and still remain a man. He was possessed of an unclean spirit, which ordinarily meant that he was bodily and morally corrupt. He was possessed of evil spirits to the extent that no man could tame him. He had been bound with chains, but with superhuman strength he had broken them. Day and night he was among the tombs crying and cutting himself. Human estimate would have been that such a man had better be left alone. He was beyond help.

But Jesus did not think so. He crossed the lake to help him. As the disciples rowed the boat to "the other side," a storm arose, and it seemed certain that they would all perish; but Jesus quietly arose "and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm." And by morning He was in the country of the Gadarenes, close to the haunts of the poor demoniac.

It should be noted that, as far as the record goes, all that Jesus accomplished on this journey was the healing of this man. We cannot suppose that He was in ignorance of this fact beforehand. When He started out, He knew definitely what He would be able to do. But He purposed to demonstrate that no man, however low he may be in the scale of humanity is to be regarded as beyond help; and that there are potentialities and possibilities in the least promising persons that must not be overlooked.

To help this man, Jesus passed a hard night with little sleep, and encountered a storm that would have proved fatal to the disciples but for Him. He did His work in restoring the demoniac to health and reason and left those shores again at the invitation of the people whom He gladly would have helped had they accepted His ministry.

The record of this healing yields another interesting point. When Jesus asked, "What is thy name?" The spirit replied: "My name is Legion: for we are many." Mark 5:9. As the evil spirits besought Him that they be not sent out of the country but into a herd of swine that was feeding near by, Jesus granted their request, and the swine promptly "ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea. And they that fed the swine fled, and told it in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done. And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind; and they were afraid. And they that saw it told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine. And they began to pray Him to depart out of their coasts." Mark 5:13-17.

We do not know why Jesus permitted the devils to enter into the swine. True, they asked to be allowed to do this, but that does not seem sufficient reason. Some commentators think that Jesus permitted this to rebuke the Jews who considered swine unclean and yet were willing to raise them for the profit that their sale might bring. We admit that one who considers swine unclean and yet raises them for profit is not very consistent. However, we would like to submit some other, facts.

Two thousand swine is not an inconsiderable investment. We do not know what two thousand swine would be worth now; we do not know what they were worth then. Estimates would differ so widely that we shall not attempt an evaluation, and that is not necessary for our purpose. Suffice it to say that thousands of dollars' worth of property was destroyed to save a poor human wreck who was hardly thought

worth saving, and who was probably responsible for his own condition. This was the opinion of the Gadarenes. When they heard what had happened too the man "that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine, they began to pray Him to depart out of their coasts."

We presume that the Gadarenes were glad that the demoniac was healed and in his right mind. He had been a source of great trouble to them. No one dared pass that way, and his shrieks at night sent terror even to the most stouthearted. He was now restored. A wonderful miracle had been performed, and the people were glad. But those swine! A man had been saved, but at what cost! Was any man worth two thousand swine? The more the people thought of it, the surer they were that they did not want any more people saved or healed at such a price. So they "began to pray Him to depart out of their coasts.-"

Is a man worth two thousand swine? Jesus thought so. He thought this poor man worth more than that. On one occasion He said: "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Mark 8:36. The world is worth more than two thousand swine. And a man is worth more than the whole world! This is the high estimate that Jesus puts on a human soul.

In the days of Christ a man was not counted as being worth much. Slaves were sold cheaply in the market. Hosea bought Gomer for fifteen pieces of silver and some grain. (Hosea 3:3) Twice that would be the ordinary value placed on a slave. But a man such as the demoniac could not be sold at all. He was worth nothing. He was a liability. Yet Christ considered him worth saving, and He wanted to impress upon the Gadarenes, the disciples, and all who later should read the account, that even the lowest of men has been bought with an infinite price and is worth saving.

## God the Father Loves You

As a boy I was fearfully afraid of God the Father. This was probably because of the way God was presented to us in school and church. Jesus is good, we were told; but the Father, beware of Him. If He caught little boys wiggling in church or looking around, it would go hard with them. The floor of hell was covered with little children not an ell long, who would suffer throughout eternity because of some little disobedience.

As a result of such teaching I was afraid of God, and it never occurred to me that I could ever love God as I could Jesus. They were entirely different. God was probably all right in His way, but I had no urge to become acquainted with Him. If I ever got to heaven and God was there, I hoped that He would sit far off on a throne, and stay there. I would go near Him only as a matter of duty, and I hoped that He would not come near to where I was. I was sure that I could not feel comfortable in His presence, as I could with Jesus. Jesus loved boys; He had been one Himself; He was human. But not so the Father. He was stern, sober, forbidding. He did not love boys. They irritated Him. It would certainly not do to play when He was around. He would frown on such frivolity. Boys and God did not get along very well. He was like some old people I knew who were annoyed by children.

It was therefore a wonderful revelation when it first dawned on me that the Father is just like Jesus. This was an entirely new conception, and I was not sure that I dared to believe it. I felt that I knew Jesus. I had no doubts about Him. But God the Father! Could it be possible that He is like Christ?

This new conception of God came to me through the statements which Christ makes about the Father in the fourteenth chapter of John. There He is talking to the disciples about the Father, eager that they shall become acquainted with Him. The subject of both the fourteenth and the fifteenth chapter of John is the Father. Again and again He is mentioned, and Jesus does His best to remove any misapprehension of the Father which may be in the minds of the disciples. When Philip in a matter-of-fact way demands, "Lord, show us the Father, and it suffices us," Jesus answers, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet has thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how says thou then, Show us the Father?" John 14:8; 9.

"No man hath seen God at any time." John 1:18. This statement is repeated in different forms in the Bible. The reason God the Father has not been seen by any man is that He is invisible to mortal sight. Paul calls God "the King, eternal, immortal, invisible." 1 Timothy 1:17. Again he speaks of God "whom no man hath seen, nor can see." 1 Timothy 6:16. When Moses "endured, as seeing Him who is invisible," it was a matter of faith. Hebrews 11:27.

For reasons best known to God, He has not appeared in visible form to man at any time. The manifestations of God in the Old Testament are manifestations of Christ. Christ is God, and whenever we read in the Old Testament of God's appearing to Moses or to any of the other prophets, it is always Christ who is thus revealing Himself. We shall not at this time present the proof for this statement, but only refer to the evident truth that if no man has seen God at any time, it must have been someone else than God the Father whom the prophets of old called God; and someone else than the Father to whom Moses spoke face to face. (Exodus 33:11) If it were really God the Father who spoke face to face with Moses, then the statement that no man has seen God at any time cannot be true. If we accept Christ as God, and understand that it was Christ who revealed Himself to Moses, then there is no contradiction, and all is clear.

If God is invisible, if no man has ever seen Him, if no man in mortal flesh ever can see Him, it is necessary that some revelation of Him be made if men are ever to know Him. Christ came to make that revelation. That is why John, immediately after the statement that no man has seen God at any time, adds, "The only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." John 1:18. Christ revealed the Father so perfectly that when men had seen Him, they had seen the Father. He was not only the image of His Father, but "the express image." Hebrews 1:3. As Christ came to this world to reveal the Father, to show men what He is like, it was necessary for Him to do exactly as the Father would have done had He been here. Hence Christ declared that He had a commandment from the Father "what I should say, and what I should speak." John 12:49. Again He says, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me." John 7:16. Again He says that the Son does "nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do." John 5:19. "I came down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." John 6:38. "The Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always the things that please Him." John 8:29.

From these statements it is evident that Christ and the Father are completely one in all that they do and say. One is the express image of the other. God is just like Christ. This deeply impressed me. I did not know God the Father. I was afraid of Him. I did know Christ. And now Christ told me that the Father is just like Him. Could that be possible? If so, then I could love God the Father, as well as God the Son.

Since childhood one text had greatly impressed me, that shortest verse in the Bible, "Jesus wept." John 11:35. Lazarus was dead. The two sisters and some of the friends were standing in a little group, weeping. When Jesus saw them weeping, He was troubled and "groaned in the spirit." It could not be that Jesus wept merely because Lazarus was dead, for in a few moments He would raise Him to life. Why, then, did He weep? Because they wept; because He was one of them. Now I had learned that even in this He

was revealing the Father. He did nothing of Himself, but what He saw the Father do; “for what things so ever He [the Father] does, these also does the Son likewise.” John 5:19. And so “Jesus wept.”

This tells me that the Father weeps over the woes and sorrows of mankind. It tells me that God is touched with the feelings of our infirmities, and that there is not a tear that falls which He does not notice. When I see Jesus going about doing good; when I see Him healing the sick and comforting the sorrowing, I see the Father. I did not know the Father before, but now I know Him. “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.” John 14:19. The Father is just like Jesus, just as kind and compassionate, just as understanding.

I have heard many sermons on Christ; I have heard many sermons on the Holy Spirit. I do not recall that I have ever heard a sermon on the Father. In many churches the name of Christ is highly exalted, the Holy Spirit is constantly referred to; but God the Father is almost forgotten. Yet I suppose that there is nothing that is more needed today than a knowledge of the Father.

Note the import of these scriptures: “These things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor Me.” John 16:3. “But all these things will they do unto you for My name’s sake, because they know not Him that sent Me.” John 15:21.

Christ is speaking of the persecution that should come to the church. The suffering which the people of God should undergo would be caused by the fact that men did not know God. History records that this is literally true.

Many of the persecutors of the church during the Dark Ages were evil, cruel men. But this is not true of all the inquisitors. The church taught that if men did not believe the doctrines of the church they would be lost and condemned to the tortures of the damned, not for a day or a year or a lifetime, but forever and ever. To save men from such a fate the inquisitors were willing to apply the torch or the rack or the screw, hoping and believing that the poor sufferers would recant and turn to the church before they died. It might mean terrible agony to them for a few hours while they were being roasted over a slow fire, but if they were eventually saved, what would a few hours of torture be as compared with an eternity of suffering from which they would be spared? Some of the persecutors verily thought that they were doing the will of God. If they were successful in saving the soul, they had done a good deed. Christ says, “These things they will do unto you for My name’s sake, because they know not Him that sent Me.”

The whole history of the Inquisition bears eloquent testimony to the fact that men persecuted because they did not know the Father. Their conception of Him was the perverted one which is still prevalent, that God is cruel, that He will punish and punish endlessly. While this view does not explain all the horrors committed in the name of religion, it does account for many of them. This Christ plainly indicates in the texts cited.

We therefore emphasize that the world needs another vision of God, a better understanding of what He really is. And this new conception is gained by looking at Christ. He came to reveal the Father. That revelation is needed today as much as ever.

Just what does all this mean to young people? Much in every way. I have known not a few who had the same conception of the Father that I had. They did not know Him. They took Him for granted, but He did not mean much to them in their religious life. They could get along without Him, and He was politely put aside.

I once witnessed the home-coming of a boy from college. The parents had done everything for the boy, even at great personal sacrifice, and now at last he had finished his course and received his degree. It was with great joy that the parents awaited him, and also with a certain subdued pride mingled with anxiety. How would John react to home conditions? Would he be the same boy who had left them some years ago, or would he be disdainful of the humble surroundings from which he had sprung?

John seemed to be the same. Apparently college and a degree had not spoiled him. He took hold of the work on the farm as he used to, and helped in any way he could. Then the time came when he would have to leave home to take up his chosen work. He and dad had a little conversation. John put his hand on dad’s shoulders, looked him squarely in the eyes, and said, “Dad, I want you to know that I appreciate more than I can ever tell you what you and mother have done for me.”

That was all. There was no special emotion, just a man-to-man talk. Dad was not given to many words, and on this occasion he was too full for words. It was the happiest day of his life. He now knew that John understood, and that he appreciated the many prayers that had ascended to the Father in heaven for him, the sacrifices that had been necessary, the skimping that his schooling had cost. The father quietly turned aside, but there were tears in his eyes. They were tears of joy.

The Father in heaven is as definitely longing for words of appreciation as was John’s father. God gets very few of those words. Many there are who in a testimony meeting will protest their love for God, who never in the quiet of the evening, alone with Him, have looked up into His face and from a full heart said, “Father, I just love you. I appreciate what you have done for me. Thank you.” God is longing for those words from His children, and especially from the young people with their ardent affection. Must He wait longer? Tell Him that you love Him. Do it quietly by yourself. God will appreciate it!

## The Shape of Things to Come

IT was Christmas Eve. I was awakening after an operation which I had undergone in a sanitarium. I was conscious for just a moment, and then sank back into unconsciousness again. But in that moment I had heard the angels singing “Silent Night, Holy Night.”

These “angels” were the nurses of the institution who were passing through the halls singing this beautiful Christmas carol that has become the favorite in so many lands. Their voices were sweet and soft, and in my half-conscious state I verily thought that I was in heaven.



When I came back to consciousness again-this time for a little longer-I still heard the singing. I was alone in the room; all was peaceful; and the singing came nearer and nearer. Through misty eyes I saw white-clad figures passing in the hall and heard the song of the angels gradually receding. Now I knew that I was in heaven; all my trials were over; all was well with my soul; and in sweet contentment I sank back on the pillow and was again in the land of forgetfulness. Never shall I forget the joy and the peace that pervaded my whole being as I rested in the sweet consciousness of sins forgiven and salvation assured.

The third time I awoke a nurse was bending over me and quietly asking how I was feeling. Feeling? What had happened to me? Was I not in heaven? She felt of the bandage. The bandage! Did I have a bandage on? I felt of it. It was there. I was not in heaven. I was in a hospital. The disappointment is not easily described.

### **Peace on Earth**

“On earth peace, good will toward men.” These words must sound strange to people in lands where neither peace nor good will is prevailing. Many are the hearts that are longing for the day to come when peace shall reign and men shall learn war no more. Shall the time ever come when there shall be in deed and in truth “on earth peace, good will toward men”?

These words were sung by the angels at the birth of the Child of Bethlehem. The angel that first appeared to the shepherds in the field announced, “Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.” Luke 2:10, 11. Then “suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” Verses 13, 14.

Many years have passed since then, and yet the promise has not been fulfilled. Will it ever be? Yes, definitely so, but not fully until that glad day shall come of which prophets and seers have spoken.

We are not to forget what Christ has said concerning the peace that may be ours even under present conditions. Hear these wonderful words. “These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” John 16:33.

This is indeed a precious promise: peace amid turmoil; peace as nations are broken up and family ties are broken; peace under social upheavals, under convulsions of nature, under the uprooting of age long customs. Yes, in Christ we may have peace, though in the world we shall have tribulation.

Christ’s coming to this world as a babe in Bethlehem is a justly celebrated event of deep significance. This must not blind us to the fact, however, that another event is hastening on apace that is no less important for the inhabitants of the world. We have reference to Christ’s second coming which all signs show is near at hand. The church in Christ’s day was not awake to the importance of the event taking place in Bethlehem. The priests, the rabbis, the scribes and the Pharisees were unaware that a child had been born who was to be ruler in Israel. Only a few shepherds were there to welcome the Prince of Peace as He made His appearance in the manger. The church and the world were asleep. Shall it be so when Christ makes His second appearing?

Just what does the second coming of Christ mean? What may we know concerning it? These are important questions to which we must turn to the Bible for an answer. Let us do this. Let us in particular note Christ’s conversation with His disciples, as one day they “came to Him for to show Him the buildings of the temple.” Matthew 24:1.

As Christ looked at the massive stones to which the disciples were pointing with pride, He quietly remarked, “There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” Matthew 24:2. No more was said. The disciples did not finish their tour of the temple. Christ had given them something else to think about.

### **Christ Answers His Disciples’ Questions**

Later the company were making their way to the Mount of Olives, right across the valley from the temple, which was in full view. As the disciples looked at it, they wondered among themselves what Christ could have meant by saying that not one stone should be left upon another. Was their beautiful temple to be destroyed? That, to them, could mean nothing less than the end of the world.’ When Christ, therefore, was seated upon the mount, they came privately to Him, saying, “Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?” Verse 3.

Christ had said nothing about the end of the world. Yet the subject does not appear to have been new to them. The Master had evidently discussed these matters with them before.

Their question involved two events which in their minds were closely united. The first, “When shall these things be?” doubtless referred to Christ’s statement about one stone’s not being left upon another. This was the destruction of the temple. The other question referred to the coming of the Lord and the end of the world. This latter in reality had two parts: What shall be the sign of Thy coming? And, What shall be the sign of the end of the world?

I once put to a minister the very question that the disciples asked Christ. I had read the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, and thought that I would ask the minister the question the disciples had asked, and see what answer I would get.

The minister looked at me sharply. “Young man,” he said, “you are not getting to be fanatical, are you? Don’t bother your head with such questions as the end of the world. That won’t come in your day or mine. You just live so that you are ready to meet your Lord whenever He comes.”

Christ could have answered the disciples the same way. He could have told them that His coming was not a matter of importance. He could have told them that only simple-minded people were interested in such questions. He could have told them that it was none of their business, and that He was too busy to answer such irrelevant queries. But Christ did nothing of the kind. Patiently

He answered them, in de-, tail and at length. The twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew's Gospel contains fifty-one verses, and the next chapter forty-six, and both of them are given to the answering of the disciples' questions. While the importance of a subject is not necessarily gauged by the length of its discussion, it is evident that Christ would not have answered so painstakingly had He not considered the subject worthy of such an answer. Let us consider part of this remarkable discourse.

### **Deceptive Doctrines Abound**

Christ's first statement is a warning against being deceived. "Take heed that no man deceive you," He says, "for many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many. And you shall hear of wars and rumors of war: see that you be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end, i not yet." Matthew 24:4-6.

It is significant that Christ utters this warning at the very outset. This should put us on our guard There is danger of being deceived on this important, subject. We all need to take heed.

Christ next speaks of the dangers and persecutions that will come to His people, of how men shall betray', one another, and of how the love of many shall wax cold. Then comes this important pronouncement! "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Verse 14.

This is a definite statement, a definite prophecy, one that can be clearly understood and cannot be misunderstood. "Then shall the end come." When? When "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world." While this states neither the day nor the hour, it does mention a very definite sign that tells when the end shall come. It shall come when the gospel shall be preached in all the world.

If we go back in time less than two hundred years, we find that at that time there were large portions of the earth where the gospel had never been heard. Eighteen centuries had passed since Christ made the prediction of the end of the world, but only a comparatively small part of the earth had ever heard of the gospel.

Today there are few countries to which the missionary has not gone, few places where the gospel has not been heard. Some, indeed, misread Christ's statement and hold that not only is the gospel to be preached, but that the world is to be converted. Of this the text says nothing. It is entirely incorrect to interpret this text to mean that the world shall be converted before the Lord shall come. All it says is that the gospel shall be preached for a witness. Men may or may not accept it, but the gospel shall be preached whether they will hear or forbear. If they hear and accept, well and good. If they do not accept, it shall nevertheless be preached to them for a witness. When this shall have been done, the end shall come.

On the basis of this text we are warranted in believing that we are nearing the end of all things. Gradually the gospel is conquering new territories, gradually the Bible is being translated into new tongues, until now the number of languages in which the Bible, or part of it, is preached is more than one thousand. Soon, we do not know how soon, the last sermon will have been preached. "And then shall the end come."

### **Dual Application**

It should be noted that this particular part of Christ's prophecy had a limited application also to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. We remarked above that the disciples doubtless connected the destruction of the temple with the end of the world. It is therefore noteworthy to recall that in the apostolic age the progress of the gospel was so rapid that Paul could say that it had been "preached to every creature under heaven." Colossians 1:23. This was about the year 64 AD. It was in 66 AD that the attacks upon Jerusalem began that led to its fall in 70 AD. This was the end of the Jewish nation as well as of the temple. There is a distinct parallel between the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world. Christ of course, knew this. He also knew of the Jewish conception that when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed, the world would come to an end.

Without correcting the idea, He so presents His prophecy that it has application to both events-a good example of what Bible students call the "double application" of prophecy. A reading of the following sections of the prophecy will convince anyone, however, that the application to the destruction of Jerusalem is only incidental, and that the prophecy finds its complete and real fulfillment, only in the events that culminate in the end of all things.

There are other prophecies in the Bible of like nature. Such prophecies as those of the ninth and fourteenth chapters of Zechariah are not exhausted in the first coming of Christ as a little babe, or in the destruction of Jerusalem, though they definitely refer to these events. Their final and complete fulfillment has a much wider range and application. There can be no doubt that Zechariah 14:2 was distinctly fulfilled in the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. It is just as clear that the following verses have a much larger scope, and include events to take place at the end of time.

Of like nature is Christ's prophecy in the twenty fourth chapter of Matthew. The discerning student will see in the first section of this chapter an instructive example of double prophecy, painted by the Master Himself. As the prophecy progresses, the more immediate events gradually fade into the larger picture, until those who read thoughtfully see a masterful picture of the scenes of the last tragic days of earth's history.

### **Turn to the Prophet Daniel**

"When you therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (who reads, let him understand:) then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains." Matthew 24:15, 16.

Christ is still speaking. He has just said that when the gospel has been preached in the whole world, 11 then shall the end come." Verse 14. He now turns the subject upon the book of the prophet Daniel, and admonishes, "Who reads, let him understand."

When it comes to the question of the coming of the Lord and the end of the world, there is probably no section of the Book of books of greater importance than Daniel. When the disciples asked the question, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Christ, in the text before us, called attention to the book of Daniel, and said in effect, "Be sure you understand it." We are not inclined to place this book above the other books of the Bible; for that would clearly be a mistake. It is, nevertheless, true that this is the only book to which Christ calls special attention and which He admonishes us to read and understand. And peculiarly enough, despite this admonition, it is the one neglected book of the Old Testament. Ministers preach from the Psalms; they quote Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the minor prophets; but to the best of our knowledge the book of Daniel is on the proscribed list of most preachers, and who ever attempts to preach from it or to explain it is immediately classed with what is sometimes called the 'lunatic fringe.'

That there are things hard to understand in the book of Daniel is admitted. This is implied in the words of Christ, "Who reads, let him understand." This, however, instead of being a matter of discouragement, constitutes a challenge. The truth is that Christ encourages the reading of the book and admonishes men to understand it.

We shall not attempt to give an explanation of "the abomination of desolation" of which Christ speaks. We wish at this time to call attention to that part of the book of Daniel that deals with "the end."

### **Modern Science Supports Prophecy**

Our discussion shall deal particularly with a text in the book of Daniel that is found in the fourth verse of the twelfth chapter, and reads as follows: "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."

In this text Daniel is told to shut up the words and seal the book until the time of the end. What should happen at that time? Then "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." This text is evidently one of those which Christ had in mind when He advised the reading of the book of Daniel.

If we had no other sign that the end of the world is near than the present increase of knowledge, it would be sufficient and convincing. Whether a man believes the Bible or not, he must admit that we are living in a time when science and the inventive genius of man have reached a new peak. The world has never seen anything like it

Several years ago I was speaking in a certain college on the subject of how remarkably knowledge has increased within the last hundred years, and happened to mention the value of matches in our complex civilization. I had heard my father tell of his childhood before matches had been invented. People were very careful then not to let the fire go out, for it was no easy task to start it again with flint and steel. If the fire in the fireplace should accidentally go out, it was easier for someone of the family to walk a few miles through the snow to the next neighbor's to borrow fire than to attempt to start a blaze with the means then at hand. At this, a young man registered his astonishment. "Why," he said, "I had the idea that matches always existed! I thought they were created when the world was created."

It is hard for us to conceive of conditions as they were one or two hundred years ago. Especially is this difficult for young people, for they have not lived long enough to note the contrast; but now even they can see that things are rapidly changing. Suppose we were suddenly transported to conditions as they were two hundred years ago. Let us go to sleep tonight and wake up in the middle of the eighteenth century.

"Wife, I am afraid I have overslept. Strange, the alarm did not go off. What has become of the clock?" I search, but do not find it.

"Wife, get me a bite to eat. I must hurry. I am afraid I shall be late at the office."

"Yes, dear, but where are the matches? I must light the stove."

There are no matches, and there is no stove.

"Well, wife, strange things have happened overnight. No matches; no stove. I wonder about the furnace. I suppose that is gone, too."

And it is.

"Well, I must phone Mr. Jones that I cannot keep my appointment with him, for I can never get downtown in time now. I wonder where the phone book is. Gone, I suppose. And it is! What has come to pass in this old world? I shouldn't wonder but the phone is gone also. Well, it is! What are we coming to?"

I search for the key to the car, so that I can drive downtown as quickly as possible, since the telephone is gone and I cannot revise my appointments. I cannot find the key. Have I lost it? Perhaps I left it in the car last night. I run to the garage. But the car is gone, and so is the garage! I do not need the key. But what shall I do? Take the streetcar? There is none. I go back to the house.

"I am going to turn on the radio, wife, and find out what this is all about. I never saw anything else like it. We might as well have lived a thousand years ago as under these conditions." But there is no radio. I am dumfounded.

"Well, that is the limit. Give me the morning paper, so I can find out what has happened." But the boy has apparently not delivered it!

Imaginary? Yes, but nevertheless real. No sewing machines, no surgery, no telephone or telegraph, no electric light-not even kerosene light-no streetcars or trains, no steamships, hardly any of the common necessities of today. If we go back two hundred years in time, we might as well go back two thousand. For there was little perceptible progress up to that time. Men tilled the soil, sowed and reaped, two hundred years ago as they did four thousand years ago. Men read by candlelight in the time of George Washington as they did in the time of Jesus Christ. Then suddenly, a hundred or more years ago, a change came. It is almost a miracle.

I was in Illinois when the first telephone line was stretched in a certain rural district. One farmer was skeptical of the newfangled idea. He had heard of speaking tubes before, but he was sure that no speaking tube several miles in length would ever work. His astonishment was unbounded when the thing did work, and when he discovered that the wire was not hollow at all, as he had thought, but solid! He could conceive of a speaking tube. But a solid wire! How was it possible to send words through such a contraption? It was uncanny, and he would have none of it.

No one was more astonished than I when I made my first radio, a little crystal set. All I did was to follow directions—quite simple for the set I was making. And behold, the thing worked! It seemed utterly unbelievable that sound could come through the air without any wires. Surely the day of miracles had come.

It is of little value to enumerate all the inventions of these days. There are too many for the space allotted us, and they are all well known. There is danger, however, that we take these things for granted, that we forget that they in themselves constitute one of the most outstanding signs of the times, and that Christ Himself called attention to the increase of knowledge as one of the harbingers of the coming day.

### **Can Education Save the World?**

The great increase of knowledge in these days serves another purpose than that of merely standing as a sign of the nearness of Christ's second coming. It demonstrates how men will use, or rather abuse, the gifts of God. There are those who believe that the great need of the world is not religion, but education. They contend that culture, refinement, learning, will save the world. They have read of the atrocities of olden times, of the brutal treatment of prisoners, the insane, the defenseless, women, children, and the aged. They have laughed at the claim that Christianity, and Christianity alone, has the power to change men's hearts. They have protested that Christianity has done nothing for humanity that education cannot do better. They claim that science has made God unnecessary; that education and culture has brought more humanitarian methods and institutions into existence than Christianity ever has brought or ever can bring.

That claim is now being tested. What has education, what has science, what has culture, done for the world? Much good, and much evil. Men are demonstrating today that education alone can never save the world or make it better. Who, for instance, could have believed that in this twentieth century, persecution could and would be revived? Such things happened in the Dark Ages; but we were assured that they never could happen in the present age of enlightenment, education, and culture. The present situation of the world is the greatest indictment of education for education's sake that the world has ever seen. It is a demonstration of what godless education and godless science will do. By this time all should be convinced that science cannot save the world, and that godless education only aids and abets evil and makes it more effective for destruction of all that is good.

It is a bounden duty of young people to get all the education they can. But let it be Christian education. Beware of the philosophy of the world. Beware of mere worldly education.

## **Signs of Impending Climax**

THERE shall be signs. "What sign will there be. When these things shall come to pass?" Luke 21:7. This was the question the disciples had asked Christ with regard to the end of the world. He answered, "There shall be signs." Verse 25. God does not leave His people in the dark.

### **The Great Persecution**

The first of the specific signs mentioned are signs in the heavens. "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars," says Luke. Luke 21:25. These signs, Matthew tells us, shall come "Immediately after the tribulation of those days." Matthew 24:29. The tribulation here mentioned is doubtless the great and prolonged persecution that God's people suffered during the so-called Dark Ages.

There have been many and severe persecutions, but none to compare with the centuries of suffering which the saints passed through for a full millennium. By way of pre-eminence Christ called this the "great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." Verse 21. Fearful as was the suffering of the Jews at the siege of Jerusalem, fearful as has been their persecution since then, yet these persecutions lasted but a few years. But not so the persecution which Christ designated as the greatest of all. Century after century passed. God's people were in hiding, hunted like wild beasts, seeking refuge in dungeons and caves of the earth. Millions found temporary shelter in the catacombs under Rome, but other millions laid down their lives for their faith—on the scaffold, on the gallows, at the stake—most of them after having suffered tortures that only the evil one himself could invent.

### **Signs in the Heavens**

It was immediately after the tribulation of those days' that the sun "shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." Matthew 24:29. While it may not be possible to set an exact date for the end of the persecution that lasted for centuries, we know that it continued until quite late in the eighteenth century, perhaps until about 1775. It was immediately after this that the signs Christ mentioned should begin. Accordingly we record the remarkable darkening of the sun on the nineteenth day of May, 1780, as the fulfillment of the first of these signs, with the corresponding darkening of the moon the following night.



This, of course, could not be an ordinary eclipse, for of them there have been many since the world began. To qualify as a sign of the coming of the Lord, it must be of a nature to command the attention of men as something unusual, and must be above any ordinary happening or explanation. The darkening of that May day in 1780 was of this very nature. It was not an eclipse either of the sun or of the moon.

Yet it was so unusual that men's minds were called to it as a portent of the coming day of God. Note these statements:

"The 19th of May, 1780, was a remarkable dark day. Candles were lighted in many houses; the birds were silent and disappeared, and the fowls retired to roost.... A very general opinion prevailed, that the day of judgment was at hand."-Timothy Dwight in Connecticut Historical Collections, JOHN BARBER, P. 403.

"In some places persons could not see to read common print in the open air for several hours together. Birds sang their evening song, disappeared, and became silent; fowls went to roost; cattle sought the barnyard; and candles were lighted in the houses. The obscuration began about ten o'clock in the morning, and continued until the middle of the next night, but with differences of degree and duration in different places. The true causes of this remarkable phenomenon are not known." - Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, edition 1883, p. 1604, in article "The Dark Day."

If the darkening of the sun and moon must be of a special nature to qualify as a sign, so also must be the falling of the stars. This event took place on November 13, 1833, and is thus described.

The celebrated astronomer and meteorologist, Professor Olmsted, of Yale College, says: "Those who were so fortunate as to witness the exhibition of shooting stars on the morning of November 13, 1833, probably saw the greatest display of celestial fireworks that has ever been since the creation of the world, or at least within the annals covered by the pages of history. The extent of the shower of 1833 was such as to cover no inconsiderable part of the earth's surface, from the middle of the Atlantic on the east to the Pacific on the west; and from the northern coast of South America to undefined regions among the British possessions on the north the exhibition was visible, and everywhere presented nearly the same appearance."

"At Niagara the exhibition was especially brilliant, and probably no spectacle so terribly grand and sublime was ever before beheld by man as that of the firmament descending in fiery torrents over the dark and roaring cataract."-The American Cyclopaedia, edition 1881, article "Meteor."

It is more than a hundred years since the last of these signs, the falling of the stars, took place. Of the next event the Inspired Word says: "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matthew 24:30.

Let us recall that the question which the disciples asked was this: "What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Matthew 24:1 It is this question which Jesus is answering. He stated that before the end can come, the gospel must be preached for a witness to all nations. This is about to be fulfilled. He stated, referring to the book of Daniel, that before the end can come, there will be a wonderful increase of knowledge. This we see fulfilled before our eyes. He stated that a persecution would come which would be the greatest since the beginning of the world, and that immediately after "those days," the sun would be darkened, the moon would not give her light, and the stars would fall from heaven. This has come to pass. The next event, He says, is that men shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. For this, then, we may confidently look in the near future.

We cannot believe that Christ had any intent of deceiving either His disciples or us. They asked Him in all honesty what signs would show that His coming was near. Christ gave them an honest answer.. This answer we have read. The disciples did not ask to know the day or the hour; and Christ did not tell them. But He did give them signs that they might know when the day was near. This is as far as we can go. We do not know the day or the hour. But we do believe the words of Christ, "When you shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." Verse 33. We have seen the things of which He speaks. We therefore believe that His advent "is near, even at the doors." The lesson is for all of us, whoever we may be: "Prepare to meet thy God."

### **A Lesson From History**

There is another chapter in the book of Daniel that has a special bearing on the question of the end of the world. To this we would now call attention.

Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, was worried. He had conquered one nation after another, and he was ruler of a world empire, but one thing gave him grave concern. His son, who was to be his successor on the throne, was utterly untrustworthy. His royal father had done everything possible to reform him, but all to no avail; he was incorrigible. What could the king do? What would become of the kingdom after he was gone and the son had taken over? He was very anxious.

It was night, and as Nebuchadnezzar fell into a troubled sleep he "dreamed dreams." One dream in particular disturbed him, "his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him." Daniel 2:1. When he awoke he was annoyed that while the dream seemed important, he was unable to recall it. In his dilemma he called the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans together. These were the so-called wise men of Babylon who claimed to have intercourse with the gods and to be able to foretell the future and to interpret dreams.

These wise men were mostly pretenders and deceivers, who had a certain insight into the sciences and were able to deduce from past events what the possible future might be. In making any forecast, they were, of course, careful to so word their predictions that whatever happened, they would be in the right. A case in point is the classic illustration of the wise men who were asked by a certain king what would happen if he attacked an enemy, the ruler of a mighty nation. Would he win or lose? The answer, given after due deliberation, was that should he undertake such a campaign he would destroy a great nation. The king naturally understood this to

mean that he would be successful. When, contrary to his expectation, he was defeated, the wise men calmly informed him that this was what they had foretold him. The great nation he would destroy was his own!

There was doubtless some ground for the title “wise men,” for they were men of unusual ability and wisdom. Their difficulty was that they claimed too much. They claimed to do through magic and astrology what was merely the result of a keen and analytical mind. They wished to be understood that they were on intimate terms with the gods, which would, of course, enhance their reputation.

But now they were in difficulty. If the king would only tell them the dream, they would be able to make some kind of interpretation that would once more save their reputation. But the king had forgotten the dream. In view of that handicap, what could they do?

When the wise men hesitated and asked the king to tell them the dream so they could furnish the interpretation, Nebuchadnezzar became angry. He accused them of wanting to “gain the time,” and said that unless they told him the dream and the interpretation without delay, they should be cut in pieces, and their houses should be made a dunghill. (Daniel 2:5)

These were hard words; but the wise men only insisted the more that if the king would tell the dream, they would interpret it. “For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded, to destroy all the wise men of Babylon.” Verse 12. Then Daniel and his friends appeared upon the scene of action.

Daniel and his companions made no claim to any knowledge of magic or astrology, but because of their “excellent wisdom” they were counted among the wise men. It appears that when the command was given that all the wise men be destroyed, Daniel and his fellows were the first to be sought in response to the king’s demand. Daniel, however, answered wisely the captain who was sent to apprehend him. He was unacquainted with the reasons for such an order, and asked that time be given him to look into the matter. This was granted.

At once, the little company of four young men Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah engaged in prayer, and the secret of the dream was revealed in a vision. First they praised God and gave thanks to Him for answering their prayer; then Daniel said to the captain of the king’s guard, “Destroy not the wise men of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will show unto the king the interpretation.” Daniel 2:24. His request was immediately granted, and he appeared before the king.

“Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof?” the king demanded. Daniel denied that he had any wisdom above the other so-called “wise men.” He stated that they could not make known the dream, but that “there is a God in heaven that reveals secrets, and makes known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days.” Verse 28. Daniel then proceeded to tell the dream.

The king had seen as he slept upon his couch a “great image, whose brightness was excellent, and the form thereof was terrible. This image’s head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou saw till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.” Daniel 2:31-35.

Nebuchadnezzar was much impressed. Daniel had described the image just as he had seen it in his dream, and this gave him confidence that the interpretation would be correct also. The image with the head of gold, the breast and arms of silver, the thighs of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet of iron and of clay was now a vivid memory. But what was its meaning? He was not long kept in suspense.

### History in Advance

“Thou, O king,” declared Daniel, “thou art this head of gold. And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and subdues all things; and as iron that breaks all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.” Daniel 2:37-40.

The explanation is so simple that a child can understand it. Babylon, the kingdom over which Nebuchadnezzar ruled, was the head of gold. After him would come another kingdom represented by the silver, which fitly portrayed the next world kingdom, Medo-Persia. Following Medo-Persia’s fall a third kingdom would bear rule over all the earth-Greece. The fourth kingdom, Rome, would be strong as iron, and would break in pieces and subdue all things. This kingdom, however, was not invincible; the image had feet made of a mixture of iron and clay, not a desirable combination, nor a strong one.

This, Daniel notes, means that “the kingdom shall be divided,” that it “shall be partly strong, and partly broken.” Verses 41, 42. He further explains the mixture of the iron and clay by saying that “whereas thou saw iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.” Verse 43.

Rome, the fourth kingdom, was divided in more ways than one. As the legs were of iron, so Rome was strong. As the feet were of iron and clay, so Rome, after it was divided into the ten kingdoms which constituted Europe, was partly weak and partly strong, as is apparent in the European nations of today.

An important statement is the information that the mixing of the iron and the miry clay denotes that “they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men.” That is, they shall intermarry; but that despite this, “they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.” Verse 43.

When the kingdom of Rome was broken up by the barbarian invasions of the fourth and fifth Christian centuries, the division resulted in ten different kingdoms which, with the exception of those which were destroyed, have remained practically the same till the present.

“And the division is as apparent now as ever. Plainly and palpably inscribed on the map of Europe this day, it confronts the skeptic with its silent but conclusive testimony to the fulfillment of this great prophecy. Who can alter or add to this tenfold list of the kingdoms now occupying the sphere of old Rome? Italy, Austria, Switzerland, France, Germany, England, Holland, Belgium, Spain, and Portugal, ten, and no more; ten, and no less.”-H. GRATTAN GUINNESS, *The Divine Program of the World’s History*, pp. 318-321.

“They shall mingle themselves with the seed of men.” All these centuries the rulers of the European nations have intermarried, mostly for political reasons. The late Christian IX of Denmark was called “the father-in-law of Europe,” as his children married into nearly all its leading nations. Thus, when the first World War started, there was a close bond through marriage between England, Germany, Russia, Greece, Denmark, Norway, all through this one Danish family. But this did not avert the war. “They shall not cleave one to another,” is the dictum of prophecy. This has been abundantly fulfilled. Today Europe is as divided as ever.

Throughout the centuries attempts have been made by different rulers to unite the scattered kingdoms of the Old World under a central government. Chief among these were Charlemagne, Charles V, Louis XIV, and Napoleon. At least two of these succeeded to a certain extent and for a limited time. But the word of God still stands: “They shall not cleave one to another.”

As the stone cut out of the mountain without hands smote the image and toppled it over, so “in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed. And the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Forasmuch as thou saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces, the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold. The great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter; and the dream is certain and the interpretation thereof sure.” Daniel 2:44, 45.

“The dream is certain.” There is no question about this. “The interpretation thereof sure.” God has made known to us what shall come to pass hereafter. He is about to set up His kingdom.

When Christ was asked what should be the sign of His coming, He referred His questioners to the book of Daniel. Wonderful is the light God has for us in this book which Christ recommended. All the kingdoms now in existence shall be destroyed. It is for us to prepare for a place in the everlasting kingdom that shall be set up by Christ Himself. The stone is about to smite the kingdoms of this earth. Let us get ready for the kingdom of God.

### **In Like Manner**

There are those who believe that Christ’s coming is at death. This, however, is not the teaching of the Bible.

When Christ was about to leave the earth after finishing His work, He led the disciples out to the Mount of Olives, where He had often met with them. Here He gave them His parting instructions; and then “while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight.” Acts 1:9.

This is the simple account of Christ’s ascension to heaven. He had been with the twelve in the flesh; He had eaten and slept with them; He had instructed and comforted them; doubting Thomas had put his hand in His side and assured himself that this was really Christ, and not a spirit. And now, when the time came for Him to depart, He was taken up from them bodily in a cloud while they stood gazing into heaven.

“While they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, You men of Galilee, why stand you gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven.” Acts 1:10, 11.

Note the ringing certainty of these words. It would have been sufficient for the angel to say, “Jesus shall come again.” But he made his message more emphatic by saying, “This Jesus shall come.” Not another Jesus; but this Jesus. But even that was not definite enough, for the angel said, “This same Jesus shall come.” God is evidently anxious that there shall be no misunderstanding. The same Jesus that the disciples saw ascend, will come back.

But how will He come? The angel might have answered that Christ “shall come as you have seen Him go into heaven.” That would have explained it all. The disciples had just seen Him ascend bodily. He will come back the same way. The angel, however, made it more specific. He said that Christ “shall so come as you have seen Him go into heaven.” That little word “so” emphasizes the manner of Christ’s coming, and leaves no Biblical ground for the belief that He comes at death. But the angel said still more.

Christ “shall so come,” he said, “in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven.” This is final. Words cannot make it clearer that the Savior’s coming is to be literal, personal, visible. Then, too, the manner of His coming must be important, or that point would not have been so emphasized by the angel messenger. God evidently knew that men would attempt to pervert His teaching on this point.

### **For His Saints**

“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 you may be also.” John 14:2, 3.

When some distinguished political personage comes to visit, it is customary for the host to meet and greet the visitor at some distance from the destination to which he is bound. Should, for example, the king of England decide to visit the United States, the President would be at the railroad station to meet him. A lesser personage would be met by a lesser official, and a common person would, of course, be left to shift for himself. What shall we say, then, when the Majesty of heaven shall come not only part of the way from heaven to meet His own, but the whole way! And when He comes, He will bring “all the holy angels with Him.” Should the President of the United States go to England, accompanied by the members of the Supreme Court and his whole Cabinet, to escort the

king of England to Washington, it would be an unparalleled event in the history of the world. And yet it would be as nothing to what Christ will do for His beloved followers. Our imaginations cease to function when we think of the honor to be bestowed on the saints at the coming of the King of kings.

It is at this time that the scripture shall be fulfilled: “The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God. And the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17.

In that awful day God’s people will be “without fault before the throne of God,” “every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” Revelation 14:5; Colossians 1:28. Christ will “present you holy and without blemish and unreprouvable before Him” (the Father). Colossians 1:22, RV.

May we believe that the coming of Christ to this earth to welcome His saints is more than a formal act, more than an official occasion? May we believe that Christ is human enough to want to meet again those from whom He has been separated, lo, these many years? Some think of God as not touched with the feelings of our infirmities, as incapable of longing, of desire, of love. But may we not think of Christ as earnestly desiring to see those with whom He was once so closely associated here on earth—Peter and James and John; Lazarus, Mary, Martha, and all ‘the rest? Some may object to this as making God in the image of man; but did not Christ while on earth have these feelings of humanity, and may we not believe that He has not changed? We do not insist that this be so, but we hope that it will be.

### **Rewards for Every Man**

“Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” Revelation 22:12. When Christ comes the second time, “He shall reward every man according to his works.” Matthew 16:27. His people shall “be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.” Luke 14:14.

What will be the reward of the righteous? First of all, life eternal, everlasting, unending. It was life that our first parents forfeited when they sinned. “In the day that thou eats thereof thou shall surely die,” God told Adam. Genesis 2:17. “The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life.” Romans 6:23. The wicked “shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.” Matthew 25:46. That which Adam lost is restored through Christ. The righteous shall be rewarded with life.

We are too apt to measure life merely by length. A far better way to measure it is by depth. It is not how long a man lives that counts; it is how much he can pack into the years given him that is of value. Some people live more in a year than others do in ten. Their lives are filled to the brim; they are awake and alive every moment of time. Others take a passive or negative attitude toward things in general, are not deeply stirred by anything. They exist, but they do not really live.

It would certainly be a calamity if eternal life were merely unending existence. It must be more than that to be satisfying. Let it be emphasized that real life is knowledge, it is love, it is friendship, it is communion. In its highest reaches it is knowledge of God. “This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou has sent.” John 17:1 This text defines life. It states that life is a knowledge of God.

The reward given to the saints, each “according to his works,” is not according to an arbitrary standard that will award so much to each man according to the good he has done. It is rather that every man will be given all that he can possibly hold of life. What each receives is not gauged or limited by God’s desire to impart or withhold, but solely by man’s capacity to receive. Some men have much greater capacity to appreciate and use than others. They will get all they can possibly use and hold. But so will the one with lesser talents. He also will have his measure filled to the brim. Thus in a very real way it is true that each man determines his own reward. But there will be no jealousy because one has more than another. Each will have all he can hold and use.

## **Sin Had a Beginning**

SIN has not always existed. There was a time when every created being was in harmony with his Maker. There are certain references in the Bible that tell with whom sin originated, but the real reason for sin is not given. Some have said that there is no reason for it, and that this is why nothing is said about any reason. We believe this to be true. There is no reason for sin; neither is there any excuse for it. There is less reason than there would be for a millionaire to go into a store and steal a spool of thread. Such an act on his part would be utterly unreasonable; and so is the origin of sin. Who can give any reason for Eve’s eating of the forbidden fruit? There were many trees in the Garden of Eden, and she was free to eat of any or all of them. It certainly was not hunger that impelled her to choose the tree of knowledge of good and evil. There were trees on the right and on the left. Why should she take the fruit of the one tree that was forbidden? There is no reason.

Eve, however, was not the first sinner. Long before her time, Lucifer had started on the path that led to his downfall. But there was no more reason for his sin than there was for Eve’s. Both are utterly unreasonable and non understandable.

There are few people from whom we cannot learn some lessons worth while. We can learn from good people, and we can learn from those who are bad. We can even learn something from Satan—not, indeed, by way of example, but by way of warning. We presume that this is the reason the record of this fall is in the Bible. Let us look at it.

Several orders of angels are mentioned in the Bible. There are the ordinary angels, who are frequently mentioned in both the Old and the New Testament. Then there are seraphim, such as are mentioned in the sixth chapter of Isaiah. They are represented as standing near the throne of God. They also seem to have something to do with the altar, for one is said to have brought live coals from



the altar and laid them on the mouth of the prophet. (Verses 6, 7) As this was a service which only priests were permitted to perform, we take it that the seraphim are angels who minister in the sanctuary above in a special way.

The cherubim are also an exalted order of angels. When Adam and Eve sinned, cherubim were sent to guard the way to the tree of life. (Genesis 3:24) When the tabernacle was built, the figure of a cherub was placed at each end of the cover of the ark, so that the two of them hovered over the mercy seat. (Exodus 25:19) It was between these cherubim that the Lord of heaven dwelt with His people. (Psalms 80:1) It was between these cherubim that God promised to meet with His people. (Exodus 25:22) It was “from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubim,” that God spoke to Israel. Numbers 7:89. Ezekiel, in the tenth chapter of his book, presents them as closely connected with the throne of God. They seem to have a higher position than the seraphim—in fact, higher than any of the other angels.

One of the cherubim, Lucifer by name, is called “the anointed cherub that covers.” Ezekiel 28:14. This indicates that Lucifer had the highest position an angel can occupy, and that God Himself had appointed him to the office he held. This is inferred in the statement, “I have set thee so”; that is, God had appointed him to the place he occupied. Ezekiel 28:14.

### **Perfect in Beauty**

Of Lucifer it is further stated, “Thou was perfect in thy ways from the day that thou was created;” “full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.” Ezekiel 28:15, 12.

It seems that in Lucifer were combined all the graces that anyone could have. He was full of wisdom, perfect in beauty, perfect in his ways. In other words, he had an attractive personality, his ways were engaging, he was friendly and personable. He had not only knowledge but wisdom; that is, he knew how to use the knowledge he had. He was not like some people who have much knowledge but little sense. Lucifer had both. If to this we add his personal appearance and his exalted position, we have a personage who well deserved the high honor given him. “I have set thee so,” says God; “thou was upon the holy mountain of God; thou has walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.” “Thou has been in Eden the garden, of God.” Ezekiel 28:14, 13. God Himself had given him his place, and as exaltation and position in heaven are not given through favoritism, we are safe in believing that Lucifer merited the place he occupied.

To many people position and preferment are harmful. Ten can stand adversity where one can stand prosperity. Few there are who do not put on “airs” because of some supposed advantage. The boy who is six feet tall is often proud of it, and in more ways than one “looks down” upon his shorter companions. The girl who has beautiful hair; or eyes, or ears, is not unaware of the fact. It is indeed remarkable how little it takes to make one feel superior. I well remember a conversation of which I was the subject years ago when I was a little boy. Some of mother’s friends were discussing me. I was not supposed to hear or understand. I confess the conversation was not very flattering to me—doubtless on good grounds. After these friends had discussed me for some time and pointed out my physical and other failings, one of the women remarked: “Have you noticed his ears? They are not bad.” For weeks after I heard that remark I washed my ears carefully every morning. I had something to be proud of; not much, it is true, but enough. I was not a complete and total loss. My ears were all right.

I have noticed that too many of us are affected by some little supposed superiority. I have known girls to become deeply enamored of themselves because of a dimple or a curl, a good complexion, or a new dress or pair of shoes. I have known boys to be greatly impressed with their muscles, their ability to run or jump, their cleverness of wit, their father’s money or position, or any one of a thousand other things. I have known families to boast of their ancestry, their home or house, their automobile, their neighborhood.

Some feel superior because of their race or creed or country, and I have even known those who boasted of the particular climate of the place where they made their home. In my own mind I excuse all these; they doubtless have an inferiority complex and are merely boosting their own morale. They must let others know that there are some things in which they excel.

### **Antidote for Pride**

This matter, however, should not be considered too lightly, for weighty are the results of that which may appear inconsequential. Paul was a mighty man of God. Yet God found it necessary to place a thorn in his flesh, “lest I should be exalted above measure.” 2 Corinthians 12:7. Three times Paul asked to have it removed, but God did not grant the requests. While we do not know the nature of the affliction to which Paul was subject, we do know that the figure suggests not merely extreme annoyance, but real suffering. Even a little sliver can be most uncomfortable. But the word here translated “thorn” does not mean a sliver only. It means a stake, rather.

We can imagine Paul asking that this “stake” be removed, thinking himself in no danger of exaltation. God thinks differently, and decides that it had better stay. After a while Paul asks again that the thorn be removed. He believes that he has learned his lesson, and that God can safely remove the thorn. But God does not consider it safe. A third time Paul asks. Again God hesitates. At last Paul is convinced that he should not ask any more. God knows better than he. If God thinks the thorn should remain, Paul is satisfied, if God will only give him grace to bear it.

### **This God promised. (2 Corinthians 12:9)**

It must have been of some concern to Paul to decide whether he should make known to others what might be considered a private matter. Should he tell the church that he was in danger of being puffed up? Should he tell the church that he asked the Lord three times to remove the thorn, but that the Lord believed that there was still danger of his becoming exalted, and that the thorn

should not be removed? Would it not hurt his influence should the truth become known? After the thorn had been removed, it might be well to reveal the struggle through which he had passed. But while the thorn remained, would it not be better to say nothing?

But both God and Paul considered the matter of sufficient importance to record it. And it is written for our admonition. For Paul is not the only one who has been afflicted with thoughts of exaltation and pride. Paul had great abilities. He had done a great work. And he was in danger of exaltation. That is a danger we all face. It was such a spirit that caused the fall of Satan.

### **Pride Before a Fall**

How did Lucifer, the beautiful angel, the “son of the morning,” become Satan? What were the factors that led him to decide to turn from his allegiance to God and attempt to set himself up as a god to be worshiped? We have already observed that we cannot peer into the secret springs that motivated and caused the first sin. All we can do is to note its first appearance as it is revealed in Scripture. Beyond that we cannot go.

The Bible records pride as the cause of the fall of Lucifer. Three things of which he was proud are specifically mentioned in the twenty-eighth chapter of Ezekiel. They are stated as follows: “Your heart is lifted up because of thy riches,” “your heart was lifted up because of thy beauty,” “thou has corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness.” Verses 5, 17. Riches, beauty, brightness—these three—the pride of their possession was the cause of Lucifer’s fall.

“There is nothing so offensive to God, or so dangerous to the human soul, as pride and self-sufficiency. Of all sins it is the most hopeless, the most incurable.”

Pride is considered by many people a respectable sin, if, indeed, they consider it, a sin at all. It is not to be classed with hatred, murder, or immorality. Even church people look upon pride with tolerance. I have never heard of anyone’s being dis-fellowshipped because of pride. And yet it is one of the most hopeless and incurable of sins. The habitual drunkard may be considered hopeless. The habitual prevaricator seems almost impossible of reformation. But these cases are not the most hopeless.

Yet some who are deeply affected by pride are holding offices in the church and are regarded, as members in good standing. Some of us will have to change our opinion of what constitutes “bad” sins. We are too likely to think that our own sins are respectable while those of other people are bad.

To have a lively and correct conception of what constitutes sin becomes important in view of the fact that the “respectable” sin of pride was fundamental in the first sin that ever entered the universe of God. Satan’s heart was “lifted up.” To him much had been given, but instead of being humbly thankful, he became “puffed up” over his attainments, taking to himself the glory which should be given only to God.

Lucifer had nothing which he had not received from God. Why, then, should he be proud?

### **Sins Worthy of Death**

The first chapter of Romans contains a list of sins which all will agree are very heinous indeed. Of them Paul says, “They which commit such things are worthy of death.” Verse 32. That we may know just what the list is, we quote: “Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity. Whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful. Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.” Romans 1:29-32.

Glancing through the list, we agree with the conclusion that death is a just punishment for such as commit these sins. And yet, when we take a second glance we are not sure that many would agree that all the sins mentioned are deserving of capital punishment. Some appear quite respectable. Let us take a close look at some of the less objectionable ones.

Envy. Bad, very bad indeed, especially when someone else is at fault. But to be a little envious myself is not so bad. I am envious of my fellow student because he gets a better grade than I do. That is not really bad, especially if I say nothing about it. I am jealous of my friend because he was chosen for an office of trust when within myself I know that I am much better fitted for it than he. Jane is envious because Mary was asked to sing at a public function, when “everybody knows that Mary can’t sing.”

One teacher is jealous of another because the students like the other teacher better. One preacher is jealous of another because people for some unaccountable reason think that the other is more efficient; one musician is jealous of another because the audience responds more heartily to his performance, when the people should know that what he plays is “cheap stuff.” One doctor—and so on. All this envy and jealousy is bad in other people. Might it not be bad in us also? We are all guilty. We need to repent.

Deceit. To deceive is to mislead, to appear to be what one is not, to dissimulate, delude, fabricate. Synonyms are craft, deceitfulness, double dealing, duplicity, fabrication, falsehood, fraud, hypocrisy, imposition, lying, trickery. Quite a list. Deceit must be very bad.

But is it really so bad? Isn’t a little hypocrisy justifiable? Can’t I dissimulate just a little? Is it really bad to steal just a little something, when it belongs to nobody in particular, but is only public property? Is it really bad to cheat just a little in examinations when nobody sees? Is it really bad to be a little hypocritical and attempt to make myself appear better than I really am? Is it really bad to appear industrious when the “boss” is around, and soldier as soon as he is gone? Is it really bad to fail to correct the mistake when we have received too much change for a purchase? Is it really bad to lie just a little when You do it with moderation? Let whoever reads this judge his own acts and motives.

Whisperers. If I were writing this to students only, I might tell them that this has reference to whispering in class and chapel exercises. That might be true; but this is not its first or primary meaning. It has reference to whispering about others, circulating falsehoods-or even truths with unworthy motives about our fellow men or comrades, to hurt one's reputation.

Too many of us are not as careful as we should be about our speech. Most of us talk too much and pray too little. We may not speak with evil intent, and yet the results may be very serious indeed. Many reputations have been ruined by a whispering campaign. Institutions have been damaged, officials unjustly dismissed, families broken up, because of evil reports. Let young people beware of the unlovely habit of talking evil of anyone. It does not pay. Paul lists this sin among those that are worthy of death.

Proud. In a school which I visited some time ago I was speaking of this list of sins which I am here reviewing. When I came to "proud," one of the young men expressed the opinion that this particular sin is a feminine weakness, and that Paul had girls in mind when he wrote "proud." To that I agreed. I think Paul had women in mind, for too many of them are afflicted with pride. But while Paul had women in mind, I think he also had men in mind. And men have less reason-if there be any reason-for pride than have women. It has always seemed to me that women are made of a little finer stuff than men. But then, perhaps I am mistaken. I suppose they are about the same.

How little it takes to make a man proud. I remember the first long trousers I had. How proud I was! I was now a real man. I was sixteen. I dressed up in the best fashion of the day, which at that time included a stiff "stand-up" collar and tie. It was Sunday afternoon, at which time all the young people paraded around town and down the main thoroughfare to be admired of the opposite sex. Winnipeg (in Canada) was a comparatively small town in those days, yet it affected a metropolitan air. Though years have passed, to this day the whole event is clear in my mind. As I walked down Main Street, I thought I was the subject of much favorable comment and smiles, and I smiled back the best I knew. I was definitely pleased with myself.

Then a horrible thought struck me. Had the young women I had just passed smiled at me, or had they laughed? Was there, anything in my appearance that amused them? I turned the corner, and there in one of the show windows was a mirror which revealed myself to me as I really was. They had laughed and not smiled pleasantly. I discovered that my tie, on which I had spent so much time to be sure that it was knotted just right, had crawled up above my high, stiff collar-an unforgivable sartorial mistake in those days! I lost no time in getting home by way of the side streets.

Boasters. Ordinarily not considered a great sin, yet placed among those sins on which the wrath of God is pronounced. Disobedient. To God; to parents; to those in authority.

Covenant breakers. Such as do not keep their promises, whose word cannot be relied upon, unreliable.

Read the list again. Here are named small sins and great sins, as men count them; but in the sight of God all are great. We repeat: it may be necessary for us to revise our opinion of sin. Some sins that we have not thought of as great, God considers so. We should do the same.

## **On the Pinnacle**

But let us go back to Lucifer. He had riches, beauty, and wisdom. Here indeed is temptation for many.

Riches. What a hold they have on many. Some are willing to sell their soul-and do sell it-for filthy lucre. Many a man has left God and the path of rectitude and stultified his own soul to gain a little of this world's goods. The pleasures and riches of the world beckon a young man, and he yields. He could have had an honored place among men; he could have had a place in the work of God, but the call of money is too much for him. Once the call of the mission field sounded loudly in his ears. His heart responded. But then he heard another call. And the world took him away. Now he has money-but more often he has not. In either case there is a wasted life if not a lost soul. Beware of the call of wealth. It is a deceiver. There is no lasting satisfaction but in God and His service. Riches was one of the causes of Lucifer's fall.

Beauty. How many have been beguiled by the vanities of this world! Lucifer decked himself with every precious stone.... the sardius, topaz, and the diamond; the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold." Ezekiel 28:13. He outshone Solomon, and was doubtless of beautiful appearance. But there was something lacking. When the test came, he failed.

There is no objection to young people's-or those older grown-making every legitimate effort to appear at their best. We cannot believe that God is pleased with anything that is slovenly or untidy. Let the young women dress with neatness and taste. Let the young men avoid that which is merely foppish or the current rage. But let all, men and women, remember that God expects us to represent Him in all that we do, and that we are not true representatives if we are careless and unattractive. Polished shoes and a well pressed suit are part of religion. So are clean fingernails, attractively arranged hair, and appropriate apparel. But let all outward adorning, everything put on for mere show, be shunned. Lucifer decked himself out with all manner of jewels and finery. We need not follow his example.

Wisdom. "Do you think I would marry that girl?" said a young man. "She doesn't even have an AB." Too bad. "Doesn't even have an AB." How dreadful! I think the young man will live long enough to know that there are things in this life more important than an AB. God forbid that I should speak disparagingly of an AB. But I am afraid that there are some who place too much emphasis on degrees. An AB. is, after all, only the beginning of the alphabet, and the occasion on which it is bestowed is rightly called a "commencement," for that is all it is. But too many consider it the end. A little modesty would be a very fitting accompaniment to educational attainment.

"The world by wisdom knew not God." 1 Corinthians 1:21. How true that is. We have come to a time when science is worshiped as verily as were heathen idols of gold. And much of the science thus worshiped is "falsely so called." Whenever

knowledge is sought for its own sake, it becomes a vice and a snare. Knowledge acquired for the purpose of imparting to others, that it might bless mankind, is to be highly esteemed.

Brightness. Lucifer's wisdom was corrupted by reason of his brightness. While "brightness" here does not have the same meaning as when we speak of a person's being "bright," there is some of that connotation in the word. Lucifer thought himself a little too bright; he lacked modesty, and was impressed with the light and knowledge he possessed. There is the same danger now. We cannot have too much knowledge, but there is definite danger in mere brightness. Let us acquire the one and shun the other.

This experience of Lucifer's is all that we know of the origin of sin. In the beginning it was not any great sin that he contemplated. He was merely proud of his riches, his beauty, and his knowledge. He thought too much of himself. When we see in the world today the consequences of what appeared to be quite innocent in the beginning, it should teach us to watch out for small sins. For seemingly small sins are mighty in their consequences.

We doubt that Lucifer fully realized what he was doing when he took the first step in sin. Few of us do, and it may have been the same with him. Riches, beauty, wisdom, beckoned him, and, little by little he was drawn away from his allegiance to God and in a short time had gone too far to turn back.

## **A Rule of Conduct**

MEN need to have their attention called to the fact that God's law, the Ten Commandments, the royal law, can be flouted only at the peril of their souls. They are in danger of forgetting this, and it devolves upon those who see the peril to acquaint them with the gravity of their situation.

While there is a definite responsibility resting upon Christians to preach the law, they must first of all make sure that they are not themselves breaking the very law they are attempting to teach others. This was the burden that rested upon Paul's heart as he reasoned with the Jews. They were proud of the law and of the fact that they were its guardians. Thou "art confident," says Paul to them, "that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness." Romans 2:19. Then he issues a warning:

"Thou, therefore, which teaches another, teaches thou not thyself? Thou that preaches a man should not steal, does thou steal?" Verse 21.

The man who is a devout churchgoer, but sharp in his dealings with others, dishonors both God and the church. The fact that he worships God one day in the week does not make up for his lack of integrity the other days. The innocent and trusting man who has been "taken in" by the misrepresentation of a so-called Christian, is not thereafter easily won to Christianity. And he can hardly be blamed.

## **Difficult to Be Honest**

It is not always easy to be truthful. It is not always easy to be honest. But we can be, and we must be. No Christian can afford to permit himself to vary from the straight line in any particular. In the complex life we are living today there are so many deviations from the right that we are in danger of being influenced to tolerate, and in some cases to adopt, practices that will not stand the scrutiny of investigation.

It is not easy to sell groceries and be strictly honest. It is not easy to be a doctor and tell the truth always. It is not easy to be a real-estate man and abide by the golden rule. It is not easy to be a businessman and hold to strict integrity. It is not easy to be a nurse, a dressmaker, a housewife, a stenographer; it is not easy to be young, or old, man or woman-in fact, it is not easy to live at all-and be honest in all things. But Christianity demands "truth in the inward parts." Psalms 51:6. Nothing less than that will God accept from us.

In my youth I thought ministers ought to be always happy, since I reasoned that they do not have the temptations to which common mortals are subject. Surely it must be easy for them to be all that they ask others to be. But after I became a minister it did not take me long to discover that ministers also have their problems.

I began my ministry in the Middle West, but after a few years was transferred to a large city in the East. The first thing I noticed as I arrived at the church for my first service in this new parish was an undertaker's sign on the church. It was neatly painted, and it gave information which would be needed should an emergency arise. I concluded that one of the members was in the business, and that the church had permitted him to put the sign up as a matter of accommodation to him. However' upon inquiry I found that this was not the case; I was informed that churches of all denominations had such signs, and that it was one of the customs of the city. At our first business meeting I asked for further particulars, and suggested that the sign be taken down. This, however, the brethren did not think best to do.

Then came my first funeral. A poor sister had lost her husband; the undertaker in question was called, and I was asked to preach the sermon. This I did to the best of my ability. On the way home I rode with the undertaker high up on one of the old-fashioned hearses used in those days. After due preliminaries he handed me a five-dollar bill. I asked what that was for, and he informed me that this was for my part in the funeral. When I inquired further how it came about that he was paying me, he explained that it was the custom in that city for the undertaker to include in his fee for services a certain amount for the minister. He regretted that as this was not an expensive funeral, five dollars was all he could pay me. When I indignantly refused his offer, he stated that he might be able to make it a little more, but not much, for he himself was making but small profit on this funeral. He had not only had



to pay the drivers of the carriages-this was in the horse-and-buggy days-but all of them would also expect extra tips. If these were not paid, untoward events and even accidents might happen, and in a short time his business would be ruined. When I told him that I could not accept the money as a matter of principle, he said little more. I was a newcomer, and would soon learn.

Then I did some thinking. What should I have done? All I had accomplished was to hand the undertaker five dollars. The widow had paid it. I had lost it. The undertaker had it. Perhaps it would have been better to accept the money. I could have given it back to the widow. It was too late this time; but next time I would know better.

It was the same undertaker next time. This time I received ten dollars, and made no objection to accepting the money, but felt it my duty to explain why I had changed my mind. I told the undertaker that I intended to give the money to the widow. This, evidently, I should not have told him. He looked at me in a queer way and said nothing; but I felt that he did not believe that I was telling the truth. He thought I was a hypocrite and a liar. Other ministers were at least honest and took the money; but I was trying to make him believe that I was going to give it back to the widow. I felt thoroughly miserable. It was not as easy for ministers to be honest as I had thought it was.

During the summer I conducted tent meetings in a rather hard neighborhood and needed police protection. I was told that I would never get it unless I was willing to "grease" the policeman's palms. Ten dollars would do, I was told. I decided not to pay any graft, and as I was given assurance by the police captain that there would be a policeman there the next night, I thought all was well. But there was no policeman, and we had more disturbance than ever. It was the same the next night, and the meetings were in a fair way to be ruined. Still, I was determined not to pay. But the next night all was well. There was no disturbance. I had won out, I thought. A few weeks later I learned that one of my friends had given the policeman the necessary money. By this time it had become clear to me that the life of a minister is rather complicated. I decided that ministers are not exempt from troubles.

Young people and even children have their temptations the same as do others. Each temptation is gauged to the age level and the individual disposition, and Satan may be trusted to take advantage of any weakness the person may have. This well known habit of his may be turned to our advantage, however, for it calls attention to our weak traits and gives us the opportunity to watch and strengthen ourselves on the very points on which the attacks are made.

The head of the mathematics department in a certain school had an assistant whom he did not like. To embarrass him, the department head refused to let the young man have the "key" with which teachers are furnished in certain classes. It might be explained that there are problems in algebra and geometry textbooks that take a great deal of time to work out. To conserve the teacher's time, he is furnished with a key. It was this key that the young teacher was refused. That made it necessary for him to spend time working out every problem in detail; but it also gave him an experience that stood him in good stead later on. He became so used to hard study that when the time came for him to do advanced work, he stood at the head of his class and graduated with honor. Where he had been weak, he became strong. He believes that he never would have attained his present position had he not been denied the "key" years ago.

Satan always attacks us where we are weak. Every time we resist, the resistance makes us stronger. After a while the tempter discovers that all he has accomplished is to make us strong where we formerly were weak, and that he has helped us instead of hindering us. This must be a matter of disappointment to him.

One of the temptations of young people as well as of those older grown is on the point of honesty. They are tempted to vary a little, just a little, from the truth. They would be offended if they were accused of prevaricating; yet this is what they are doing. Others are tempted to cheat-just a little-in examination or in other work. They do not mean to be dishonest; yet what else is it but dishonesty? Some have a tendency to be hypocritical-just a little. They would not like to be called hypocrites, and yet, what else can they be called?

### **Which Way Shall Take?**

We have mentioned that it is not always easy to do right, and that there may even be times when we are not sure what is right. Why is this? Why do we not always know the right? Why are we at times left in doubt as to our duty? Such uncertainty can be very trying, and we wonder why God does not come to our rescue immediately. There are reasons for this.

If we always knew which way to take; if questions never came into our minds regarding the right; if we were never in perplexity over our course of action, we would never delve deeply into questions of right and wrong. As it is now, when perplexity comes, when questions arise, we begin to think, we begin to pray. We may not have given much attention to a certain matter before; but it now takes on great significance. And when the crisis is past, when at last light breaks, we are better and more intelligent Christians because of the experience.

There are some who think that the path of the Christian should always be bright, and that if they are ever in doubt regarding the course they should pursue, it is because they do not live close enough to the Lord. Now, it is well to keep close to God, and it is always well to consider that we ought to live still closer to Him. But this should not cause us to forget that dark days are as important as bright ones, and that these dark days are part of God's plan for us. If we really love the Lord and are willing and eager to do right, God will place us in circumstances in which we will learn to lean a little harder than ever before on Him. He will permit perplexities to annoy us until we learn the lesson He has in mind, until we learn to trust Him fully. It may be a hard lesson, or it may be an easy one. But whatever it is, it is gauged to our strength and need, and will not last one moment longer than necessary. So let us take courage.

Perplexity, trials, obstacles-all are a part of God's plan for us, and are essential. We can therefore be happy when all is well, and we can be happy in tribulation. "All things work together for good to them that love God."

### **Law for the Lawbreaker**

Laws are made for two kinds of people, the ignorant transgressor and the willful transgressor. "The law is good," says Paul, "if a man use it lawfully; knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners." I Timothy 1:9. God has "compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way," but for those who "sin willfully," or rather; "who habitually indulge in sin" and continue to do so after they "have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment." Hebrews 5:2; 10:26, 27.

These are serious and solemn words. God can and does have compassion on the ignorant sinner; but with premeditated sin His attitude is different. There "remains" no sacrifice for willful sins. Such sins merit death. (Numbers 15:30-36; Exodus 21:14-17.)

It may be of help to some to make it clear that to "sin willfully" (Hebrews 10:26, 27) does not mean to commit a sin under a sudden temptation. The verb tense used in Hebrews suggests habitual sinning, not the single act speedily repented of and turned away from. It might further be mentioned that Paul's statement does not refer to any one sin, but to the continual sinning of such persons as do not care to do right. Some commentators give the idea that the correct translation would be that there is no more sacrifice for sins "as long as men continue in sin," with no desire to do right. As long as they continue in that state of mind, there is no hope for them.

But even with this explanation, the text contains a solemn warning. How often we do what we ought not to do and regret our act afterward! God graciously forgives, but He warns us not to do that thing again. We know better, and ought to do better. If we find ourselves doing wrong knowingly and habitually, it would be well for us to pause and take inventory of our Christianity. God is not mocked, and what we sow, that we shall surely reap. No Christian can knowingly continue in wrong and expect to escape the consequence. The consequence will be the loss of eternal life.

Many Christians act as if there were no law. They feel that they can do what the world does and still be good Christians. But this is a grievous error. God has set up a standard of conduct, and that standard is found in His ten commandment law. If we would think of the law as a rule of conduct, one that will help us in our intercourse with our fellow men, we would have a fuller appreciation of its value and use. It would cease to be merely a reprover and would become a positive guide of life. We would furthermore find that there is a reason behind every precept, and realize that without law life would be impossible.

There are good reasons for every one of the commandments. They are not simply arbitrary commands that God has given us to make the way a little harder. They are the rules of life without which existence would not be possible.

### **Restrictions Are Necessary**

By experience men have found that the commandment, "Thou shall not steal," is a good commandment, one of the necessary rules of conduct, and not merely an arbitrary decree. Men are discovering that the words, "Thou shall not kill" and "Thou shall not commit adultery," are for the good of society. In fact, men have found by experience that the law of God is inherent in human nature, and that life and happiness depend upon the recognition of this law as binding.

Even, savages, far beyond the pale of civilization, have found certain laws necessary to existence. They have rules regarding property rights; they have rules regarding respect for parents and authority. They may kill and even eat their enemies, but within their own tribe they have rules regarding general conduct and the sacredness of life. All this gives point to the contention that the Ten Commandments are not arbitrary demands of God, but constitute the basic conditions of life, and are indispensable to organized society.

Children may not always understand why they are not permitted to have all the candy they want. It tastes good to them and they may decide that it is only arbitrariness on the part of their elders that denies to them this tasty sweet. For older young people there may be things other than candy that seem desirable, and they may feel that they are being denied them without cause. It would be well if they would think things through. If they did, they probably would find that there are good reasons for doing certain things and for not doing others.

I am afraid, however, that some things are denied to young people for no other reason than that older people no longer are interested in doing them themselves. Oh, the misery of the years I spent under certain tutorship! I felt that if my superiors' ever found out that I wanted anything, it would be sure to be denied me. It seemed that everything I wanted to do was wicked, and I had better leave it alone. On the other hand, if I could convince my superiors that I did not care whether I was permitted to do a certain thing or not, there might be some hope that I would be allowed to do it. At times this plan worked, but most of the time it did not.

Somewhat later in life I made a decision based on my childhood experience that has stood me in good stead ever since. Some parents and teachers have a custom of saying "No" to every request unless there are very good reasons for granting it. I made up my mind that I would take the opposite view. Instead of saying or thinking, "Why should this be granted?" I would say, "Why should it not be granted?" As I followed this line, I would immediately have the good will of the child or young person, and though at times I was compelled to deny the request, he would still consider me his friend and would come back again for counsel. He knew that I would weigh the problem and look at it from his viewpoint, and attempt to help him. This attitude has helped me many times, and has given me the confidence of many young people, which I much appreciate.

Let it be burned into the consciousness of all that law is a friend of all right-thinking people. It is a protector and a guide, not merely a condemner. Neither our streets nor our property would be safe were it not for law. Without law, life would be cheap and existence a burden. Thank God for law. And thank God for His own law, the perfect pattern of all other law. There are times when we may not like its threatening and when its stern commands may frighten us. But all this is for our good.

## Earth's Golden Clasp With Heaven

THE first sunset that Adam ever witnessed, a Sabbath sunset, must have been a wonderful occasion. He had been created on the sixth day of the week, and that same day at evening for the first time he saw the sun sink slowly behind the horizon. Hand in hand Adam and Eve had explored their new home, delighted and enthralled with the beauty of what their eyes witnessed. The flowers, the birds, the blue heavens above, the majestic trees, the happy animal creation—all must have excited their wonder and admiration. God had visited them; they had talked with the angels; everything was wonderful, exciting, glorious. Life could hold no more.

### The First Sabbath

And now evening was coming on, the first evening they had ever witnessed. The sun was setting, and heaven and earth were bathed in celestial glory. So I this was the Sabbath! How resplendent; how wonderful! Heaven and earth united in praising God! Reverently Adam and Eve worshiped, and their voices blended with those of the angels as the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy. Heaven had come to earth, and the earth had become heaven.

How wonderful everything—earth, the heavens, flowers, trees, animals, angels, life itself—must have seemed to our first parents! And how filled with glory and beauty the Sabbath—that first Sabbath! Angels were their companions, and God Himself had come to be with them, to rest and refresh Himself. (Exodus 31:17) A day of communion, of being with God! A day to view nature and drink in its beauty! What a thrilling Sabbath that first Sabbath must have been!

As Adam and Eve watch the setting sun, a new miracle occurs. Small jets of light begin to appear all over the heavens, and the glorious moon with its mellow light takes the place of the sun. With the change from sunlight to moonlight, nature itself takes on new beauty. Everything seems softened and beautified, and a new peace settles over creation as the birds sing their evening song and retire, and all nature is at rest. Sweet Sabbath of God!

In amazement Adam and Eve look at the heavens now covered with myriads of twinkling stars of different hue and brilliancy, each sending its greeting to the 'newly created earth pair. What does all this mean? What are these little lights?

Angels explain to our first parents the mystery of the universe. In Father's house, they inform them, are many mansions. What they see now, those little twinkling lights that seem to quiver with joy as they greet the new creation, are much larger and greater than they seem. Many of them are, in fact, worlds filled with happy creatures whom God has created. Their inhabitants, as well as the man and woman just created, are rejoicing in the love of God and live for His glory. Adam and Eve are not to think that the little world which they inhabit is the only world in the universe. No, there are many others—thousands, millions, of them. Adam and Eve are not alone. Their own world, beautiful and wonderful as it is, is only a small part of God's great creation; someday they will be permitted to visit other and greater worlds and see more of the wonderful creation of God. All that God requires of them is that they be faithful, love Him, and do His will.

This new sight of the heavens immeasurably enlarged Adam and Eve's conception of God, His power, and His love. What a wonderful God their God must be! They discover that not only their world but countless other worlds encircle the throne of Deity. All of them have been made and are upheld by Him who is now with them, spending the first Sabbath on earth with His newly created children. To Adam and Eve it seems too good and great to be true. 'How glorious to be permitted to live, to love, to understand, to communicate with angels and with God!

Night comes. Under the canopy of heaven He gives His beloved sleep. But it seems only for a moment. They awaken. The wonderful picture which they saw as they lay down to rest gradually changes before their very eyes. The stars begin to disappear; the moon sinks below the horizon. Is all the beauty to depart? Are they to be left in semidarkness? Is this the end of the glory? They turn to look about them, and suddenly discover a light in the east, a glorious, entrancing vision of the returning sun. With exclamations of wonder and rapture they behold the miracle of the creation of a new day as the light slowly returns and the heavens once more are clothed in celestial glory. And when at last the full orb of day appears, they again praise God who has given them life and who has created the miracle they have just witnessed.

### An Unforgettable Experience

As long as Adam lived he never forgot the beauty of the first Sabbath. We may imagine that to his children and grandchildren, even to the tenth generation, he told the story again and again. He had talked with angels. He had talked with God. Together Adam and Eve in their first love had spent that first Sabbath. How could he ever forget that day? A thousand memories must have crowded his mind as he recalled this day of days. Every event must have been indelibly inscribed upon his mind. He must have been deeply impressed with the sacredness of the Sabbath, its importance and its privileges. He must have told each following generation how God kept it, how He rested and was refreshed, and how He gave it to man to be kept and revered. Of all the commandments of God, perhaps none made a deeper impression upon him than the Sabbath commandment.

The Sabbath was especially suited to Edenic conditions. It is the one commandment in the observance of which God Himself could fully join. It is not appropriate to say that God keeps the commandment, "Thou shall not steal," or any of the other commandments that deal with men's relation to their fellow men. These commandments do not apply to God, and it would be sacrilege to put Him in the same class as men and say that He does not steal. It is the same with the commandment, "Thou shall have no other gods before Me," with the command about making images, and the command relating to taking the name of God in vain. They have no application to God. He is over and above these commandments, and it would be inappropriate to apply them to Him.

### **God Joins Man On Sabbath**

But the Sabbath command is different. It is the one commandment which God can be said to keep. God not only can keep it, He did keep it in Eden, and in the earth made new it will continue to be kept. It is the golden clasp that unites heaven and earth. On the, Sabbath heaven is nearest earth; then God meets with His people, and His presence is felt as verily as it was felt that first Sabbath in the garden of God.

"On the seventh day He [God] rested, and was refreshed." Exodus 31:17. The word "refresh" literally means to "take breath," a most remarkable expression as applied to God. God "took breath," rested, and was refreshed. This, of course, is a human expression, and attempts to convey to us God's reactions to creation, to the Sabbath, and to man. As one draws a deep breath, as one drinks in the beauty of the scene, as one catches his breath at the glory and wonder of it all, so God took in the loveliness of His own creation and pronounced it "very good." He was not weary, He was not fatigued; He was just resting in His love; as the prophet expresses it, "He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing." Zephaniah 3:17.

In close connection with the statement in Exodus 31:17 that God rested and was refreshed, is another expression that is interesting and informative. It refers to the seventh-day Sabbath, which is here called "the Sabbath of rest," literally, "Sabbath of Sabbaths." Exodus 31:15. Other translations have it "rest of restfulness," "the high Sabbath," or as in the American Revised Version, "the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest." The Sabbath is called "holy to the Lord," or as the margin reads, "holiness to the Lord." And since it is "holy to the Lord," He tells the people that He desires it to be "holy unto you." Verse 14. This day pre-eminently is the "Sabbath of solemn rest." It is "holy to the Lord." It ought also to be holy to man. The Sabbath is a bit of heaven transplanted to this earth. One writer calls it "heaven once a week."

We do not know how long Adam and Eve remained in Paradise before sin came; but we presume that it must have been for some time. The original statement that God walked in the garden in the cool of the day implies that this was not an unusual occurrence, but that God was in the habit of doing this. (Genesis 3:8) An American translation makes bold to translate the original that God walked in the garden "daily." While this perhaps cannot be entirely defended on philological grounds, it seems clear that God was in the habit of visiting the garden often. This would also be in harmony with the statement that the time shall come again when "the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them." Revelation 21:3. If God will do this when Edenic conditions are restored, it is not unreasonable to conclude that in the beginning He took pleasure in being with our first parents.

What a picture greets us as in imagination we think of God's spending the first Sabbath with His own! And if He thus spent the first Sabbath with them, might they not have reason to expect Him to be with them the following Sabbath? Would God disappoint this expectation? We are encouraged to believe that He took pleasure in being with Adam and Eve, that He rested and was refreshed, and that it was no burden for Him to associate with our first parents. He loved them and loved to visit them. As long as they remained faithful, He would not leave or forsake them. Sin alone could bring a separation. Even in the Garden of Eden the Sabbath was the golden clasp that united earth with heaven.

### **The Sabbath From Eden**

It must have been a dreadful experience for Adam and Eve to be driven out of the garden after their failure to endure the test given them. No more could they meet with God. No more would they hear His footsteps as He walked in the garden in the cool of the day. But if it was dreadful for Adam and Eve, it must have been even harder for God. To Him the garden must have seemed forsaken. No more could He call, and expect to hear His children joyfully answer Him. God walked alone in Eden, His heart heavy with sorrow. The man and woman whom He had created had failed Him!

But our all-seeing, all-loving Father, looking into the future before He began the work of creation, had made a plan for their redemption. Infinite love had found a way. It was a way of sorrow, of suffering, of death, but through the love God bore for His own He would draw them back to Him. He wanted them to know that though they had sinned, He still loved them and would do anything to help them. And so God gathered all the riches of the universe to buy the pearl of lost humanity.

In token of this, God in due time instituted the sacrificial offerings, a direct promise to man of the coming Deliverer. And this promise was closely connected with the Sabbath, God's other gift to man. This Sabbath man took with him from the garden, and it was ever a sign to him that the Lord was still his God, and that He had not forsaken him. (Ezekiel 20:12, 20) It was a sign of the "perpetual covenant"; in fact it was the perpetual covenant. (Exodus 31:16, 17) That covenant God will not break, though men may fail to keep their part. (Psalms 89:30-36)



Adam and Eve were faithful in the observance of the Sabbath. This is evident from the fact that “in process of time” their two sons brought their offering to God. (Genesis 4:3, 4) For “process of time” the original has “end of days.” That is, at the “end of days” offerings were brought. Commentators are agreed that this has distinct reference to the weekly cycle, for there can be no “end of days—unless there is a cycle of some kind. The “end of days” of the weekly cycle is the Sabbath, and hence it was on this day that Cain and Abel brought their offerings. It may be presumed that Abel, being a godly man, would gladly bring his offering. But as Cain brought his offering at the same time, and as he was far from godly, it could be only the example and precept of his parents that caused him to do this. We are therefore warranted in believing that Adam and Eve were faithful in their Sabbath observance, and that they taught their children to reverence this day of days. It has been said that the least-governed country is the best governed country. This is true. It is also true that the least-governed family is the best-governed family just what is meant by this?

### **Law and Love**

Laws are necessary for the government of society and family alike. Where there is cheerful obedience, where all are in harmony with the accepted rules, there is little friction, and the hand of authority is hardly felt. Where love rules, there is the fulfilling of the law. It could not be otherwise.

Take the ideal family. Love, consideration, courtesy, respect, are dominating factors. The habits, practices, and example of the parents are the recognized standards of conduct, and are accepted by all. As the children grow up, they naturally follow the lead of the parents. On the Sabbath the children go to Sabbath school and church as a matter of course. They see and hear of children in other homes who go to questionable places of amusement; but it never occurs to them to ask permission to go to such places. There may be no prohibition against it; there is no need of any; it is well understood that such things simply are not done in their family.

But there comes a time in some families when commands and prohibitions become necessary. The children grow up. Some of them lose interest in religion and become slack about the Sabbath. Out of respect for their parents they do no work at home on God’s holy day, though they may work on the Sabbath in the office or shop in which they are employed. The parents grieve, but there is nothing they can do about it. The children are of age and must assume full responsibility for their own acts.

After a while, however, the children lose respect for the place which they still call home to the extent that though they know that the parents disapprove, they quietly begin to do a little work at home on the Sabbath. The father ponders what to do. He cannot permit work to be done in his home when the command includes both son and daughter, and even the stranger that may be within his gates. (Exodus 20:10.)

So at last he “lays down the law.” He does it with a heavy heart, for he knows that it may mean the departure of the son or daughter whom he loves, and whom he would gladly have remain within his walls. But he has no choice. It is for the children to decide what they will do.

### **Laying Down the Law**

This illustrates the position of our heavenly Father. When He instituted the Sabbath in the Garden of Eden, it was not a question of command, but of privilege. Can anyone imagine that when God Himself kept the Sabbath, when He rested upon it, it ever occurred to Adam and Eve to do anything but follow the example set before them? There was no command needed. All of Adam’s thoughts, emotions, acts were in conformity to the divine will. It was only sin that made any command necessary.

It was never God’s intention to appear on Mt. Sinai in fire and lightning, and with a voice of thunder proclaim His law. That became necessary only after Israel had willfully and rebelliously departed from His way. As in the home the father lays down the law only when there is no other alternative, so God laid down His law after it became dear that there was no other way. The question, Why did God not do it before? Is beside the point. God would rather speak in the still, small voice. He thunders only when it becomes necessary.

Was there no law until Sinai? Most certainly there was. Paul argues that most effectively in the book of Romans. He states: “Until the law sin was in the world.” Romans 5:13. By this he means that there was sin in the world before the law was given on Sinai. This, of course, is self-evident. Adam sinned, Cain sinned, the antediluvians sinned. Then Paul adds: “But sin is not imputed when there is no law.” This also is self-evident. Now comes the climax of the argument: “Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses.” Verse 14. Death is the result of sin. This shows, then, that sin was punished before Moses. But sin is not imputed where there is no law; hence, the law existed before Moses, even though it had not yet been proclaimed from Sinai.

That the law of God existed, that it was known by the children of Israel before it was given as ten direct commands, and that it was enforced, is clear from the record given in the Bible. Israel had come into the wilderness. They complained of the food furnished them, and longingly looked back to the time “in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots.” Exodus 16:1 God therefore promised them bread from heaven, which He told them would fall on the six days of the week, but not on the Sabbath. When, despite God’s command, “there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather,” God rebuked them, saying, “How long refuse you to keep My commandments and My laws?” Exodus 16:27, 28.

This wording is informative. “How long refuse you?” This was evidently not the first time God had spoken to His chosen people. If it had been, there would be no ground for saying, “How long refuse you?” The implication is very clear that He had spoken to them before, apparently more than once. Also, the statement, “My commandments and My laws,” is not here presented as something new. The question is, “How long refuse you to keep My commandments and My laws?” This question makes it clear that God’s commandments and laws were known to Israel before Sinai, that He had chided them before for not heeding them, and that the time was nearing when He would speak to them in such a way that there could be no misunderstanding.

It is interesting to note that these same commandments and laws were known to Abraham. God approvingly mentions that “Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.” Genesis 26:5. This was several hundred years before the proclamation from Sinai. In the face of this testimony it cannot be contended that God’s law was not known before Sinai. The people knew of it, but it had not been thundered at them. That did not take place until their perverseness made it necessary for God to speak to them in that manner.

God’s rebuke to Israel in the wilderness was for their nonobservance of the Sabbath. They went out to gather manna on the seventh day, despite the command given them not to do so. Yet, when God takes them to task for their disobedience, He does not rebuke them for Sabbath breaking, but says, “How long refuse you to keep My commandments and My laws?” When they gathered manna on the seventh day, they did more than break the Sabbath. They broke God’s commandments and laws. The Sabbath did not stand alone. It was part of the law, part of the Ten Commandments. Breaking one commandment, they broke all.

When God came down upon the mount and with His own voice proclaimed the “ten words,” “the people saw the thundering, and the lightning, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they removed and stood afar off.” Exodus 20:18. Moses himself had never before heard God speak thus. “So terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.” Hebrews 12:21. God was not speaking with the still, small voice. He was speaking in tones that could not be misunderstood.

God spoke from heaven once, and He will speak once more. At Sinai His voice “shook the earth; but now He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.” Hebrews 12:26. And this time it will not merely be the earth that will be shaken, but heaven also. God will once more proclaim His law, and men will hear it whether it be their wish or not.

## Has the Sabbath Been Changed?

REMEMBER the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shall thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shall not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.” Exodus 20:84 1.

The wording of this commandment is very explicit. There is no doubt whatever that it proclaims the seventh day as the Sabbath of the Lord. It is also clear that it is addressed to men, and defines their duty in regard to God’s holy day. “In it thou shall not do any work.” Nothing could be clearer or more specific. If this commandment is still in force in the New Testament dispensation, then there is not the slightest doubt regarding which day is the Sabbath. “The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord.”

After their experience with the golden calf Israel did better for a time. But when they had come into the Promised Land, and were scattered over large stretches of territory without immediate sanctuary privileges, they again became careless. The heathen were not driven out, and their presence served as a continued temptation to apostasy. Israel began to serve other gods, and one of the first evidences of this was slackness in regard to the observance of the Sabbath.

## God Reproves His People

For this they were reprov'd and warn'd by the prophets. God could not permit His people to desecrate the Sabbath by carrying on their regular business on that day, by buying and selling; so He sent word to them through Jeremiah, as exemplified in the following message: “Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem. Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath day, neither do you any work, but hallow you the Sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers.” Jeremiah 17:21, 22. But the people did not listen: “They obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction.” Verse 23.

God had given His people great and precious promises of blessing if they would obey Him and do His will. These promises were now repeated in a very definite form upon the condition that they should keep the Sabbath. Note what God told Israel: “If you diligently hearken unto Me, said the Lord, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work therein; then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: and this city shall remain forever.” Jeremiah 17:24, 25.

It was about this time that Nebuchadnezzar came up to Jerusalem to take it. He was a king of mighty Babylon, and there was little hope that a nation like Israel could withstand his onslaughts. In fact, God had chosen him as His instrument to punish Israel for its back sliding. And so the promise is definitely given to the people that if they will “hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work therein,” Jerusalem shall not be destroyed, but become a mighty city with kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, “and this city shall remain forever.”

On the other hand, “if you will not hearken unto Me to hallow the Sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. Then will I kindle fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.” Verse 27.

Israel did not repent. Israel did not keep the Sabbath according to the commandment. And so the Babylonian king came and “burnt the house of the Lord, and the king’s house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man’s house burnt he with fire. And all the army of the Chaldees, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about. Now the rest of the people that were left in the city, and the fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon, with the remnant of the multitude, did Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carry away.” 2 Kings 25:9-11.

God had sent them messengers with warnings and entreaties, but “they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy.” 2 Chronicles 36:16.

Dreadful words—“till there was no remedy.” God had done all that He could for them. He had sent warnings, but they would not listen. He had reminded them of their remissness in Sabbath keeping and had graciously promised to spare their city if they would observe the Sabbath day. But they refused to change their ways. So their beautiful city was destroyed “to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill threescore and ten years.” 2 Chronicles 36:21.

A lesson such as this should not be lost to posterity. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. His principles, His law, do not change. It can hardly be supposed that He would treat Israel of old as He did and take an altogether different course with transgressors in the New Testament dispensation. If God really did the things here noted because Israel had become careless of the law; if God really has made the Sabbath commandment a part of the law kept beneath the mercy seat, the transgression of which necessitated atonement, can we believe that He now looks with indifference on the transgression of any of His commandments?

We have been considering the Sabbath in the old dispensation. Our consideration has not been exhaustive. Much more might be said, and many more texts might be presented. Enough has been set down here to bring the subject clearly before the reader. The Old Testament teaches that the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, that God holds it in high regard, and that He wants His people to observe it. It teaches that God punished those who of old ignored the day and desecrated it, and that the Jews were carried into captivity because of their violation of the seventh-day Sabbath. So far as we have studied we are impressed with the fact that God is in earnest, and that we can ignore the Sabbath only at the peril of our souls. We now come to a consideration of the Sabbath in the New Testament.

### **Has the Sabbath Been Changed?**

There is a widespread opinion that the Sabbath which God instituted in Eden is not binding in the new (Christian) dispensation. This opinion is favored by the fact that many Christians observe the first day of the week instead of the seventh, the day which God sanctified and blessed at creation. This is an important matter, one which should be thoroughly explored. In the study of the question we shall have recourse to the Bible. In a matter affecting one of the commandments of God, we dare not let any man, however great, be the deciding factor.

So far, we have found unanimity of opinion with reference to the Sabbath. Again and again the record reads: “The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.” There is no mention of any other day. The Old Testament knows only one Sabbath, the seventh day of the week. On this all are agreed, whatever day they may keep personally. God commanded that Israel should keep holy the day which He sanctified at creation. He embodied this precept in the law of the ten commandments, thus giving it an equal status with the other commandments. So far as the law is concerned, the record is clear. “The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord.” Exodus 20:10.

We therefore raise the question: Are Christians exempt from the obligation to keep God’s commandments? Was God in Old Testament times so very careful of His Sabbath that He would bring dire punishment on those who did not observe it, and did He then suddenly change His mind and become indifferent to its observance?

### **God Must Be Plain**

It would seem that if there were to be any change in the fourth commandment, such a change should have been common knowledge and should have been definitely announced. That is, if from a certain time God wished men’ thenceforth to keep the first day of the week instead of the seventh, this should have been plainly stated, not only so that it could be understood, but so that it could not be misunderstood. This is essential.

God is in the habit of speaking plainly. Look at any of the commandments and see how concisely and definitely each of them conveys its message. There is no way of misunderstanding any of them. No one will ever be able to say that he did not know his duty because God did not make it plain. That, of course, is one of the essentials of law. It must be worded in such language that its meaning is plain. And this must in a special way be true of the law of God; for the punishment for its transgression is so tremendous that it would be the height of crime to hold men responsible for its violation if there were the least possibility of its intent not being clear. God would never be able to face His creatures in the judgment; God would cease to be a God of justice, did He not make plain His intent. We say it reverently: God must make His intent plain.

This applies specifically to the supposed change of the law of God. There has been no repeal of the Ten Commandments; there has been no enactment of any other law to take their place; and there has been no announcement by God or by His authorization of any contemplated change. In fact, quite the opposite is true, for Christ, when He was here on earth, lived out the law, expounded it, and proclaimed, its binding quality. We shall now address ourselves to more detailed consideration of these questions.

### **Christ Upholds the Law**

Christ's opposition to the many burdens and restrictions which the Pharisees had placed upon the Sabbath caused some to think that He disregarded the day. They likewise felt that He thought lightly of the law, and that He had come to destroy or abolish it. Christ met these thoughts and suggestions with a definite statement in regard to His attitude toward the law.

"Think not," He said, "that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Matthew 5:17, 18.

When Christ stated that He did not come to destroy the law; when He said that those who teach the law shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven; when He said that it is easier for heaven and earth to pass than for one tittle of the law to fail, He had reference first of all to the law of God as contained in the Ten Commandments. We cannot lightly brush these statements aside as of little importance. Christ was accused of breaking the Sabbath and destroying the law even after announcing His creed, as it were. Foremost in this "creed" is the statement that He stands by the law, that He is not destroying it, that He reverences it highly. So, far from attempting to destroy it, He says it is easier for heaven and earth to pass than for one tittle of the law to fail.

If we apply this latter statement to the Sabbath commandment, we would certainly not come to the conclusion that it is an easy matter to change seven to one, as would have to be done if the first day were, to be the Sabbath, rather than the seventh. It would not be changing merely one word. The whole commandment would need to be changed. The reason given in the commandment for keeping the Sabbath is that God worked six days and rested on the seventh. The statement is very definite: "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." Exodus 20:10. It would not make sense to say: "Remember the first day, to keep it holy. Six days shall thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: on the first day thou shall not do any work; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the first day, and hallowed it." That would be confusion confounded. No one would be able to see any reason for keeping the first day, because God kept the seventh. To say that God worked six days and rested the seventh, and that we therefore ought to keep the first day, does not seem sensible or convincing. It would therefore not be enough to change a word only of the commandment if we change the observance from the seventh to the first day of the week. We would have to change the very reason for keeping the Sabbath. But if Christ says that it is easier for heaven and earth to pass than for one tittle of the law to fail, what shall we say of changing many tittles and many words? It cannot be done, according to Christ's pronouncement.

The statement, "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God," has not been given due emphasis. It does not say that the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Jew or the Gentile, the bond or the free, man or woman, but that it is the Sabbath of the Lord. If God were asked, "Which day, Lord, is your Sabbath, the first or the seventh day?" He would answer in the language of the commandment: "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. And He would address the following command to the questioner: "In it thou shall not do any work." This would be embarrassing to one who keeps the first day of the week. But in reality does not this settle the question of which day is the Sabbath? When God says, "The seventh day is the Sabbath," who dares contradict Him and say, "No, Lord, the first day is the Sabbath"? In the language of man God might answer, "Do not think that the first day is My Sabbath; 'the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord.' I don't want you, to do any work in it. 'Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy."

## Obedience a Symbol of Love

THE Sabbath question is larger than the mere keeping of this or that day. It is a question of obeying God or not obeying Him. It is a question of observing His law or violating it. And it, concerns not the Sabbath commandment only. It concerns the whole law. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." James 2:10.

Lest any should be in doubt regarding which law is meant-the Ten Commandments or the Levitical law - James adds: "For He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law." Verse 11.

This makes the breaking or the treating lightly of one of the commandments a serious matter. Not one jot or one tittle of the law must be changed, Christ says. Was He thinking of the time when some would attempt to change it? May it not be the same thing James had in mind when he said: "Who looks into the perfect law of liberty, and continues therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed"? James 1:25.

Not a forgetful hearer! What is there in the law that reminds us of not forgetting? There is one commandment that begins with "remember." Did James think of this when he said that we must not be forgetful hearers, but doers? The man who is a doer "shall be blessed in his deed."

Some Christians object to James because they think he speaks too much of the law. After all, they say, we are not saved by the law, but by faith. To this we agree. Does faith, then, make the law of none effect? Let us ask Paul. He himself propounds the question, and answers it: "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." Romans 3:31. The Greek word here translated "establish" means to place, to set, to cause to stand. It is the same word that is used in Hebrews 10:9, where one law-the one dealing with "sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin" is "taken away," and where the other law-the one which Christ has in His heart, the Ten Commandments-is established. "He takes away the first, that He may establish the second." Hebrews 10:6-9. Let those who believe that the moral law is taken away ponder this text. If the ten commandment law is the law which is taken away, then there is only one other conclusion regarding the law that is established: it must be the law of offerings. Do any wish to contend that Christ abolished the moral law, the Ten Commandments, and established the law of "sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin"? Yet the one is taken away; the other is established. There



is only one answer to this question. The law that was taken away was the Levitical law, and the one that was established was the moral law of God, the eternal, unchangeable transcript of God's own character, the ten commandments.

Some people object to Paul. They think he stresses the law even more than does James. They wish a religion that is emasculated, one in which all that is stern and hard and unpleasant is taken away, and only that which is easy and pleasant and soft is left. They seem to forget that life is real, that Christianity is real, and that, there is a cross to bear as well as a crown to be won. Such persons enjoy quoting certain passages from John. He is the apostle of love. He does not deal with such unpleasant matters as duty and law. With him all is love. Let us accept their invitation and follow them to John and note what he says of love.

### **The Apostle of Love**

John was and is the apostle of love. That is his great theme. And rightly so, for God Himself is a God of love. He not merely loves-He is love. So let us find out from John himself what his conception of love is. We ask: "John, just what is love?"

He answers: "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." 1 John 5:3.

"Why, John, we have been taught that that is a grievous and hard thing to do."

"No, 'His commandments are not grievous. Verse 3.

"We are perplexed, John, at this answer. You say that if we love God, we will keep His commandments.

Now, we are not heathen; we are Christians. We know God. We love God, but we do not keep His commandments." "He that said, I know Him, and keeps not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." 1 John 2:4.

"Why, John, this is almost worse than what James and Paul say. Do you really mean that if we love God, we must keep His commandments?"

"This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." "He that said he abides in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." 1 John 5:3; 2:6.

"How did Christ walk? Did He keep the commandments?"

"Yes. Christ says: 'I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love.'" John 15:10.

"Is it not enough to love God and the children of God, without having to keep the law?"

"There is no way that we can know that we love God or the children of God without keeping the commandments.

"We know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments." 1 John 5:2.

"If we have God and the Spirit dwelling in the heart, do we need to keep the commandments?"

"God has promised to dwell in the heart of the man who keeps the law. 'He that keeps His commandments dwells in Him, and He in him.'" 1 John 3:24.

"Are we then to understand that if we profess to love God, we must keep the commandments?"

"Yes, there is no other way. Christ Himself says: 'If you love Me, keep My commandments.'" John 14:15.

These texts bring vividly to mind the fact that the love of God and the commandments of God are closely united. They do not give the least hint that the commandments have been repealed. John, the apostle of love, is also the apostle of the law. When John says that "this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments," and that "he that said, I know Him, and keeps not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him," there does not seem to be much to say in reply. 1 John 5:3; 2:4. If a man should say this to us, we might be offended, for the words are very plain and do not admit of more than one meaning. But when God speaks, we keep silent. We admit our shortcomings and ask God for forgiveness and for strength to do what we ought. This is true Christianity.

So far we have not found anything in the New Testament that would give us the idea that we might play fast and loose with God's law. On the contrary, we have found that the test of our love for God is our attitude toward the law. If we love God, we will keep the commandments.

This, of course, is as it should be. The law is an expression of God's will. It defines sin and warns against it. For this we should be thankful. We would not have known sin, but through the law. We would not have known that it is sin to covet, any more than did Paul, "except the law had said, Thou shall not covet." -Romans M. As we should be thankful to a faithful guide who points out to us the danger of the way, so we should be thankful to the law for its insistence on righteousness and holy living. It is to be seriously doubted that one who does not love the law loves the Lord. He may be in ignorance, but when light comes, the man who loves God gladly accepts the law as his rule of life.

### **The Sabbath and the Law**

The Sabbath stands or falls with the law. If the law is still in force, the Sabbath is in force. If the law is done away, then the Sabbath is done away. The Sabbath is an integral part of the law, and its future is bound up with it. What happens to one happens to the other.

What reason could there ever be in heaven or in earth for the abrogation of the law? It condemns sin. Is not this needed? We are at a loss to understand how any person could wish to have a law abolished that is as faithful as is the moral law in pointing out sin. As a physician diagnoses a case, so the law diagnoses the case of each one of us. It finds the disease spot and makes possible the application of a remedy.

It may be conceived that a person who is sick does not wish to find out what ails him, but if so, it must not be because he does not wish to get well, or else there is something wrong with his mental processes. No, the person who is sick and wishes to get well,

must, first of all, have a thorough examination. His condition must be understood by the physician, his life history must be reviewed. The physician may ask some embarrassing questions, but if the patient wishes to be helped, he will tell the truth. So the physician probes deep. All contributing factors are weighed, all inherited and cultivated tendencies are examined. At last the diagnosis is complete. The physician gives his verdict. The patient knows what is wrong with him. He must now decide for himself whether he will follow the advice of the physician or ignore it. The doctor has done his part. The patient must take the next step.

This matter of diagnosis is the work of the law in co-operation with the Holy Spirit. The law points out the sin; the Holy Spirit says, Thou art the man. The law points out general conditions and principles; the Holy Spirit makes an individual application of them. The law defines sin; the Holy Spirit convinces of it. We must therefore be careful not to do despite to the Holy Spirit and neglect His warnings. We do so at the peril of our souls.

Why, then, should anyone object to the law? It seems beyond comprehension that a person-and, above all, a Christian-should believe and teach that the law is no more in force. Do such persons mean to say that the commandment against stealing has been abolished? That cannot be. Do they mean to say that men henceforth may kill with impunity? They surely cannot mean that. Then what do they mean? Each commandment taken by itself is still in force, but the law when considered as a whole is repealed! Why such inconsistency?

There is only one consistent position. If the law stands, the Sabbath stands. The only way to avoid the Sabbath obligation is to do away with the whole law. This is rather drastic treatment, but to some it seems preferable to acknowledging God's original day. And so they perform the mental gymnastics of abolishing the entire ten commandment law and then re-enact the nine commandments, leaving out the fourth-the one which is objectionable. They fail to understand that their attitude toward one commandment determines their attitude toward all of them. They are in reality at war with God and with His law, though they may not intend to be.

There is no fact clearer in the Bible, in both the Old and the New Testaments, than that God's law is eternal in its nature, and that it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one jot or one tittle of that law to fail. Is it not therefore strange that in view of all this testimony, men should still believe that the law is of a temporary nature and can be broken without breaking fellowship with God?

## A Day of Rest for Modern Man

To the question, Is there any mention in the New Testament of the first day of the week? we answer cheerfully that there is. We not only admit it, we affirm it. There are eight texts that mention that day. We urge these texts upon the attention of the reader. No study would be complete without a discussion of them, for upon them hangs much.

The eight places in the New Testament where the first day of the week is mentioned are as follows: Matthew 28: 1; Mark 16:1, 2, 9; Luke 24: 1; John 20: 1, 19; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2. Six of these texts refer to the same day, the day of the resurrection. Of the other two, one refers to a meeting held by Paul, and one to a collection to be taken on the first day of the week. We shall consider these more in detail.

### Resurrection Sunday

The first text reads, "In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulcher." Matthew 28:1. It is to be noted that Matthew differentiates between the Sabbath and the first day of the week. The Sabbath is one day, the first day of the week is another. Matthew could just as well have said: "When the old Jewish Sabbath was past, and the new first-day Sabbath had come." But he said no such thing, although he wrote several years after the crucifixion. Not a hint is given here that there is any change in the seventh-day Sabbath.

The next text reads: "When the Sabbath was past, very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulcher at the rising of the sun. The ninth verse states: "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils." These two texts in Mark mention the same day that was mentioned by Matthew. Note that Mark also makes a distinction between the Sabbath and the first day of the week. He says: "When the Sabbath was past, very early in the morning the first day of the week." Mark wrote some thirty years after the resurrection. He could easily have put in a word concerning the new Sabbath had he so wished and had there been a new Sabbath. And he ought to have done so if it was God's intention to institute a new day of rest and worship. But Mark says nothing of a new Sabbath. The reason is that he knew of no change.

The next text is Luke 24: 1. It mentions the same day as the others: "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulcher, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them." The preceding verses throw a little light on the circumstances which surround this visit of the women to the tomb. Christ had been crucified on the preparation day, and "the Sabbath drew on." Luke 23:54. After they had seen where Christ was laid, "they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment." Verse 56. Then follows: "Now upon the first day of the week." Luke 24:1. The situation is the same as in the other cases: the Sabbath was past when the first day of the week came. In this case we are definitely told that this Sabbath was "according to the commandment." Luke wrote more than twenty years after the resurrection.

The fifth text is John 20:1. It reads: "The first day of the week comes Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulcher, and sees the stone taken away from the sepulcher." This is substantially the same record that Luke gives. Christ was crucified on the preparation day, and "that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day, (for that Sabbath day

was an high day,)” the Jews “besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.” John 19:31. Again we have the Sabbath mentioned as coming before the first day of the week. John wrote about the close of the first century, nearly seventy years after the resurrection. If God intended to confer any sacredness on the first day of the week, would it not have been fitting for John to say a word about this, rather than to call the seventh day the Sabbath, and merely refer to the other day as the first day of the week?

The sixth text is found in John 20:19: “Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and said unto them, Peace be unto you.” This was not Christ’s first appearance. He had previously “appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked into the country.” Mark 16:12. These two had hurriedly returned to Jerusalem to tell the others what they had experienced. “They went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them.” Verse 13. When Christ suddenly appeared to the disciples, He “upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen.” Verse 14. Some say that the disciples were together to celebrate the resurrection. But in the face of this testimony, how can anyone believe this? The fact as stated is that “they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen.” For this Christ “upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart.” Nor were they together to celebrate the Lord’s supper. They were in that room because they lived there, and “for fear of the Jews.” And it was for this reason that “the doors were shut.” John 20:19. They were having an evening meal, and when Christ came “they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish, and of a honeycomb. And He took it, and did eat before them.” Luke 24:42, 43. This can hardly be called a communion service or a celebration of the resurrection. Neither fish nor honey is used in communion.

These texts exhaust the statements concerning the day of the resurrection. Two \*other first-day texts remain which we shall now consider.

### **A Sunday Meeting**

The first of these texts is Acts 20:7: “Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.” Here is a meeting, and the first and only meeting specifically recorded in the New Testament as being held on the first day of the week. They were together “to break bread.” Paul preached, and “continued his speech until midnight.” We do not know what time they began the meeting, but we know that it lasted till after midnight. “There were many lights in the upper chamber.” A young man was sitting in the window, “and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.” Acts 20:9. Paul went down and restored him to life, after which they broke bread “and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.” Verse 11.

Commentators are not agreed what evening this meeting was held. The Biblical day, which the Jews followed, begins at sunset. The first day of the week would therefore begin at sunset Saturday evening. When it says that this meeting was held the first day of the week, the question arises whether by this is meant the evening of Saturday or of Sunday. If Sunday is meant, and the meeting was held after sunset, then, of course, it was really the second day of the week, and as they had a long meeting, they did not break bread until Monday morning, some time after midnight. As far as we can learn from the record, it was about midnight when the young man fell down. It was after this that they broke bread and continued until morning. The breaking of the bread was therefore on Monday and not on Sunday, if the meeting was held Sunday evening as some believe.

If the other view is taken-and this we believe is the more probable-then the meeting was held on what we would call Saturday night, beginning after sunset. Paul has been in Troas seven days. (Acts 20:6) He is on his way to Jerusalem, but he has tarried at Troas to visit the church and to meet his companions on the journey, who have preceded him here. After the Sabbath he wishes to resume his journey. But before leaving, he meets once more with the church. It is a farewell meeting, and he is “ready to depart on the morrow.” According to this view, the meeting was held on the first day of the week as the text says. On the whole this seems the more probable. The next day, Sunday, Paul starts on his journey, walking nineteen miles to Assos, where he took ship; “for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot.” Verse 13.

Paul had the same custom as Christ. He went to church on the Sabbath day. (Luke 4:16; Acts 17:2; 13:14; 16:13) He doubtless did the same at Troas. But on the first day of the week he started on a long journey afoot. Apparently he did not consider the day different from the other working days.

### **First-day Collections**

The last text in which the first day of the week is mentioned is 1 Corinthians 16:2. “Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.” Alford, in his New Testament for English Readers, says of the translation: “Literally, let each of you lay up at home whatsoever he may by prosperity have acquired.” The Cambridge Bible, though also holding to Sunday sacredness, says: “Not that the contribution is not paid into a common fund, but laid by at home.- The Greek reading is clear. It is not a public collection. Each is to lay by him- that is, at home- whatever he may have. So the Vulgate translates it, and also the German by Luther, several French translations, the Italian of Diodati, the Spanish, and others.

These are all the texts in the New Testament that mention the first day of the week. None of them speak of the day as holy; none of them call it the Sabbath; none of them command its observance; none of them say that the day has taken the place of the seventh-day Sabbath.

The question may arise in the minds of some why the first day of the week is mentioned in the New Testament. God certainly knew that many would begin its observance. Would it not have been better under these circumstances to ignore the day and not to mention it at all? Why mention the first day when it might only cause confusion?

We think this question deserves consideration. Let us therefore hasten to remark that we believe that God had good reasons for wishing to mention the first day of the week. One reason would be that He wished to make it very clear to all that the first day is not the Sabbath, that it is only a common working day, and thus forestall any argument that might be propounded from silence. Also, by making a contrast between the two days, calling one day the Sabbath, He would make clear His position in the matter.

It will be remembered that the first six times the first day is mentioned in the New Testament it is distinctly declared that the first day follows the Sabbath, and hence it is not the Sabbath. The Sabbath is mentioned as being “according to the commandment” (Luke 23:56); it is said to follow the preparation day (John 19:31); it is said to come before the first day of the week (Mark 16:1 2). The women who followed -Christ rested on the Sabbath, and “when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint Him.” Mark 16:1. When the disciples were together in the evening, to make sure that it should not be understood to be a meeting to celebrate the resurrection or the Lord’s supper, it is stated that the disciples were together for fear of the Jews; that the doors were shut. That they did not believe that Jesus had arisen from the dead. That they were full of doubt and unbelief; that Jesus rebuked them for this; and that they ate fish and honeycomb, and were not celebrating the Lord’s supper. (John 20:9; Mark 16:13, 14; Luke 24:42, 43)

These texts all give evidence of having been put there for the specific purpose of telling us that the first day of the week is not the Sabbath, and that the seventh day of the week is.

The other two texts bring the same testimony. Paul held a meeting Saturday night as he was about to begin a long journey. , The meeting is recorded to tell us of a miracle which Paul performed that night, but the author takes occasion to inform us that the next day, Sunday, Paul walked nineteen miles on his journey, a thing he would not have done on the Sabbath. (Acts 20:6-12)

The last text, 1 Corinthians 16:2, tells us, On the first day of the week, “every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him.” This was to be done “at home,” as has been noted; hence no public meeting is signified. Moreover, each believer was to lay by “as God hath prospered him.” This would necessitate going over the records of the week. Many of the people were traders, and only by examining their accounts could they know their financial standing. This work was not to be done on the Sabbath, but they were to wait until the first day of the week. On that day they could do their bookkeeping and balance their accounts. This is what the text says. God could have omitted all record of the first day of the week had He so desired. But that would not have helped matters any. There would have to be a historical record of some kind, and He chose to do it this way, the best of all possible ways. As God in the beginning began His work on the first day of the week, worked six days, and rested the seventh, so in the new creation Christ finished His work, rested the seventh day, and arose the first day of the week to begin His new work of redemption. The fact that God began His work on the first day of the week no more makes it the Sabbath of the Old Testament than the fact that Christ during His earthly ministry began His work on the first day of the week makes it the Sabbath of the New Testament. The two accounts correspond. In each it is made very plain, not only which day is the Sabbath, but also which day is not the Sabbath. God Himself could not make it plainer.

### **Who Changed the Sabbath?**

With the clear testimony of the Bible that “the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord,” and that the keeping of the first day of the week has no basis whatever in that inspired Book, the question naturally arises how it came about that so many people keep Sunday, if they keep any day at all, and that so few people keep the Sabbath commanded in the Bible, the seventh day of the week, Saturday.

The history of the attempted change of the Sabbath is a long one. Christ, the apostles, and the early church kept the seventh day of the week. But when Christianity began to be popular, a gradual change took place. Advocating and taking the leadership in this change was the pope of Rome. Usurping the place of Christ, claiming to be the vicegerent of Christ, he took upon himself powers that belong only to God.

The pagans kept no Sabbath as such. Sunday was to them a kind of holiday, dedicated to the worship of the sun. As the pagans accepted Christianity, the Catholic Church followed the practice it has always followed; namely, leaving the people to their usual customs, but placing upon them a religious stamp. The first day of the week, which the heathen had dedicated to the sun, the church now dedicated to the Son. The keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath was solemn and holy; the keeping of the first day of the week was made popular by the permission to hold games and festivities after the morning worship was concluded. Gradually the first day of the week became the popular holiday, and the number who adhered to the Sabbath of the Lord found themselves in the small minority.

God, of course, knew of this long before it was done or even contemplated. Through His prophet He unmasked the attempt hundreds of years before it was made. In the seventh chapter of the book of Daniel the story is recorded. There a power is spoken of, the Papacy that shall “think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.” Verse 25. An American Translation, published by the University of Chicago, reads: “He shall plan to change the sacred seasons and the law.” The Septuagint reads: “Shall think to change times and law.” Young’s says: “It hopes to change season and law.” The American Revised: “He shall think to change the times and the law.” Other translations say the same. The word “law” in the Hebrew is in the singular, and doubtless has reference to the law of God, as there would be no point whatever in saying that a certain power should change a human law—a thing that is done continually.



If we are correct in this interpretation, we are face to face with a power that would attempt to do that which neither Christ nor the apostles had in mind to do—change the law of God as written and engraved on a tablet of stone with God’s own finger. This is a most presumptuous undertaking, and would be attempted only by a power that should presume to speak for and act in the stead of Christ. That it must be a religious or an anti-religious power is clear from the fact that only such a power would be interested in the law of God.

There is probably no more convincing testimony regarding the guilt of a person than his own confession. In obtaining such a confession, there must, of course, be no compulsion. If a person who has the free use of his faculties is accused of a crime, and of his own free will confesses his part in it, there is every reason to accept his testimony as true.

If we apply this principle to the question under discussion; if we ask the accused point-blank whether he is guilty or not guilty as charged. If he should answer that he is guilty, and should not only willingly furnish the information, but be proud of what he has done and publish his confession far and near, we would be inclined to accept such confession, especially if it agreed with known facts.

We are therefore going to ask the accused, the Roman Catholic Church, some very definite questions, or better still, we are going to let the church ask its own questions and answer them.

#### A Frank Admission

“Question. Which is the Sabbath day?

“Answer. Saturday is the Sabbath day.

“Question. Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

“Answer. We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church, in the Council of Laodicea (AD 336), transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday.”-REV. PETER GEIERMANN, CSSR, *The Convert’s Catechism of Catholic Doctrine*, p. 50, 2d edition, 1910.

“Question. Has the [Catholic] church power to make any alterations in the commandments of God?

“Answer. Instead of the seventh day, and other festivals appointed by the old law, the church has prescribed the Sundays and the holy days to be set apart for God’s worship; and these we are now obliged to keep in consequence of God’s commandment, instead of the ancient Sabbath.”-RT. REV. DOCTOR CHALLONER, *Catholic Christian Instructed*, p. 211.

“We Catholics, then, have precisely the same authority for keeping Sunday holy, instead of Saturday, as we have for every other article of our creed; namely, the authority of ‘the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth’ (1 Tim. 3:15); whereas, you who are Protestants have really no authority for it whatever; for there is no authority for it in the Bible, and you will allow that there can be authority for it anywhere else. Both you and we do, in fact, follow tradition in this matter; but we follow it, believing it to be a part of God’s Word, and the church to be its divinely appointed guardian and interpreter; you follow it, denouncing it all the time as a fallible and treacherous guide, which often makes the commandment of God of none effect.” Clifton Tracts, Vol. IV, article, “A Question for All Bible Christians,” p. 15.

“Question. Have you any other way of proving that the church has power to institute festivals of precept?

“Answer. Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her, she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday, the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday, the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority.”-REV. STEPHEN KEENAN, *A Doctrinal Catechism*; approved by the Most Reverend John Hughes, DD, Archbishop of New York, p. 174. New York: Edward Dunigan and Brother, 1851.

“Question. By whom was it [the Sabbath] changed?

“Answer. By the governors of the church, the apostles, who also kept it; for St. John was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day (which was Sunday). Apocalypse 1:10.

“Question. How prove you that the church hath power to command feasts and holy days?

“Answer. By the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, which Protestants allow of; and therefore they fondly contradict themselves, by keeping Sunday’ strictly, and breaking most other feasts commanded by the same church.

“Question. How prove you that?

“Answer. Because by keeping Sunday, they acknowledge the church’s power to ordain feasts, and to command them under sin; and by not keeping the rest [of the feasts] by her commanded, they again deny, in fact, the same power.”-REV. HENRY TUBERVILLE, DD, *An Abridgement of the Christian Doctrine (R.C.)*, p. 58. New York: Edward Dunigan and Brothers, approved 1833.

#### A Challenge

How will a Protestant answer this challenge? “You will tell me that Saturday was the Jewish Sabbath, but that the Christian Sabbath has been changed to Sunday. Changed! but by whom? Who has authority to change an express commandment of Almighty God? When God has spoken and said, Thou shall keep holy the seventh day, who shall dare to say, Nay, thou may work and do all manner of worldly business on the seventh day; but thou shall keep holy the first day in its stead? This is a most important question, which I know not how you can answer.

“You are a Protestant, and you profess to go by the Bible and the Bible only; and yet in so important a matter as the observance of one day in seven as a holy day, you go against the plain letter of the Bible, and put another day in the place of that which the Bible has commanded. The command to keep holy

the seventh day is one of the Ten Commandments; you believe that the other nine are still binding; who gave you authority to tamper with the fourth? If you are consistent with your own principles, if you really follow the Bible and the Bible only, you ought to be able to produce some portion of the New Testament in which this fourth commandment is expressly altered.” - Library of Christian Doctrine: Why Don't You Keep Holy the Sabbath Day? pages 3, 4. London: Burns and Oates (R.C.).

And here is another challenge:

“The Catholic Church for over one thousand years before the existence of a Protestant, by virtue of her divine mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday. We say by virtue of her divine mission, because He who called Himself the ‘Lord of the Sabbath,’ endowed her with His own power to teach, ‘He that hears you, hears Me. Commanded all who believe in Him to hear her, under penalty of being placed with the ‘heathen and publican’; and promised to be with her to the end of the world. She holds her charter as teacher from Him—a charter as infallible as perpetual. The Protestant world at its birth (in the Reformation of the sixteenth century) found the Christian Sabbath too strongly entrenched to run counter to its existence; it was therefore placed under the necessity of acquiescing in the arrangement, thus implying the church’s right to change the day, for over three hundred years. The Christian Sabbath is therefore to this day the acknowledged offspring of the Catholic Church as spouse of the Holy Ghost, without a word of remonstrance from the Protestant world.” -The Catholic Mirror (Baltimore, Md.), Sept. 23, 1893.

We believe that these statements from recognized Catholic sources are sufficient to prove the point made, that the Roman Catholic Church not only admits that it has changed the law of God with reference to the Sabbath commandment, but is proud of the fact, and claims that it has done so by divine authority. The church rather chides the Protestants for keeping the first day of the week, for which there is no Scriptural authority, but only the edict of the Catholic Church, when the Protestants claim to accept the Bible and the Bible only. It would appear to us that the Catholic Church is a great deal more consistent than are the Protestant churches in this matter. For how can Protestants stand for the Bible and the Bible only and yet accept and obey the voice of the Catholic Church instead of that of Christ? In doing so, Protestants certainly “fondly contradict themselves, by keeping Sunday strictly, and breaking most other feasts commanded by the same church.”

### **Protestants Agree**

At this point it might be interesting to hear what Protestant denominations have to say on this question. Do they recognize the truthfulness of the presentation made by the Roman Catholic Church? Do they know of the claims it makes, and do they acknowledge them? As long ago as the Protestant Reformation, this was incorporated in the Augsburg Confession:

“They [the Catholics] allege to have changed the Sabbath into Sunday, the Lord’s day, contrary to the Ten Commandments as it appears; neither is there any example more boasted of than the changing of the Sabbath day. Great, say they, is the power and authority of the church, since it dispensed with one of the ten commandments.” - Augsburg Confession, Art. XXVIII.

The following quotations from writers belonging to different Protestant denominations all present the same testimony:

“It is quite clear that, however rigidly, or devoutly we may spend Sunday, we are not keeping the Sabbath. The Sabbath was founded on a specific, divine command. We can plead no such command for the obligation to observe Sunday.... There is not a single sentence in the New Testament to suggest that we incur any penalty by violating the supposed sanctity of Sunday.”-R. W. DALE, MA (Congregationalist), *The Ten Commandments*, pp. 106, 107. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1871.

“There is no word, no hint, in the New Testament about abstaining from work on Sunday. Into the rest of Sunday no divine law enters. The observance of Ash Wednesday or Lent stands on exactly the same footing as the observance of Sunday.”-CANON EYTON (Church of England), *The Ten Commandments*, pp. 62-65. London: Triffiner & Co., 1894.

“And where are we told in Scripture that we are to keep the first day at all? We are commanded to keep the seventh; but we are nowhere commanded to keep the first day. The reason why we keep the first day of the week holy instead of the seventh is for the same reason that we observe many other things, not because the Bible, but because the church, has enjoined it.”-REV. ISAAC WILLIAMS, BD (Church of England), *Plain Sermons on the Catechism*, Vol. 1, pp. 334-336. London: Rivingtons, 1882-

“It is impossible to extort such a sense from the words of the commandment; seeing that the reason for which the commandment itself was originally given, namely, as a memorial of God’s having rested from the creation of the world, cannot be transferred from the seventh day to the first. Nor can any new motive be substituted in its place, whether the resurrection of our Lord or any other, without the sanction of a divine commandment.” – “The Christian Doctrine,” book 2, chap. 7; in *Prose Works of John Milton*, Vol. V, p. 70. London: Henry G. Bohn, 1853.

“For if we under the gospel are to regulate the time of our public worship by the prescriptions of the Ten Commandments, it will surely be far safer to observe the seventh day, according to the express commandment of God, than on the authority of mere human conjecture to adopt the first.”-JOHN MILTON, *A Treatise on Christian Doctrine*; cited in *The Literature of the Sabbath Question*, Robert Cox, Vol. 11, p. 54. Edinburgh: Maclachlan and Stewart, 1865.

This presents the matter before us in its true light. We do not see how, in face of this testimony, anyone can fail to see the lasting obligation of the seventh-day Sabbath.

## **The Masterpiece of Creation**

AS a boy I remember sitting looking into a mirror and wondering who I was. I knew my name, I knew my parents, my brothers, and my sisters, and they all knew me. But that did not satisfy me. Who was I? Where did I come from? Who or what was the real ‘I’ anyway?

This question bothered me for years. I did my best to solve the riddle of existence but did not get very far. I knew I had a body. But if "I" had a body, then the body was not the real personality; for "I" had a body. Who was the "I" that had the body? I also had a head, limbs, brains, heart. I had all these things, but who was the "I" that had them? After a while I gave up. I could not solve the problem.

In school I learned that I was not the only one who was puzzled about the mystery of existence and the human soul. All through the ages men have tried to find who they are, where they came from, and where they are going. And they have not made much progress. They know very little more now than they did a few thousand years ago about human existence, human destiny, the human soul. They are still interested in these subjects, but have so far been unable to fathom the depth of personality. True, progress has been made in the study of psychology, psychoanalysis, and kindred subjects. Men know a great deal more than they did of human behavior and the vagaries of the mind. But the abysmal depths of human consciousness have eluded the keenest minds.

I suppose the truth is that as man can never by reasoning find out God, neither can he find out man. Apart from divine revelation men will ever remain in ignorance of some of the deepest things of life, and will stand baffled before manifestations which they cannot understand. Only God knows the whole truth, and we may know truth only as God reveals it and has given us powers to grasp and believe His revelation.

I was brought up to believe that man had an immortal soul. This was not definitely told to me. It was simply taken for granted. I knew of a few persons who had their doubts about the immortality of the soul, but I decided that they were probably mentally deficient, for everybody "knew" that man was immortal. This, was so evident that it needed no proof. The body might die, but the soul never. That would live on forever and ever.

Then came the years of my skepticism, when I began to doubt everything. Perhaps there was no God such as I had taken for granted, and perhaps there was no such thing as an immortal soul or Immortality. After some time I came back to my belief in a personal God; and with the question of God settled, other things that had been shrouded in fog and uncertainty became clear.

But the question of the immortal soul still bothered me. Did men have, did all men have, did I have, an immortal soul? The more I thought of it, the more afraid I was of the implications inherent in such a doctrine. It seemed to have such tremendous consequences that I could hardly see how God, whom I had learned to know and love, and in whose wisdom I had implicit confidence, could create man in such a way and with such a nature that he could never die, never cease to exist; that though man should decide to defy God, yet God Himself could never blot him out of existence.

If a man was not thought worthy of eternal life, God had no way of disposing of him. He must live on forever in suffering. The universe would never cease to resound with the curses of the damned; the saved would forever be conscious of the fact that some of their loved ones were suffering the tortures of hell, while they were trying to enjoy heaven. The universe would never be clean; there would always be a plague spot holding unnumbered millions of tortured souls who had been brought into existence without their consent, and were now denied the privilege of cessation of existence. It seemed to me that God Himself would become tired of hell after a while and wish that there were some way of making an end to the dreadful spectacle. But God Himself could not do that. He had made men immortal, incapable of dying; and now He must make the best of it. Throughout eternity hell must exist; curses, blasphemies, cries of agony must fill the air. And God must stand helpless. He started it, but is unable to stop it. Man has an immortal soul; and this one act of God has so limited Him that He must bear its consequences forever. So I reasoned.

In my thinking I had no trouble with the destiny and future bliss of the righteous. It seemed perfectly clear and consistent to me that God should place man on trial in this world below. Give him a taste of life and of its possibilities, and then give him eternal life if he desired it enough to abide by the conditions upon which it might be had. That seemed eminently fair and just. That such people as were in harmony with God and His government should be selected and in the world to come form a happy family whose delight would be to do the will of God, seemed an ideal arrangement and gave purpose and direction to life here. Man was destined to something higher than merely this earth life. If he obeyed God, if he really loved life he would be permitted to live forever.

But the future existence of the wicked was different. Dreadful were the tales of their suffering as recounted in sermon and pamphlet. The wildest imagination of man seemed incapable of portraying the horrors that awaited the impenitent. And the most dreadful of all was the assurance that there would never be any surcease. As long as God Himself existed, men would suffer.

### **Modern Teaching**

Lest some may think that we are exaggerating the teaching of this doctrine, we call the reader's attention to a little work of about 450 pages called *Tracts for Spiritual Reading*, published by the Excelsior Publishing House, New York City. It is designed for the youth and little children, and contains the approbation by Vicar General William Teacher:

"I have carefully read over this little volume for children and have found nothing whatever in it contrary to the doctrines of holy faith, but, on the contrary, a great deal to charm, instruct, and edify our youthful classes, for whose benefit it has been written."

One section of thirty pages is headed "The Terrible judgment," and another of thirty-two pages is called "The Sight of Hell." From the latter we quote: "In hell there are not two or three hundred prisoners only. Millions on millions are shut up there. They are tormented with the most frightful pains. These dreadful pains make them furious. The fury gives them strength, such as we never saw." - Page 5.

"Look at the floor of hell. It is red hot like red hot iron. Streams of burning pitch and sulfur run through it. Isaiah 34. The floor blazes up to the roof. Look at the walls, the enormous stones are red hot; sparks of fire are always falling down from them. Lift up your eyes to the roof of hell; it is like a sheet of blazing fire. Take a spark out of the kitchen fire, throw it into the sea, and it will go

out. Take a little spark out of hell, less than a pinhead, throw it into the ocean, it will not go out. In one moment it Would dry up all the waters of the ocean, and set the whole world in a blaze.” - Pages 6, 7.

“Listen to the tremendous, the horrible uproar of millions of tormented creatures mad with the fury of hell. Oh, the screams of fear, the groaning of horror, the yells of rage, the cries of pain, the shouts of agony, the shrieks of despair of millions on millions. There you hear them roaring like lions, hissing like serpents, howling like dogs, and wailing like dragons. There you hear the gnashing of teeth and the fearful blasphemies of the devils. Above all, you hear the roaring of the thunders of God’s anger, which shakes hell to its foundations. But there is another sound!” -Page 8.

“There is in hell a sound like that of many waters. It is as if all the rivers and oceans of the world were pouring themselves with a great splash down on the floor of hell. Is it then really the sound of waters? It is. Are the rivers and oceans of the earth pouring themselves into hell? No. What is it then? It is the sound of oceans of tears running from the countless millions of eyes. They cry night and day. They cry forever and ever. They cry because the sulphurous smoke torments their eyes. They cry because they are in darkness. They cry because they have lost the beautiful heaven. They cry because the sharp fire burns them.

“Little child, it is better to cry one tear of repentance now than to cry millions of tears in hell.” Pages 8, 9.

“The devil gave job one ‘Stroke, only one stroke. That one stroke was so terrible that it covered all his body with sores and ulcers. That one stroke made job look so frightful that his friends did not recognize him. That one stroke was so terrible that for seven days and seven nights his friends did not speak a word, but sat crying, and wondering, and thinking what a terrible stroke the devil can give.

“Little child, if you go to hell, there will be a devil at your side to strike you. He will go on striking you every minute forever and ever, without ever stopping. The first stroke will make your body as bad as the body of Job, covered from head to foot with sores and ulcers. The second stroke will make your body twice as bad as the body of Job. The third stroke will make your body three times as bad as the body of Job. The fourth stroke will make your body four times as bad as the body of Job. How, then, will your body be after the devil has been striking it every moment for a hundred million years without stopping?” -Page 13

“Come into this room. You see it is very small. But see, in the midst of it there is a girl, perhaps about eighteen years old. What a terrible dress she has on -her dress is made of fire. On her head she wears a bonnet of fire. It is pressed down close all over her head; it burns her head; it burns into the skin: it scorches the bone of the skull and makes it smoke. The red-hot fiery heat goes into the brain and melts it.” -Page 17.

“Look into this little prison. In the middle of it there is a boy, a young man. He is silent; despair is on him. He stands straight up. His eyes are burning like two burning coals. Two long flames come out of his ears. His breathing is difficult. Sometimes he opens his mouth, and breath of blazing fire rolls out of it. But listen! There is a sound just like that of a kettle boiling. Is it really a kettle which is boiling? No; then what is it? Hear what it is. The blood is boiling in the scalded veins of that boy. The brain is boiling and bubbling in his head. The marrow is boiling in his bones.” - Page 20.

“See! it is a pitiful sight. The little child is in this red-hot oven. Hear how it screams to come out. See how it turns and twists itself about in the fire. It beats its head against the roof of the oven. It stamps its little feet on the floor of the oven. You can see on the face of this little child what you see on the faces of all in hell-despair, desperate and horrible! “-Ibid.

This forbidding picture of God is taken, not from a book published in the Dark Ages, but one which is available today in the bookstores. If the reader has the courage to read more of the same kind-and still worse-let him procure the book and read it for himself. But we do not recommend it.

This misleading doctrine has its root in the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. If man has an immortal soul; if he is incapable of dying; if when the body dies, the soul still lives on, then such conditions as portrayed in the quotations above are possible. The question of the nature of man is therefore an important one, and not merely a dry theological speculation. Just what does the Bible teach on this subject?

### **Does Man Have an Immortal Soul?**

While the Bible is not given to philosophy as such, it definitely raises a question regarding the nature of man and what his final end will be. Note how the psalmist introduces this subject:

“When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou has ordained; what is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visits him? For Thou has made him a little lower than the angels, and has crowned him with glory and honor. Thou made him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands. Thou has put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, Yea, and the beasts of the field. The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passes through the paths of the seas. O Lord our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth.” Psalms 8:3-9.

The psalmist was evidently impressed with the insignificance of man as compared to creation in general. He mentions the heavens, the moon, and the stars, the mighty works of God, and then asks the question, “What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visits him?”

However, he also appreciates that man, though small in comparison with the universe, occupies a unique position in the plan of God; that God is “mindful of him” and “visits him.” He declares that man is but a little lower than the angels, and that God has crowned him with glory and honor, and given him dominion over His works. All things are put under his feet. As the psalmist thinks of this, he exclaims, “O Lord our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!”



These statements give to man a very high position. He is God-made: "Thou has made him." He is king and ruler of the brute creation and but a little below the angels. From this we draw the conclusion that God made man a being fit to associate with Him. The Bible gives a straightforward, simple account of how man came to be. Let us look at this record a little more in detail.

"The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Genesis 2:7. This took place on the sixth day of creation. On each of the preceding days God had done His work. He had created light; He had made a firmament in the midst of the waters and called it heaven. He had collected all the waters into one place and had let the dry land appear; He had commanded the earth to bring forth grass and herbs yielding seed and the fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind. He had set lights in the firmament of heaven to be for signs and for seasons and for days and for years. He had made two great lights to rule the day and the night; He had created fishes, birds, and other living creatures. Then He finished His work by creating man.

Man was God's masterpiece. When He created the fishes, merely said, "Let the waters bring forth abundantly." When He created other living creatures, He said, "Let the earth bring forth." But when He came to man, He followed a different procedure. As though He were counseling with someone, He said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Genesis 1:26. "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them." Genesis 1:27.

God did not merely say, "Let there be a man." He "formed man of the dust of the ground." To form is "to make or construct out of existing material, to shape or fashion with the hand or tool, to give shape, to mold, to put into a particular or specified form." All God's other created works He had spoken into existence; but man He formed and fashioned with His own hands. When God had thus formed man, he was perfect in every detail, except one, the most important of all. He was without life. So God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

Man differs from the animals in that he walks upright. His physical constitution in general, however, cannot be said to be of a higher order than that of animals. Many of these live longer than man, have better sight, better hearing, greater strength, and, greater endurance. While no animal has any organ that begins to compare with the human hand in dexterity, flexibility, and general usefulness, on the whole it cannot be contended that man is superior to animals in physical structure.

We may next inquire if the breath of life which was given to man was different from the breath of life given to the beasts. In this connection it is interesting to note that the words used in Genesis 2:7, God breathed into man's nostrils "the breath of life," are the same words used in Genesis 7:15, where the animals are said to enter "into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life." This is also emphasized in verses 21 and 22, where the statement is made that in the Flood all flesh died upon the Earth, "both of fowl and of cattle, and of beasts, and of every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth, and every man; all in whose nostrils was the breath of life."

When the breath of life was breathed into Adam's nostrils, he became a living soul. When the breath of life entered the animals, did they also become living souls? To this the Bible gives an affirmative answer. A careful reading of the first chapter of Genesis, verses 20, 21, 24, and 30, will disclose these statements: "the moving creature that hath life," "every living creature," "the living creature," "everything that creeps upon the earth, wherein there is life." The original Hebrew language here in each instance gives "nephesh chayah," which means "living soul," as is also noted in the margin of verse 30. Referring to this reading, we find that "to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creeps upon the earth, wherein there is a living soul, I have given every green herb for meat." The same expression is used of the beasts in Genesis 2:19. We refer the reader also to Genesis 9:10, 12, 15, 16, and Leviticus 11:46. In these verses the term "living creatures" is used, but in each instance the original is "living souls," the same words that refer to man in Genesis 2:7.

### **In the Image of God**

If men have or are "living souls" the same as animals, is there, then, no difference between man and beast? Yes, a most profound difference. Let no one draw any unwarranted conclusions from what has so far been presented. It is true that man has a body composed of the same material as the animals; it is true that they as well as man receive their life from God. It is true that they are spoken of as living souls; but when we have said this, we are far from having told the whole story. In some respects man is as high above brute creation as heaven is above the earth. Man was created in the image of God and the beasts were not. This constitutes a difference that can hardly be exaggerated. As God is above man, so is man above brute creation. Man is not God, but he is made in the image of God.

When the statement is made that man is created in the image of God this refers to three particular aspects: the physical, the intellectual, and the spiritual.

The physical aspects of man's likeness to God are, of course, the least important. We are not unmindful of the fact that we are not warranted in making God in the image of man; for it is not God who is made in man's image, but man who is made in God's image.

We believe, however, that man has a kinship to God even in physical appearance. As the son is like the Father, so we may believe that man is like God. We are, therefore, not surprised when the prophet in a vision of God likens Him to "the appearance of a man." Ezekiel 1:26. We would not press this point too much, but believe it warrants us in believing that man may claim a likeness to God in appearance.

When we come to consider man as an intellectual being the difference between man and the beasts of the field becomes very apparent. Man is spoken of as being "renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him." Colossians 3:10. This affirms that man is intellectually in the image of God. As far as is known at present, man is the only earth creature that can reason

and think. This statement may be disputed by some, and we admit that there are instances where the difference between animal instinct and man's reasoning seems very small indeed. We believe it true, however, that no indisputable case of reasoning has ever been discovered in any of the lower creatures.

Man is an intellectual being, capable of measuring the depths of the heavens as well as of exploring his own soul. He is not only conscious, but self-conscious. He can examine himself and sound the purity of his motives. He bridges the chasms and tunnels the mountains. He chains the lightning and utilizes the mighty forces of nature. He builds machines that, like a bird, fly through the air, and, like a fish, descend to the deep. He parts asunder continents, and harnesses the mighty waterfalls. He speaks, and his voice is heard around the world; he commands, and the earth gives forth its treasure. He weighs the suns in a balance and marshals electrons to do his bidding. He discovers the timetable of the stars and delves into the secrets of nature's laboratory. Truly, he is but little below the angels; yet he is only a child of the dust-created in the image of God, but formed of clay. We are safe in saying that in the intellectual realm there is an impassible gulf between man and beasts. Man's mind is never at rest. However far he may advance, he still finds heights ahead which he feels compelled to surmount. Blind instinct may lead animals to do what appear to be heroic deeds; but man apparently is the only creature who, for the pure love of adventure, honor, or ambition, attempts the seemingly impossible and endures untold privation in the attempt.

But great as is man's intellectual superiority over the brute creation, this does not constitute the greatest difference. This we find in his spiritual nature, in his capacity for knowing and appreciating God.

## In the Realm of the Spirit

In the spiritual nature of man is found the greatest difference between him and the lower creation. It is in this that he is most like God: "Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Ephesians 4:24. Note, man "after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." This means that man is created with a desire to emulate God in these respects.

"God is a Spirit," says Christ, "and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." John 4:24. This text reveals God's inmost nature. "God is spirit," as the original reads. If there be doubt in the mind of any about the thinking or reasoning ability of animals, there can be no doubt of their total lack of spiritual qualities. We cannot think of an ape as having any spiritual conception, nor can we think of a cat endowed with moral virtues. No dog ever returned the bone he stole from the butcher. Animals are neither moral nor immoral. Such qualities are not predicated of the brutes. Beauty, virtue, and holiness are entirely foreign to them. Man alone has capacity for God; he is a partaker of the divine nature. (2 Peter 1:4.)

It is in the spiritual realm that man is most like God. The attributes of love, kindness, justice, mercy, compassion, and tenderness are qualities found in man as in God, though, of course, in a lesser, an imperfect, degree. It is because of these spiritual possibilities that men may be raised above present earthly conditions and become fit companions for the angels in light.

God made man with the power of choice, with freedom of will. He can choose and determine his course of conduct and direct his energy toward carrying out his determination. In the power of choice lies man's destiny. It was the choice of Adam in the Garden of Eden that brought sin into the world. As a man can thus will to sin, he can also will to do right. The will is the deciding factor in man. It is that which determines his eternal destiny.

This will is God-given. The Lord considered freedom of choice so important that He was willing to run the risk of having man transgress His commandments rather than to deprive him of this freedom. The Creator could have made a being incapable of doing wrong. However, such a being would be less than a man. God could have restrained Adam as he was about to eat of the fruit. He chose not to do so. He knew what would be the consequences both to Adam and to Himself. To Adam it meant death; to God it meant the sacrifice of His only Son. That God gave His Son, and that the Son gave Himself, is an indication of the value which God places upon the freedom of will.

The great value of will lies in its ability to choose between moral values. This is distinctly a human trait and does not belong to any of the lower creatures. We do not hold them morally responsible. Moral values have no meaning whatever as applied to the brute creation.

With freedom of the will comes moral responsibility. A man is able to order his own life, and is responsible for the choices which he makes. He may misuse his freedom of will, but he must take the consequences. He may also order his life in conformity to the will of God and receive a reward. We hold that in this man's moral choice lies his greatest opportunity and his most solemn responsibility. In this respect he is not merely different in degree from the beasts of the field, but he is different in kind. There is no likeness here, no comparison, only contrast. Man is as far above the beasts as heaven is above earth.

If man is created in the image of God, and God is immortal, is not man also immortal? This question deserves consideration.

## Spirit and Soul

Though man is created in the image of God and God is immortal, it is not necessarily true that man therefore is immortal. God is omniscient-He knows all things; but man, though created in the image of God, is not omniscient. God is everywhere present; man is not. God is all-powerful; man is not. God is spirit; man is not. Therefore, we cannot conclude that since God is immortal, man is also immortal because he is created in His image.

The Hebrew word for spirit is *ruach*. It occurs in the Old Testament 442 times. It is translated by sixteen different English words, such as "spirit," 232 times; "mind," 97 times; "breath," 28 times; also-anger," smell, blast, courage, "air." Its equivalent in

Greek is *pneuma*, which will be found in the New Testament 385 times. This is translated by four different English words: “life,” “spirit,” “ghost,” and “wind.” The Hebrew of the Old Testament has one other word from which “spirit” is translated—*shamah*. This word occurs 24 times, and is translated five different ways: “inspiration,” “breath & blast,” “spirit,” and “soul.”

It will thus be seen that these words have many different meanings. Should one insist that “spirit” means only wind, he could cite many passages in proof of his contention. Should he decide that it means “mind,” there would be 97 texts to sustain him. It is therefore clear that no narrow or partial view will suffice as an adequate explanation. As the two words are used more than 1,700 times, it would be a colossal task to examine all of them critically. This we shall not attempt to do, as neither space nor time would permit it. All we can do here is to record the results.

“Spirit” is the breath of life, which in the beginning was breathed into Adam’s nostrils, causing him to become a living soul. It is the principle of life from God, imparted to man and beast alike. (Genesis 2:7; 7:15, 21, 22) It is “the universal principle imparting life from the Creator.” It is to man what steam is to an engine. It is as the current of electricity that causes the motor to operate. It is impersonal, powerful, God-given.

“Soul,” on the other hand, is not impersonal, but individual. It might be said to be the principle of life as embodied in an individual. While it is used of any animate being whether human or animal, it denotes individual life as differentiated from the mere principle of life.

It is interesting to note that of the 851 times “spirit” is used in the Bible, though translated in more than forty different ways, 762 times the translation accords with the above definition of the impersonal, universal principle of life, while of the 850 times that “soul” is used, 770 are in harmony with the definition of individual personal existence.

In these definitions we are in harmony with most Biblical authorities. Thus Jacobus, in *A Standard Bible Dictionary*, says: “The word ‘soul’ stands for the principle of life as embodied in individuals, while ‘spirit’ is the same principle as cause underlying the constituted life.”

Hastings’ one-volume *Dictionary of the Bible* says that “soul” is used in the Old Testament “for any animated being, whether human or animal,” while “spirit” “is the universal principle imparting life from the Creator.”

The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* says under “soul”: “The ‘spirit’ (*pneuma*) is the out breathing of God into the creature, the life-principle derived from God. The ‘soul’ (*psuche*) is man’s individual possession, that which distinguishes one man from another and from inanimate nature.”

These definitions we accept as true and Biblical. The spirit is the impersonal principle of life, universal life, given to all, man and beasts alike. (Genesis 7:21, 22) The soul, however, is not impersonal, but stands for one individual as distinct from another.

Though soul is referred to 850 times in the Bible, not once is immortality predicated of it. Inspiration has 850 opportunities to speak of the “immortal” soul, if such indeed were the soul of man. But, as stated, not once is the soul mentioned in any connection whatsoever with the thought of immortality.

The Bible tells us that God “only bath immortality.” 1 Timothy 6:16. It also tells us that man is “mortal and that “this mortal must put on immortality Job 4:17; 1 Corinthians 15:53. It states that the gift of God is eternal life,” and that only “he that has the Son hath life.” Romans 6:23; 1 John 5:12.

In view of this, we are on solid Biblical ground when we state that the Bible knows nothing of an immortal soul. It does, however, definitely promise eternal life to whosoever will believe in Christ.

There is nothing clearer in the Bible than, the promise of everlasting life to the believer: “God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. The time is coming when those who have been faithful shall receive the immortality which is brought to light in the gospel. (Romans 2:7; 2 Timothy 1:10.)

We are firm believers in eternal life. We believe that the saints of God shall be with Him forever in the next world, and that there shall be no end either to life or to joy in the hereafter. When we therefore discuss the matter of the immortal soul and find it nonexistent, we wish to make it very clear that we believe in immortality, in eternal life, a life that measures with God’s own. Christ came that we might have life and have it more abundantly. We want to emphasize that there is no promise that is dearer to us than that of life unending and everlasting, in the presence of God.

This matter of eternal life, however, is altogether different from a belief in an immortal soul, in some undying principle that is incorporated into man’s being and makes him incapable of death. This is an unbiblical conception of the eternal life which is the heritage of the believer.

This brings us again to the matter of the nature of man. Man was created in the image of God, physically, intellectually, and morally. He appears upon the earth, lives a short time, and then passes on. What shall be his destiny? We have learned that he came from God, created by the Almighty. We have learned that there are capacities in him for understanding and appreciating God and all that is holy and good and true and that God has endowed him with the will to choose the right or the wrong. We have also learned that man may gain eternal life if he desires it enough to abide by the rules of that life. But now the question comes, What happens to men at death? Where do they go? Do they become angels, or spirits, or what?

## Who Are the Spirits?

THERE are those who believe that men, when they depart this life, become spirits, that they lead a shadowy existence, but are able to communicate with men on earth, and that men are able to communicate with them. This, of course, is built upon the theory

of the immortal soul, which is the foundation of spiritualism. Spirit mediums claim to have communication with the dead, to talk with them, and to receive messages from them.

Such claims are entirely and completely false. No one has or can have any communication whatever with the dead, for the simple reason that “the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion forever in anything that is done under the sun.” Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6.

“Man lies down, and rises not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.” Job 14:12. In harmony with this, Christ speaks of death as a sleep. “Our friend Lazarus sleeps,” He said; “but I go that I may awake him out of sleep.” John 11: 11. When the disciples misunderstood this and thought that Christ was speaking of natural sleep, Jesus plainly said, “Lazarus is dead.” Verse 14. In like manner Paul speaks of death as a sleep when he says, “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.” 1 Thessalonians 4:13-15.

It would certainly be most unfortunate if the teachings of spiritualism were true. Consider this: A person dies, and, according to the popular theology of the day, goes to heaven. There he enjoys eternal bliss and is a companion of the angels in light. But at the same time he is subject to the call of spiritualists on earth. He is suddenly summoned to leave heaven and appear at some sance where a few persons have gathered to see the manifestation; he is asked to lift tables; to answer by rapping a certain number of times; to answer inane, oftentimes silly, questions, most of them trivial and personal. At the request of some medium he must appear as often as wanted, and serve as the attraction at some cheap performance to which he would not lend his influence were he alive. The whole process seems unthinkable.

### **The Witch of Endor**

God does not treat His saints that way. Yet men quote the Bible in support of such blasphemy, calling attention to the experience of the witch of Endor, in which the prophet Samuel is supposed to have appeared. A careful reading of the account recorded in the twenty-eighth chapter of the first book of Samuel will yield these results:

Saul, the king of Israel, had departed from God. Because of this God had rejected him and made David king in his stead. The Philistines, the ancient enemies of Israel, were gathered together in battle against Saul, who, when he saw the host arrayed for battle. “was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled.” Verse 5. As Saul had forsaken God, so God had forsaken him, and when he attempted to inquire of the Lord what he should do, “the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.” Verse 6. His old and faithful counselor, the prophet Samuel, was dead, and he had no one else to whom he could turn in his distress.

In his perplexity he thought of the necromancers, the wizards, and those who had familiar spirits, who claimed to have communication with the dead. Might he receive help from them? Quickly he commanded his servants, “Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her.” Verse 7. The servants informed the king that they knew of such a woman who lived at Endor. Saul disguised himself, took two men with him, and in the darkness of the night arrived at the woman’s dwelling and commanded her to bring up the one whom he should name. (Verse 8.)

The witch was assured by Saul that no ill should befall her, as he demanded, “Bring me up Samuel.” Verse 11. As she attempted to obey the command of the king—he had not made known his identity to her—she was evidently informed by the spirit with which she was communicating that the man before her was Saul, the king. At this she became afraid, for witches had supposedly been prohibited from plying their trade, and what she was doing was unlawful punishable by death. “Why has thou deceived me?” she cried, “for thou art Saul” Verse 12. The king told her not to be afraid, but to inform him of what she had seen. She replied, “I saw gods ascending out of the earth. And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man comes up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself.” Verses 13, 14.

After this Saul had a conversation with the supposed Samuel, who complained, “Why has thou disquieted me, to bring me up?” Verse 15. Saul was told plainly that the kingdom had been taken away from him and given to David, and that by “tomorrow” Saul and his sons would be with Samuel. This is a typical seance. Let us examine it.

The woman did not say that it was Samuel she saw. She said, “I saw gods ascending out of the earth.” Nor are we told that Saul saw Samuel, or that he saw anything. He asked the woman, “What saw thou?” When the woman said she saw gods ascending out of the earth, Saul concluded that it must be Samuel. But the woman did not say so, and Saul did not see the apparition himself.

If this were in truth Samuel, then he did not come down from heaven. What the woman saw was gods “ascending out of the earth,” and the supposed Samuel himself said, “Why has thou disquieted me to bring me up?” He was not in heaven. He was in the nether regions.

Would the real Samuel be likely to warn the witch first of all that it was King Saul who was visiting her, and thus put her on her guard against him? For be it remembered that according ‘to God’s command, “Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land.” Verse 3. The penalty for witchcraft was death, and now the purported Samuel attempts to shield the woman from possible punishment! Would the Lord’s prophet appear at the demand of a witch who was doing an unlawful thing, punishable by death? Would Samuel lend his influence to nullify God’s decree?

God’s command was, “Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God.” Leviticus 19:31. “Thou shall not suffer a witch to live.” Exodus 22:15. Are we supposed to believe that God would



send one of His prophets to appear at the call of a witch, when He had definitely declared that His people were to have nothing to do with such, “to be defiled by them?” and had commanded that they be killed? If God really sent Samuel to the dwelling of the witch to communicate with Saul, then He did so contrary to His express statement that He would not answer him, “neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.” 1 Samuel 28:6. We may safely conclude that the apparition, or whatever the woman saw, was not Samuel.

In any event, whatever the woman saw, came up “out of the earth.” If Samuel was in heaven when called, did he descend to the earth, then go down into the earth that he might ascend “out of the earth”? Such would be nonsense. Apparently the supposed Samuel was not pleased with being called, for he complained, “Why has thou disquieted me?” Without doubt we would all complain if we were in heaven and then suddenly received a call to appear at some disreputable witch’s house to “perform” for a Godforsaken company of unbelievers, to help make a living for a woman acting in defiance of God’s command. Certainly God had no part in this affair.

### **The Spirits of Devils**

If the real Samuel did not appear to the witch at Endor, what did appear? Did nothing at all happen, and was it all an illusion of the mind? By no means. Something or somebody did appear, but it was not Samuel, or any other departed human being. We have already noted that “the dead know not anything,” that they are unconscious and do not know what is happening on earth. (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6) If this is so, what really did take place at the seance? The same thing that happens at every true spiritualistic performance. Evil spirits, fallen angels, who are well acquainted with what goes on here on the earth, who know many of the secrets of which men think they only have knowledge, impersonate departed men and women for the sole purpose of deceiving and ensnaring souls, and leading them to destruction. If it is possible for Satan to appear as “an angel of light,” is it any wonder that his angels also have power to transform themselves into the likeness of departed friends? (2 Corinthians 11:14, 15)

It is well at this time to heed the admonition of the prophet of old. “When they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. Isaiah 8:19, 20.

Spirits that appear at seances are merely “spirits of devils” which have come to deceive men. They may at times reveal secrets which only a few persons know; however, they do this to deceive, and with no intent to impart information. But most people have an insatiable desire to know the future; the mysterious appeals to them. Satan knows this and is making the most of it. Even in this enlightened age every city has its complement of mediums. Thousands and even millions consult them and are thus led on to the path of destruction.

We would not give the impression that every medium has intercourse with some spirit. Much of what goes under the name of spiritualism is cheap trickery and deceit, based on the principle of sleight-of-hand performance. Such “mediums” have been exposed again and again. It is safe to say that nine-tenths of all supposed seances are frauds and nothing but frauds.

I have seen many of these mediums’ tricks duplicated by clever magicians. But Satan can take advantage of even this. For if some of the tricks can be performed by sleight-of-hand artists, may not all of them be done in the same way? And so people fail to understand that there are real spirit performances at which the devil himself has charge, and supernatural things really do take place. We all need to be on our guard. Satan will deceive the very elect if that be possible. (Matthew 24:24) He will even cause fire to “come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,” and thus he deceives them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast.” Revelation 13:13,14.

In view of all this, it is well for us to know what the Bible teaches concerning the dead, and also what it teaches concerning evil spirits. Thus we will be enabled to stand when the test comes, and will not be deceived.

## **Prayer and Meditation**

IN its highest exercise, prayer is communion. This needs to be emphasized, for to many Christians prayer is merely a means of getting something from God. They feel their lack in certain respects. What easier way is there than to ask God for what they need? Has not God promised to supply that which we lack? As a result of this way of thinking, many prayers consist mostly of asking for things—some of them good, some not so good, some positively harmful. To such people God is the Source of supply, the great Giver, the inexhaustible Fountain of gifts.

All they need to do is ask, and God will do the rest. They measure their Christianity by the answers they receive to their petitions, and feel that their prayers are not effective when the request is denied. They are continually asking for something, and they believe that God does or should answer their requests. Like the prodigal son, they pray, “Father, give me.” Luke 15:12.

It cannot be denied that prayers of petition-asking for things—are a legitimate form of prayer. We shall always need to ask God for the things we desire. But it is to be emphasized that prayers of petition must not become the prevailing form of prayer. Prayers of praise, thanksgiving, and adoration must always have the pre-eminence. Submissiveness to the will of God, complete dedication to Him, and thorough consecration would indicate the form prayers should take. When our prayers are changed from an effort to get God to do what we want Him to do to an intense desire to find out what God wants us to do for Him, our prayers will not so often take the form of asking merely for things and demanding that God forthwith give them to us.

Indeed, it would be better for most of us to cease asking for things for a while and concentrate our entire efforts on learning what God wants us to have, to do, or to be. When we find this out, we are on sure ground. Then we can ask of Him what we feel we need, confident that His will is to be done. The great problem confronting us is to find out God's will, and then search our hearts to make sure that we really want His will to be our will.

Someone has said that prayers are an effort on the part of the petitioner to have God change His mind. Many are making no effort to find out what God wants, although they are very clear on what they want. Their prayer is really, "Thy will be changed," not, "Thy will be done." They are struggling with God. They are agonizing in prayer. They are demanding of Him that which they believe should be done. It does not occur to them that the first thing to find out is, Does God really want me to have the thing that I so much desire? Is it for my good? Is it God's will? Has the time come for it to be done? Is there something I must do first? Am I really willing to submit everything to God, so that if He does not give me what I desire, I will be satisfied and thank Him for what He does give; or am I really more intent on getting what I want than I am on ascertaining God's will?

It may be well to enumerate some things that prayer is not. It is not a substitute for work. A Christian confronted with a hard problem has a right to ask God's help and expect that He will respond. But this does not excuse him from hard, taxing labor. God will strengthen the intellect, He will invigorate the mind; but He will not accept prayer as a substitute for mental effort or give to those who are slothful. Such as are capable of learning the multiplication table and have the opportunity to do so must not shun the effort necessary, trusting that God will do for them that which will make mental exertion unnecessary. In most cases work and prayer go together. Neither one is sufficient in itself.

The aim of prayer is not merely to get God to do something we want. Some apply worldly methods and have a worldly philosophy in their approach to prayer. They have learned that as far as the world is concerned, to get anything out of God they must "go after it." They act as though God were not willing to grant their petition without a great deal of coaxing, and seem to believe that by persistency and wheedling they can get out of Him that which He would not otherwise give them. No one can get out of God that which he desires, merely by continually annoying Him. Wheedling, coaxing, cajoling, teasing, annoying-mere persistency-do not avail with God.

The impression must not prevail, however, that there is no such thing as wrestling in prayer, or that we need only mention to God once and for all what we want and it will be forthcoming. Prayer is not quite so simple as that. No, there is need of agonizing, prevailing prayer-prayer that goes to the heart of things and is not satisfied till lives and conditions are changed. Jesus prayed all night; Jacob wrestled with the Angel; Daniel sought the Lord with prayer and fasting; Paul besought the Lord again and again. We need not fewer prayers, but more. And we need to learn to pray in faith. This, perhaps, is the vital point.

### **Let God Speak**

Prayer is not monologue. It may be audible, or it may be the unspoken desire of the soul. 'In either case ideal prayer is communion. Some pray at length, informing God of things of which He is already aware. They call His attention to many matters that need correction. They seem to believe that He is in danger of forgetting certain things that need to be done, and their prayers take the form of reminding Him of His duty. Having done this, they feel that they have done their duty. They have "said their prayers" and with an "Amen" their "conversation" stops. It has been a monologue entirely. They hope that God will use judiciously the information which they have conveyed to Him, and that He will do something about the matters concerning which they have prayed.

Many consider prayer a one-way communication, man speaking to God. Yet this is not the highest form of prayer; for as stated above, ideal prayer is communion. In true prayer God speaks to man just as truly as man speaks to God. True friendship will not last long where one does all the speaking. In our prayers we too often do all the talking and expect God to do all the listening. And yet, may it not be possible that He would like to communicate with us as well as we with Him? This He often does by bringing certain scriptures to our remembrance. Is it too much to believe that after we have offered an earnest prayer which we believe God in heaven has heard, He might wish to say a word to us? Is it not possible that after we have said "Amen," God may be on the point of communicating with us; but we rise from our knees and do not give Him a chance to speak? We hang up the receiver, as it were. We "ring off." Can it be conceived that the true Christian is forever speaking to God and that God has no message for him? It must grieve the Father to be denied the chance to communicate with us just at the moment when He is ready to do so. It would seem that after this has happened several times, He can come to no other conclusion than that we are not very eager to have communion with Him. We merely "say" our prayers, and when we have finished, we walk away. Such prayers surely cannot be all that God means by "communion."

Let us repeat; prayer is communion. It is more than conversation; it is intimate fellowship. It is an exchange of views and ideas. It presupposes sympathetic understanding and confidence. It need not always be accompanied by words. Silence may be more eloquent than torrents of oratory. It is rather a kind of friendship grounded in quiet confidence and assurance, unaccompanied by spectacular demonstrations, or outbursts.

### **Meditation**

Meditation is a vital ingredient of prayer. It may almost be said to be its better part. And yet it is mostly neglected. We appear before God, present our petition, and depart. Next time, we do the same. We keep God informed in regard to our status, tell Him of some things that need attention, and having thus delivered ourselves, we close the interview. This is repeated day after day, but it cannot be said to be a very satisfactory experience. Is there nothing better? There must be.

The psalms, especially those of David, sound the depths of Christian feeling. David passed through some soul-harrowing experiences. Once he was fleeing from Saul into the wilderness. There he penned the sixty-third Psalm. It is the cry of a soul longing

for God, for a deeper knowledge of Him and acquaintance with Him, especially in prayer. David was evidently not satisfied with his prayer experience. God seemed far away. He did not answer. David experienced the feeling of seeming to address nobody, in an empty room. Yet he longed for God. His soul thirsted for the living God. Was there no way in which he could get into real communion with Him?

Then David learned the real meaning and method of prayer. Of this he speaks in Psalms 63:5, 6: “My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips: when I remember Thee upon my bed, and meditate on Thee in the night watches.” Note the wording: “My soul shall be satisfied when I remember Thee upon my bed, and meditate on Thee in the night watches.” David had prayed before. Now to prayer he adds meditation, and says that when he does this his “soul shall be satisfied. To him it is as “marrow and fatness,” and he praises God “with joyful lips.” At last his soul is satisfied.

This record is of great encouragement to us. Many, like David, cry out for the living God. They are not satisfied. They believe that there must be something better than they are experiencing. David found it. Can they not do the same?

“My soul shall be satisfied.” How wonderful to have the soul hunger satisfied! It was when David added meditation to prayer that he could at last say that his soul was satisfied. It may be that we shall have the same experience. Most Christians remember God. They pray. In fact, it may be said, and rightly, that no one can be a child of God and not pray. But not many are practiced in the art of meditation. They pray, but they do not meditate. Yet one is as important as the other.

Most Christians are too busy to meditate. Their work makes too many demands upon them. They rush from one thing to another and have little time to commune with their own souls or with God.

Yet how much is lost to themselves and to the world because of lack of meditation! No soul can rush into the presence of God and out again and expect to enjoy communion with Him. The peace that passes understanding does not dwell in a restless heart. “Take time to be holy,” is more than a mere sentiment. It takes time to commune with God, time to be holy. “Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah!” Psalms 4:4. The last statement needs special emphasis. “Be still.” We are too restless. We need to learn quietness with God. We need to be still.

### **Wait Before God**

“My soul, wait thou in silence for God only.” Psalms 62:5, A.R.V. Let these words sink deep into each reader’s consciousness. “My soul”-this is addressed to every Christian - “Wait thou in silence for God.” This is a command and also a promise. Wait in silence. Wait in silence for God. Wait thou in silence for God. Wait thou in silence for God only. And the one who waits in silence for God only, at His invitation, will not be disappointed. He will be satisfied.

What a wonderful invitation this is! You have prayed, you have poured out your heart to Him who alone understands. Do not say “Amen” and walk off. Give God an opportunity. Wait for Him. Wait in silence. Wait for Him only. He has invited you to wait. Let your whole soul be intent upon Him. It may be that God, through the still, small voice, will make Himself known. Wait in silence upon Him.

To some Christians this is no new doctrine. They know what it is to commune with God. They have had precious seasons alone with Him. They have learned to wait in silence. And precious have been the revelations which have come to them.

To others, however, this listening side of prayer may be a new experience. They have learned to pray, but they have not learned to wait in silence upon God. Meditation as a part of prayer has not been important to them. They have conceived of prayer as a certain form of words reverently addressed to the Father in heaven. With their “Amen” the communion is at an end. God does not intend it thus. Amen may mean the end of man’s speaking, but it should not be the end of the interview. God invites us to wait in silence. He may wish to speak, or He may not. In any event, we are to wait.

Many are inclined to speak too much. We have all had experience with persons who come ostensibly to seek counsel, but who in reality come only to present their own views. They seem eager for the interview; yet there is small opportunity to give any counsel, for they occupy the time themselves and seem satisfied when they have presented their story. If some measure of agreement with their view is elicited, they are content.

So it is, too often, with prayer. The most important part is not our speaking to God, but God’s speaking to us., True, our Father loves to have us pray. Our prayers are music to Him. And yet, would it not be well to give Him an opportunity to communicate with us?, Would it not be well for us to have a listening attitude? Would it not be well for us to do exactly what we are counseled to do, “wait. . . in silence for God only”? Surely He will not let us wait in vain.

There is always danger of going to extremes. There are those who reject or think lightly of the instruction given in the Bible and depend almost wholly on impressions. Such persons are in great danger. We believe that God will lead those who are willing to be led, but we believe also that such leading will always be in harmony with His revealed will, and will not in any way contradict the, written Word, Wonderful as is the privilege of communing with God, and wonderful as is the privilege of meditation, there is danger of their misuse.

Especially should the younger Christians be on their guard. Only long experience in the things of God, backed by a life of obedience to His will, enables one to judge the processes of the mind. Satan is ever near to suggest his own thoughts, and spiritual discernment is needed to recognize the voice speaking. This, however, should not cause even young Christians to omit meditation. Far from it. God is ever near to help and guide, and we may believe that the quiet hour spent with Him will yield large results for the kingdom. We are only issuing a warning to such as I would be led by a voice speaking to the soul and neglect the voice speaking through the Word.

Our prayers are only a mockery unless we, from a sincere heart, abstain from sin and dedicate ourselves entirely to God. Prayer must have sincerity as a foundation and background. It must be grounded in repentance and godly sorrow for sin. It must be evidenced by confession and restitution. A prayer thus conditioned will not remain unanswered. God is true to His word.

### **The Unjust Judge**

In the parable of the unjust judge Christ by contrast shows what God is not, and also teaches other precious lessons. The parable was primarily given to teach the lesson of faith and perseverance in prayer.

“He spoke a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint. Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: and there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubles me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge said. And shall not God avenge His own elect which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them. I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man comes, shall He find faith on the earth?” Luke 18:1-8.

The word “avenge” has nothing to do with “revenge,” but is rather an appeal for justice. Having lost her husband the widow had been taken advantage of, and she had appealed for justice. The judge was a hard man; he feared neither God nor man, and for a while would do nothing for her. Then, because she annoyed him and wearied him, he at last heard her petition and gave her justice. She wore him out. She got what she wanted, not because of any change in the judge’s attitude toward her case, but simply that he might be rid of her continual coming. She wearied him, and he gave her justice.

The first lesson Christ wants us to learn is that if it is possible to get justice from a man who is positively unjust, by the simple expedient of troubling him, should it not be much easier to get justice from God, who is willing to help and eager to avenge us of our adversary? He wants us to know that God is ready and waiting to come to our rescue; and that if He delays, it is not for the reason which prompted the unjust judge to delay his answer.

### **God Works in His Mysterious Way**

Is it true that sometimes when we pray God does not seem to hear? We must all admit that this is the case. Are we to keep on praying? Yes, the parable was given to teach “that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.” God is eager to help, and will do so at the first opportunity. In the meantime we are not to give up. He has heard our prayer. He is even now “working on the case.” Let us be patient, confident that in due time the answer will come. God has not forgotten us. He has good reasons for not answering immediately, which it may not be best to reveal at the time. This is a most important lesson and one which must be mastered if we are to have a successful Christian experience.

It is well for us to bear in mind that God “sees not as man sees” and that there is always a just and loving reason behind all His workings. Suppose we are praying for the conversion of some friend. We have prayed a month, a year, ten years, and yet God has not heard our prayer. What is the reason?

There are some things which God cannot do because He has limited Himself. He does not compel a man to serve Him against His will. When we pray to God to convert a man, we must remember that the exercise of the will is the most precious right which He has bestowed upon mankind and that He Himself respects it. He could not violate it and be God. We are therefore asking Him to do the impossible if we ask Him to convert a man and expect Him to use force in bringing the conversion about. God cannot do this. It would violate the very principles on which the gospel is founded.

What, then, can God do that He is not already doing, when such a request is presented to Him? Much in every way, if-and note this if-if you are willing to co-operate with Him. God has not given to angels the work of preaching the gospel. While there are many things which angels can do, this is not their work. It is reserved for man; man alone has in his own experience felt the power of sin and the greater power of salvation from sin. Man can help man as the angels are unable to do even if they were given permission. God is therefore handicapped by His own limitation of Himself until He has a man to co-operate with Him.

Therefore when you pray for the conversion of a person, you demonstrate to God that at last someone is interested in the same person He has been interested in since his birth. That someone is you. You prayed for the person. Are you enough interested in him to do something else for him? If you are sincere and willing to do your share, God will immediately set you to work. As you think, as you meditate, as you seek for ways to reach the person for whom you have prayed, God will help, God will advise, God will put means at your disposal that will aid you. Angels will minister as they could not minister before-in short, all the resources of heaven are at your command. You are a laborer “together with God.” You two are working and planning together for the salvation of a soul. You are not merely working for God, you are working with Him. The difference is vital.

Thus effective prayer forms a partnership between the one who prays and God. As truly as two friends may counsel together, so may God. And a praying person have communion. They have a common objective, they are working for the same end. All that can be done is being done. If the person prayed for will not yield, God Himself can do nothing. A person who chooses to be lost will at last have his way.

There are misapprehensions of God’s method of work that should have consideration. When we say that He does not force the will of anyone, we are stating the truth. But some draw from this the conclusion that God simply sits afar off, unconcerned; that if a man will turn to Him, well and good, but if he will not, God has no further responsibility. This is not true.

God is vitally interested in the conversion of every man and woman on the face of the earth. It is not His will that, any shall perish. He longs for all to come to repentance and have everlasting life. He so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son for



its salvation; He still loves the world and every man in it to the extent that there is nothing short of the actual forcing of the will which He will not do to save a man. He will correct, He will punish, He will hedge up the way, but He will not compel.

When at last a man is lost, it is from his own choice; God cannot be blamed. There is nothing that He has not done that could be done. "What could have been done more to My vineyard," He asks, "that I have not done in it?" Isaiah 5:4. "In vain have I smitten your children; they received no correction." Jeremiah 2:30. God had punished Israel. They had not heeded His rebukes. It was of no use to add more stripes. "Why should you be stricken anymore?" He asks. "You will revolt more and more." Isaiah 1:5. Sadly He acknowledges that if He punishes more, they will only become more rebellious.

We must therefore banish from our minds the idea that God will not do everything possible to save a man, even to very severe punishment. God must do this, so that no one can ever say that He has not done all that can be done, but primarily because of His great love for sinning humanity. If there is any way of saving a man, God will save him.

## Peace With God

THEREFORE being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 5: 1. "He is our peace." Ephesians 2:14. Israel of old was invited to celebrate the fact that their sins were forgiven, and that they were restored to favor with God. This celebration included the parents, son and daughter, manservant and maidservant, as well as the Levite. All sat down at the table of the Lord and rejoiced together "in the hope of the glory of God." In like manner we are to "joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." Romans 5:11.

Few appreciate or rejoice in the peace of God as they should. Though the reason may be in many cases a lack of appreciation of what God has done for them, many times there are those who fail to understand that it is their right and privilege to be happy in their religion. They live in the shadow of the cross, rather than in its sunshine. They feel that there is something wrong in being happy, that to smile is inappropriate, and that even innocent laughter is sacrilegious. They carry the burden of the world on their shoulders and feel that to spend an hour in recreation is not only a waste of time, but is definitely sinful. They are good Christians, but not happy ones. If they had been living in the days of Christ and following Him, they would have questioned the advisability of going to the marriage feast "in Cana of Galilee." They might even be perplexed about Christ's eating and drinking with sinners. With John's disciples they would have been fasting and praying often. (Luke 5:29-35.)

This is written with full appreciation of the times in which we are living. If there was ever a period when seriousness and sobriety should characterize the work and conduct of Christians, this is such a period. In view of the approaching crisis, what manner of men ought we to be, in all holy conversation and godliness! (2 Peter 3:11) All frivolity and lightness should be put aside, and solemnity should take possession of every earthly element. Great and momentous events are moving on apace. This is no time for trifling and pettiness. The King is at the door!

These conditions, however, should not cause us to lose sight of the fact that we are children of the King, that our sins are forgiven, and that we have a right to be happy and rejoice. The work of God in the earth must be finished, and we are to have a part in this task, but after all, it is God who must finish His work. Many talk and act as if they were carrying this full responsibility, that though God may help, it is really for them to do the work. Even in their prayers they often remind God of what He should do, fearful that He may forget some things that are on their hearts. These are good people, anxious to do the right thing at all times, but they have not learned to cast their burdens on the Lord. They are doing their best to carry the load, and though groaning beneath the burden, are determined not to give up. They struggle on and are getting much done. They are valuable workers, and the Lord loves them dearly.

But they are lacking in some essentials, and are not getting much joy out of their Christianity. They work, but they are not very happy about it. They are Marthas who toil incessantly, but leave out the one thing needful. They look disapprovingly at the Marys and make their complaint to the Lord. They do not understand how Christ can take Mary's part, when to their mind she ought to be rebuked. They think others are not doing their share. (Luke 10:38-42) Christians should be a happy people, even in the midst of the most solemn events. And why not? Their sins are forgiven. They have peace with God. They are justified, sanctified, saved. God has placed a new song in their mouths. They are children of the Most High. They are walking with God. They are happy in the love of God.

Christians should be careful not to forget their heritage. Said Christ: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world gives, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." John 14:27.

Yet the hearts of many are troubled. They are afraid. They are worrying. Some dear one is outside the fold of the church, and they are trying to "pray him in." They leave no stone unturned in their efforts to encompass his salvation. And they do not leave God out of the reckoning. They pray to Him. They entreat Him. They pray as though God needs prodding. And at last the dear one turns to the heavenly Father. How happy they are! Now they can rest. Now their work is done, their task is accomplished.

Does it ever occur to such persons that God is as much interested in the dear one's conversion as they are-yes, more than they possibly could be? Does it ever occur to them that long before they began to pray and to work, God planned and worked for the loved one's salvation; that He is doing and has done all that possibly can be done? That instead of their taking over God's work and imploring Him to help them, it would be better if they recognized the work as God's responsibility, not theirs, and co-operated with Him? The moment such realization comes to an anxious one, peace comes. He will not work less or pray less, but the emphasis will shift. He will begin to pray in faith. If we believe God is really at work, if we believe He is interested in men's salvation, we will pray more than ever, but we will leave the responsibility with Him.

‘There is no higher bliss possible than to have the peace of God in the heart. It is the legacy Christ left us. “Peace I leave with you,” He says. Wonderful words. “My peace I give unto you.” John 14:27. His peace is that quiet assurance that comes from confidence in God. At the time Christ spoke these words, He was nearing the cross. Golgotha was before Him. But He did not waver. His heart was filled with peace and assurance. He knew Him in whom He trusted. And He rested in the knowledge that God knew the way. That same peace He bequeaths to us. It means oneness with the Father, fellowship, communion. It means quiet, joy, rest, contentment. It means faith, love, hope. In it there is no fear, worry, or anxiety. Whoever possesses it has that which passes understanding. He has a source of strength not dependent upon circumstances. He is in tune with God.

## Seven Sabbaths

THERE have been many noteworthy Sabbaths on earth, days which, in view of the great things they commemorate, might be called epoch-making Sabbaths. We shall call attention to two of these in the past out of many that could be selected-and to five in the future. They are all of special import and connected with great events.

The First Sabbath. This was the Sabbath of the creation week, the first Sabbath this earth ever saw. God had ended His work. He had appraised it, and found it “very good.” Now the Sabbath was drawing near, the sun was sinking, and holy time was about to begin.

What a Sabbath that first Sabbath must have been to Adam and Eve! They had been created on the sixth day of the week; they had walked through Eden hand in hand, viewing the things God had made for them, and had witnessed their first sunset. How beautiful, how glorious, how wonderful all must have seemed to them-God walking in the garden in the cool of the day; angels as their companions; their wonderful estate, their work, their home. All was glorious-the whole creation was praising God.

Though Adam lived to be nearly a thousand years old, it may confidently be asserted that he never forgot that first Sabbath. Heaven and earth were united, God and man were one; all was holiness, beauty, peace.

The Second Sabbath. Contrast the first Sabbath with the second-after sin entered the earth, which had been perfect as it came from the hand of the Creator. What a difference! Sin has come. Adam and Eve have been driven out of the Garden of Eden. No longer will they hear God’s footsteps or meet Him in the quiet evening. Angels are guarding the way to the tree of life, and sinful man and woman are shut out of Paradise, now to earn their bread in the sweat of their face.

That Sabbath must also have remained in Adam’s memory as long as life lasted. He must have told his descendants again and again of the time he was in the garden and also of the time when he was shut out. He must have warned them of the fearful cost of disobedience and cautioned them to be careful to heed God’s commands even in small things. Adam had learned his lesson, but the result of his sin continued to curse the world even though he had repented. Fearful has been the history of man since his fall. That first sin brought murder in the next generation, and within seven generations men’s hearts were only evil continually. Thank God that we are nearing the time when sin shall be no more.

The Third Sabbath. Six thousand years have passed since that fateful second Sabbath. We are now nearing the last Sabbath that this old world will ever see before the Son of man comes in the clouds of heaven. When that day will come, no one knows; but it is nearing. It is coming surely; and some Sabbath will be the last Sabbath.

What a day it will be! All the signs of Christ’s coming have been fulfilled. Men have taken their stand for or against His message of salvation. Wonderful signs and portents have appeared; the plagues have been and are still falling; God’s people are passing through the time of Jacob’s trouble, and the supreme hour is at hand. Some of God’s faithful ones are in secret recesses of the mountains; some are in the caves of the earth; some are incarcerated within prison walls. The time has been set for the execution of all who will not worship the beast or his image. (Revelation 13:15) It is a time of fearful anguish for God’s people. They cry day and night unto Him for deliverance. But He delays answer until the appointed time shall come.

What a solemn Sabbath that last Sabbath on earth will be! We know that God will deliver His people, but there will be little to point to that last Sabbath as evidence that they will be saved. With job they will say, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” Job 13:15. But whatever the outcome, they will be faithful to God. Death may stare them in the face but, nothing daunted, they will maintain their faith until the end. That last Sabbath will be a most solemn, one, a day of deep heart searching and earnest prayer.

The Fourth Sabbath. This is the Sabbath following the last Sabbath on earth. And again, what a Sabbath that will be! The resurrection has taken place; the Lord has come; loved ones who have been separated by death are reunited, and all are on the way to heaven. Their trials are past, their labors are ended; at last they are safe. And only the Sabbath before they were down on the earth, face to face with the powers of hell. They were threatened with death, they were imprisoned, they were suffering, they were in soul anguish.

But now all is changed. They are free; they are happy; they are saved; they are on the way to glory, away from all that has held them down and hindered them in their journey along the heavenward way. O happy day!

The Fifth Sabbath. What a Sabbath that first Sabbath in heaven will be! To the saints it will seem like a dream. All will be so much more glorious and wonderful than even the most vivid imagination has been able to picture. There is the throne. There is God. There is the Lamb. There are all the saints of all ages. Their trials are ended; their warfare is accomplished. They shall hunger no more; neither shall they thirst. The sun shall not light upon them, and no plague shall come near their dwelling in this holy place. Those from whom they have been separated will be there, and nevermore shall there be any parting or tears or sorrow. All shall be joy, everlasting joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee. Glorious day!

“Eye bath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God bath prepared for them that love Him.” We will exclaim, Is it real? Am I really saved? Am I in heaven? That first Sabbath in heaven will be almost too much for us. Is this what Paul calls an “eternal weight of glory”? 2 Corinthians 4:17. It will seem too good to be true.

For one thousand years we will enjoy the hospitality of the angels in heaven. We will become acquainted with them. We will learn of the many times angels have been our guardians and protectors here on earth, of the part they have played in our salvation, and of their loving watch care over us.

We will not fear death any more; there will be no sickness, no funerals, no heartaches, no parting.

What a wonderful experience it will be to meet the saints of all ages, the prophets, priests, and kings, the martyrs, the heroes of old, the mighty men of God! Peter and James and John; Moses, Abraham, Isaiah; Ezekiel, Noah, Adam! That first Sabbath in heaven will be joy unalloyed and it will continue through all the coming years as we meet from Sabbath to Sabbath to worship God!

Then we shall see His face, that wonderful, beautiful, loving, tender face. We shall see those hands that were wounded for us; we shall hear that voice that will thrill the soul; we shall look upon Him who was bruised for our iniquities and wounded for our transgressions. And as He leads us by the still waters, as He restores our soul, our cup will run over. At last we shall be satisfied as we awake in His likeness, and He shall be satisfied as He sees in us the result of the travail of His soul. What a wonderful day that first Sabbath in heaven will be!

The Sixth Sabbath. Between the first Sabbath in heaven and the next Sabbath which we shall consider, lie a thousand years. These years are ordinarily spoken of as the millennium, which the saints will spend in heaven, and after which they will take permanent possession of their new home on this earth.

The thousand years spent in heaven span a most interesting and important period in the long history of the controversy between good and evil, for it is the time of the judgment, when those who have rejected the offer of mercy will have to give an account of the things done in the body. It is the day of judgment that long-looked-for and dreaded day, when men shall be arraigned before the judge of all the earth and receive their just deserts.

For the saints it will be a solemn and not altogether pleasant time, for they will have a part in the judgment and must help to decide the cases of the wicked dead as they come up in review. This participation of the saints in the judgment is God’s way of making heaven safe for all in the days to come. He could arbitrarily mete out judgment-and the judgment would be just-to all who have neglected to accept His great salvation. In a moment of time He could decide every case should He so desire, but such a decision might involve results that would not be best. Let us explain.

There are some, there are many, that will not be saved. Some of these will be relatives, friends, acquaintances. We had hoped that they would be saved, but now they are lost. Why? God wants us to know why, so that no question will ever arise in the mind of any as to the justice of what has been done. The only, or the best, way is to let the saints have a part in the judgment. They will then have all the facts of each case clearly before them. No doubt of God’s justice, based on lack of understanding or knowledge, will ever arise in their minds; for they have thoroughly examined each record and have themselves had a part in the final decision. This participation safeguards the whole proceeding. We stated that in some respects this will not be pleasant work. Even to God this is a “strange work.” Isaiah 28:21. But it is a work that must be done, and the saints will faithfully do their part in it.

After the judgment is finished, come the final scenes. The second resurrection takes place. All the wicked from all ages are raised from the dead. (Revelation 20:5) The saints with the holy city, New Jerusalem, come down from God out of heaven to a place prepared for this occasion. As the city comes down, the wicked surround it; but fire from God consumes them, and at last sin and sinners are no more. (Revelation 20:9) The destruction of sin has taken place; the earth and the universe are free of it. Eden is restored, and once more God will dwell with men on the earth made new.

“Behold,” He says, “I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.” Isaiah 65:17. We are not told how God will make it new. We know how God created it in the beginning. He spoke and it was done; He commanded and it stood fast. In six days He made heaven and earth and all that in them is. Will He do the same thing again? We do not know; we are not told. But we do know that the Sabbath will be restored, and that it will be kept on the earth made new. (Isaiah 66:23) If this is so, some Sabbath will be the first Sabbath that we will spend on the new earth.

What a Sabbath that will be! At last the saints are in their own home. At last sin has been destroyed, root and branch. Nevermore will there be anything to hurt or destroy in all the dominions of God. “The tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. 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 He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.” Revelation 21:3-5. The first Sabbath on the new earth! Wonderful day.

The Seventh Sabbath. All these Sabbaths have been and will be important. But there is one more that may be even more important for us as we face today. It is this Sabbath, this coming Sabbath, this present week end. How much blessing and inspiration may it not hold for all of us? Are we ready for the heavenly kingdom? Are we at peace with God? Are we ready for the things that we know of a surety are coming on the earth? If not, let us make this the most important Sabbath of all by giving ourselves to God, by rededicating our all to Him. Let us all unite in such a consecration.

## The Courage of Conviction

WE all despise a coward, even though we ourselves do not always measure up to the standard we have set for others. Indeed, many persons do not understand what true courage is, a lack of comprehension which is not surprising; for at times there is so little difference between courage and foolhardiness, between a hero and a fool, that the distinction is hardly discernible. A man may span the ocean for the first time in a small airplane. If he has the good luck to get through, he is acclaimed a hero. If a spark plug fails and he goes down into the ocean, he is merely another fool who thought he could make it. The difference in this case is merely a spark plug. Many are the men who have confessed that the deed of heroism which they have performed was grounded in fear. They were in a tight place-scared out of their wits, as we say. They were saved almost miraculously and came out heroes, to their own astonishment.

This does not mean that there are not heroes, real heroes, who knew the risk they were running and deliberately chose their course, conscious that they had little chance of success. Such people, however, say very little of their accomplishment; it is hard to get them to talk about it at all. They are of an altogether different caliber from those who, feted, featured, acclaimed as superior beings, actually enjoy the Worship accorded them. These have their reward.

I asked a soldier once what was the hardest thing he had to do in the first World War. I expected him to mention some dark night when he was commanded to go "over the top." But no; he told me that he faced the hardest thing one day when his company was detailed to attack the enemy. In so doing they had to cross no man's land under fire. A barrage was laid ahead of them, and they were told to march at exactly such a pace, no faster. If they did, they, would run into their own fire, which was just ahead of them. The men advanced with equal distance between them. This soldier said that he never felt so much like running in his life. He did not care which way, just so he could run! To proceed slowly under such conditions required more courage than he had ever before been called upon to exercise.

The soldier who in the heat of battle performs heroic' deeds of valor should be given due credit. The scientist who deliberately permits himself to be inoculated with poisonous virus to demonstrate theories that will save thousands of lives, is no less a hero. It is not what one does in the heat of a sudden excitement that demonstrates the greatest courage. It is the man who quietly thinks things through, who counts the cost and then goes ahead, who in reality is courageous. It is not the man without fear who is greatest; it is the man who fears but still advances.

### **An Experiment in Psychology**

One of my teachers in a certain university told the class about a barber who in a fit of insanity slashed the throat of a customer whom he was shaving. The man, was reclining in his chair; the barber had put a hot towel over his face. Suddenly an uncontrollable desire to do the horrible deed had come over him. He was declared insane, put in the hospital, and, later transferred to the prison, as it was considered unsafe to allow him to resume his occupation.

One of the physicians in the prison felt sure that this man could be rehabilitated under proper treatment. But this, he believed, would have to include an opportunity to shave a man under like circumstances to those under which the tragedy had occurred. If he once more was permitted to wield a razor, if he once more had a customer in a chair and had the opportunity to slash his throat, but resisted the temptation to do so, the doctor thought he would get a hold on himself again.

He felt sure that his theory was correct, but to carry it into effect was a more difficult matter. Who would want to sit in a barber's chair, have his face and eyes covered with a hot towel, hear the barber strop the razor preparatory to shaving, and lie perfectly calm and still-which would be the requirements -to give the man a fair chance? The doctor decided that he himself would have to go through with the experiment, as no one else would care to run such a risk.

And so he did. It would take more courage than I possess, I am sure, to lie down in a chair and hear a barber of that kind sharpen his razor. I do not think I could lie still. In any event I would be sure to peek, and that would very likely spoil the experiment. The physician, however, did his part, and the man was fully restored. The teacher, a man of high reputation, vouched for the truthfulness of this story. For sustained courage the intrepid explorer, the devoted missionary, the conscientious scientist, ranks high; in many cases, indeed, his courage is of a much higher order than that which is the result of a sudden impulse brought about by momentary excitement. Under certain excitement, such as martial music, the example of others, or mob psychology, men have been induced to start on a course of action to which they never would have agreed if they had calmly counted the cost. Having started, they feel impelled to go on, even against their better judgment. If the path they have chosen leads to glory, they become heroes. But it is debatable how much credit should be given to the result of a sudden decision. It is the well-thought-out plan, the deliberate decision, the calmly planned adventure that counts most in eventual value.

There are thousands of unsung heroes who rank with the world's renowned, but remain unknown. What shall we say of the bereaved mother who, undaunted, faces the future with her little ones; of the parents who willingly and cheerfully give their son or daughter to mission service; of the aged father and mother who uncomplainingly "carry on" after the dread word has arrived that they will never see their beloved again? To the youth it may seem to be only another adventure to start for college. But father and mother look beyond the immediate departure. They know that four years will soon pass; and after the four years comes graduation; then the beginning of the lifework, and they will never have their son or daughter at home again as in former years. The parents see all this, and for them the first departure for college is a solemn occasion. It takes courage of the highest order to send a boy or a girl to school. It costs money, yes, but it costs more than that.



## Self-control

Physical courage is not the highest kind of courage. It is never the exhibition of power that is most impressive; it is the control of power; it is mighty power under mighty control. It is no glory for a man of strength to knock down an aged person even under provocation. It is the highest kind of glory for that man to control himself when he knows, and others know, that he has the power of retaliation. Christ was never so impressive as when men spat in His face as He stood on trial before Caiaphas; as when He was scourged and bound, but stood silent and unmoved, knowing that at His call legions of angels from before His Father's throne would-come to His rescue. Perfect composure, quiet dignity, unruffled temper! What a man was the Lord Jesus!

Peter was a valiant man. He was not afraid to use the sword even though he knew he was hopelessly outnumbered. And yet what a coward he was! When that maiden in the courtyard asked him whether he had been with Jesus, he basely refused to admit that he understood what she was saying. (Matthew 26:69, 70) When another maid repeated the query he denied with an oath that he even knew Jesus; and finally, cursing and swearing, he reaffirmed his declaration that he did not know the prisoner. All this time Jesus was standing before His judges, on trial for His life. If ever He needed help, He needed it then; yet at this crucial moment Peter failed Him.

Many of us are not unlike Peter. We have a certain kind of courage; but we lack spiritual, intellectual, moral courage. A sneer, a little ridicule, a look, makes cowards of us. We lack the courage to stand alone. We lack the courage to be different from those around us; we lack the courage to let others know who we are and where we stand. When we are questioned about our religion, we answer that we are Protestants, instead of stating the fact that we are Seventh day Adventists; in social gatherings we say and do things of which we are ashamed later. The young man in the Army needs courage of a high order to fulfill his duty to his country in time of war, but he will often find that the first few days after induction into the armed service take more courage than he will ever need later when he faces the enemy. Will he be true to his convictions? Will he let all know modestly but definitely where he stands on Sabbath observance and other things which will make him stand out from the crowd? Will he respectfully appear before his superior officers and there manfully but with Christian courtesy explain his position? The soldier who does this saves himself much grief later on. But let him come short in moral courage the first few days, and he has a long, hard road before him.

## A Compromise of Principle

In the first World War some of our young men were together in a certain regiment. They declared themselves noncombatants, and immediately became the butt of ridicule of the other men. Life was made miserable for them, and they were subjected to all kinds of indignities. At last they felt that they could stand it no longer. As noncombatants they could not fight, but they felt that some of their tormentors would greatly profit by a lesson in boxing. One of our boys was reasonably proficient in this art; he went to their superior officer, told him how they were being tormented, and requested permission to "lay out" the chief offender. While the officer did not give permission, he agreed to wink at what might happen; and so in due time the leader of the tormentors was "laid out." A few days after this happened I arrived. The boys told me their story, and also their dilemma. For how could they explain how a Christian, a noncombatant, could fight? I helped as much as I could, but before long the fighter was inducted into a combatant unit and lost his previous status.

There are times when it is easier to fight than to suffer insult. Yet which acts the part of a true Christian-the one who patiently bears mockery, insult, and even stripes; or the one who strikes out against his tormentor and fells him to the ground? The answer is obvious.

What the world needs is not more heroes of the flashy kind, but men and women with the courage of their convictions, who cannot be bought or sold, who cannot be intimidated, who will stand like a rock for principle, and will be true to duty though the heavens fall. Firmness without obstinacy; courage without braggadocio; conviction without offensiveness; patience without weakness; faith without presumption; religion without hypocrisy; justice without partiality; love without dissimulation; charity without condescension; liberality without ostentation. What a world this would be if we had a group of young men and young women who would, by the grace of Christ, try out such a program.

"I see your point," says one. "You mean to say that I know what is right and that I should have the courage of my convictions and do it. In short, since I believe that Seventh-day Adventists have the true interpretation of the Bible, I should become an Adventist. The truth is that I would have been one long ago if I did not know that there are those in your church who make a high profession, but who come far short of living up to what they believe. There are too many hypocrites in the Adventist Church."

To this last statement we agree. Too many hypocrites? One is too many, and we regret that there is even one. There ought not to be any. But why stay out of the church because there are those in the church who are not what they ought to be? Christ had a Judas among the twelve disciples, and some of the rest were rather weak. The argument of those who say they will not join a church because there are hypocrites in it, would have kept them out of Christ's company when He was on earth. One hypocrite in twelve is a rather large percentage, but that is what Christ had. The Adventist Church is not that bad. We believe that we can truthfully say that the fact that Adventists keep the Sabbath is a mighty factor in keeping out of the church those who otherwise might join for the loaves and the fishes. We have our share of hypocrites, of weaklings, of those who are no honor to the cause of God, but we also believe that our system of records tends to give us, a larger percentage of active church members than any other communion. There can be no honest reason for anyone's remaining outside the church because there are those in the church who are not worthy to belong.

Let everyone who knows the truth of God for this last day and generation have the courage of his convictions. We need men and women, young men and women, who love the third angel's message and who love the Lord, who will band together to help finish

His work in the earth. Now is the time for all to break every hindering band and cast aside every impeding weight, to arise and run with zeal and Christian patience the race that is set before us, to finish God's work. We need the help of everyone. That includes you!

## The Spirit of Prophecy

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS have a prophet. Her name is Mrs. E. G. White. She has written many books, and all Adventists revere them as they do the Bible, some even more. She is dead now, but they still follow her, and believe that all that she has written is inspired. Better look out before you join something that you don't know much about."

This was the information and advice given to a young woman who was interested in some evangelistic meetings I had been holding, and who was on the point of accepting the Adventist faith. While this information did not accomplish all that the adviser had in mind, it was a definite shock to the young woman to discover that Adventists held such views, and that they had a Bible other than the one she had been taught to believe is the Word of God. She frankly stated her difficulty to me, and this admission led to a study of the attitude of Adventists toward Mrs. White and her writings.

Protestants take their stand on the Bible, and the Bible only. Lutherans have their "symbolical books"; Methodists have their "Discipline"; Episcopalians have their prayer books; but none of these takes the place of the Bible in their estimation, and this is as it should be. The Bible, and the Bible only, is the platform of Protestants.

On this platform Seventh-day Adventists also stand. They have the Bible and the Bible only, and no other book or set of books can ever take its place. In their estimation the Bible stands supreme. Whoever holds any other view is not a true Adventist.

Where, then, do Mrs. E. G. White and her writings come in? Is there a Mrs. White? Who is or was she? How did she come to be regarded as a special messenger of God? What evidence is there to justify the belief that her writings are any better than a thousand other books or articles written by Christians who have done much good in this world? These and many other questions crowd into the mind of a person who for the first time stands face to face with the problem of deciding whether her communications are special messages from God to the remnant church for this time.

For, be it remembered, Seventh-day Adventists do recognize the prophetic gift in Mrs. E. G. White, and they believe that the Lord has used her as His special messenger to the people. They believe that her writings are indited by the Spirit of God, and that while they in no sense constitute another Bible, they do contain instruction that is not only valuable but essential for these last days of earth's history.

The church recognizes, however, that belief in such a spiritual gift is not something that can be commanded, but must be a matter of personal conviction based upon evidence after investigation. Acceptance of the writings of Mrs. White is, therefore, not made a test of church fellowship, and is not placed on the level of belief and faith in Scripture or any of the other cardinal points of faith. In this Seventh day Adventists believe that they are taking the true Protestant stand, making the Bible, and the Bible only, the norm of doctrine.

It is not the purpose here to go into detail concerning the life or writings of Mrs. E. G. White. Born at Gorham, Maine, November 26, 1827, she early felt called of God to bear her testimony for Him in the old Methodist experience meetings. She was deeply moved under the preaching of the advent message during the years 1840-44, and because of her acceptance of the Adventist view, she, with her parents, was dis fellowshipped from the Methodist Church. With the rest of the advent believers she passed through the great disappointment in 1843-44, but retained her faith in God, and was used mightily by Him to encourage and strengthen such believers as were ready to renounce their faith after the disappointment. In 1846 she was united in marriage with James White, and together they labored for the scattered flock of advent believers, building them into a compact and united company, and were largely instrumental in founding the present Seventh-day Adventist denomination, which today numbers more than half a million.

Besides rearing a family, Mrs. White traveled extensively with her husband, and also wrote prodigiously. She died in 1915 at the age of eighty-seven years and was laid to rest in Oak Hill Cemetery in Battle Creek, Michigan.

Mrs. White's formal education was limited. An early accident made formal schooling inadvisable if not impossible, and she was mostly self-taught. She was an omnivorous reader and was well read on a wide variety of subjects. Her chief interest was the Bible, of course, and she was an apt student of the Sacred Word, as her writings abundantly testify. Her mind was keen and active, even to old age, and the contribution she made to Biblical knowledge is of untold value both to the student of exegesis and to the more casual reader. The wisest and most profound researchers have found her writings a source of information that has caused them to marvel at her formal knowledge as well as her deep spiritual insight.

Mrs. White was constantly engaged in writing, and book after book came from her pen. More than two score of these volumes, some of them nearly a thousand pages in length, have been published. This does not include her contributions to periodicals, which in volume are nearly equal to her books. We marvel that one lifetime was sufficient for the production of such a colossal amount of literary matter. It should of course be remembered that what she wrote was not fiction, but largely solid religious matter, which could not be dashed off at a moment's notice or merely dictated to a stenographer. It was all laboriously written by hand.

In addition to her religious writings Mrs. White made valuable and liberal contributions to such fields as child training, education, health, manual pursuits, recreation, voice training, family life, religious liberty, literature ministry, home missions, foreign missions, Christian help work, and temperance. The scope of her work is as astonishing as its quantity.

However, it is neither the scope nor the quantity that is most impressive; it is the quality, the character, the high standard of every book, every chapter, every article. She wrote nothing that was cheap or questionable, but only the purest of the wheat, thoroughly winnowed. Mature counsel, earnest exhortation, pure morality, sound theology, correct and authoritative information, are all imparted in correct and beautiful English. Viewed purely as literary productions apart from any divine or spiritual gift, Mrs. White's writings deserve and are given a place among the best religious literature.

Long and careful study of these writings deepens one's respect for their content. For fifty years I have been engaged in such study, part of the time in critical and exhaustive research. Today my respect is deeper and more profound than at any previous time. I am convinced that these writings cannot be accounted for on any other ground than that of divine guidance. In such guidance I thoroughly believe.

I am well aware that such faith as I have in the divine guidance in the writings of Mrs. White is impossible of transfer to anyone else who has not himself had opportunity to examine thoroughly her published works. All that I can do is to give my personal testimony regarding my findings, with the prayer that it may be of some value to those who are honestly seeking light and truth.

I have had only a limited personal experience with Mrs. White. When I knew her at the beginning of the present century, she was already well advanced in years. I had heard of her before I became a Seventh-day Adventist, and I was eager to meet her. I was acquainted with her writings, but what was she like? I wanted to know.

When I entered the ministry, this desire became more pronounced. I felt that if I was to teach others I ought to be intelligent myself. Therefore when an opportunity presented itself, I visited her in her home, Elmshaven, near St. Helena, Sanitarium, California.

I was welcomed warmly and given perfect freedom to pursue the work I had come to do. I wanted to know many things, and no obstacle was placed in my path. Mrs. White began work early in the morning, and it was at that time, when her mind was fresh and active, that I had my conversations with her. I found her intelligent on all subjects which we discussed together. Moreover, she had a quiet sense of humor and a delightful little laugh. I greatly enjoyed those early morning hours spent in her study.

I do not know at what time she arose in the morning, but when I arrived—never later than six o'clock and often earlier—she had already written a goodly number of pages. Usually she invited me to look them over—a privilege I much appreciated, for it gave me an opportunity to examine what she had written before anyone else had touched it.

I learned to my astonishment that Mrs. White wrote with her own hand all that was published under her signature. Having written it, she passed it to her copyists for transcription on the typewriter. After this was done, the manuscript was returned to her for correction. As I saw this process day after day, I was assured that no corrections were made except under her direction, and that what appeared in periodicals or books over her signature, was her own work practically as it had come from her pen, with such corrections as she herself had made, or such as were made with her approval. To me this was a vital matter, for I had been informed that her typists changed, altered, omitted, or added to what she had written, so that what appeared in print was very different from the original draft. My experience convinced me that this statement was pure fabrication.

Wishing to find out whether there was material in her collection that had not been published and which perchance might contradict what had appeared in print, I asked the privilege of free and full access to all files in the Elmshaven vault, where the manuscripts were housed. In my own mind I was ready for a refusal of this privilege, for, after all, I was a stranger, and neither Mrs. White nor any of her assistants was under obligation to accord me such courtesy. To my astonishment my request was granted. With the help of a stenographer, I spent some precious days and weeks examining the documents. I am a reasonably rapid reader, and I put in long hours. When my search was completed, I had come to certain definite conclusions; I could account for what I had read only on the basis of divine enlightenment. Though I did not know much of theology, I knew enough to know that no one not thoroughly versed in its different branches could have written what I had read unless the Lord had helped in a special way. I knew that Mrs. White had never attended a theological school; I knew that she had never studied such difficult subjects as the incarnation or the Trinity; I knew that the different theories of atonement as presented in theological works were outside her field of thought. But I also knew that one not acquainted with these theories could never have avoided so cleverly as she had done the pitfalls in these subjects which are there for the unwary and the uninitiated. Yet Mrs. White wrote as though she was perfectly at home in these difficult fields, and she presented views that would stand the closest scrutiny. I found a consistency in her writings that reached back to her youthful days, when there was no possibility that she had ever even looked into a theological work.

I was nonplused; here was something I could not account for on any known human theory. I felt that I was dealing with sacred matters. I went away profoundly convinced that I was face to face with the workings of the Almighty.

Time and space forbid my telling of experiences I had later after I had become more mature. Again I came away from Elmshaven, more convinced than ever of the divine origin of the writings I had examined.

As I have said, such a conviction cannot be transferred to others. All I can do, and all I am doing, is to give my personal testimony and experience. I trust that you will take the opportunity of reading such books by Mrs. White as are available to you. I assure you that you will not be disappointed. God has spoken and God is still speaking through the published works of Mrs. E. G. White. Let all make personal search and be convinced of this truth for themselves.

## The Final Controversy

LUCIFER was once one of the highest angels, bright, perfect in beauty, so full of wisdom that nothing could be hid from him. (Isaiah 14:12; Ezekiel 28:17, 12, 3) Surely no evil could come from him. Were not even his "ways" perfect? (Verse 15) Had God told the angels that Lucifer would depart from the right way and what he was capable of doing after he had taken this step, it might

have been hard for them to believe that He really knew. Had not Lucifer united with them in praise of their Creator? Had he not joined them in worship and in singing, "Holy, holy, holy"? Had he not stood in the very audience chamber of God as custodian of the seal and guardian of the law? Could it be possible that such a being would rebel against God without just cause? But even if he should rebel, he would certainly never stoop to anything that in any way might be questionable, but ever would uphold the high and holy principles which he himself had helped instill in their very being.

How could the angels ever believe that Lucifer, whom they had highly revered, would harm or torture even the least of God's creatures? How could they ever believe that he would cause pain or sorrow, sickness, agony, death? How could they ever believe that if he once got Christ in his power, he would scourge Him till the blood would run down His back, press a crown of thorns upon His brow, drive cruel nails through His hands, and hang Him on a cross to suffer a lingering death? How could they ever believe that Lucifer would cause millions upon millions to suffer torture and excruciating agony, and terminate their earthly existence by causing them to be roasted over a slow fire?

It would have been hard for the angels to believe this. But it would have been hard only because they did not know the insidious nature of sin. When at last they saw Satan do the very things here mentioned, they were overcome with the hideous, awful, revolting power of evil. This demonstration of sin and their reaction to it made heaven forever safe for both angels and saints. It is doubtful that it could have been made safe in any other way.

The controversy as far as human records go has been continuing for nearly six thousand years. We are nearing the final stages. Through the centuries Satan has had abundant time to demonstrate what he will do if he has the opportunity. God also has been making a demonstration. The final climax is just before us.

God is not in any way responsible for sin; yet there are some things for which He cannot escape responsibility and from which He does not wish to be excused. When God chose not to destroy Satan, but permitted him to carry on his nefarious work, certain results followed for which God assumes full responsibility. Let us consider this.

We need not here enter into the question of how God more than nullifies the intrigues of Satan. Where sin abounds, grace does much more abound. No one needs to be deceived 'or lost. God "lights every man that comes into the world." John 1:9. None need be in darkness. Not only does God enlighten every man, but He makes provision for those who have been caught in Satan's snare of sin so that they can escape if they wish. And this He does not only once. If a man sins a hundred times, God will forgive him. If he sins a thousand times, the door of mercy is still open. If he sins every day of his life, and lives a thousand years, he may find pardon if he thoroughly repents. If he is nailed to a cross, as a malefactor, and deservedly is about to forfeit his life because of his crimes, there is still hope. God can do no more than He has done and is doing. If anyone is lost, it is only after God has done all in His power to avert such a tragedy, even to the offering of Himself to die in the place of the sinner. More than this no one can do.

### **God Suffers Too**

When we speak of the sorrow and tragedy which, sin has caused, and the suffering attendant upon it, we are likely to think of it only in terms of human suffering. Yet, much as mankind has suffered, God has suffered immeasurably more. It was at infinite cost to Himself that He permitted Satan to live instead of immediately destroying him at the first indication of his disaffection. There must be a reason for this, and this reason is found only in the unfathomable love of God. God could have saved Himself untold agony; He could have saved His Son from the cruel nails and the taunts of the wicked; He could have destroyed Satan and refused to create man; He could have done a thousand things other than what He did do, and thus escape the terrific cost to Himself of salvation. But God did not save Himself. He so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son"; the Son so loved the world that He gave Himself. Much as sin has cost mankind, it has cost God a thousand fold more.

This suffering of God must be taken into account when we compute the cost both of sin and of salvation. When we hear men thoughtlessly speak of all the suffering sin has caused -mankind, without taking into account the greater cost which God has paid, it is well to remember this. Some persons seem to think that God is far above the common experiences of humanity, that He sits on a throne high and lifted up, in everlasting joy and bliss, while men are suffering the pangs of hunger and distress. Let all who entertain this idea remember that God is touched with the feeling of our infirmities; that He "hath borne our grief, and carried our sorrows"; that "the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed"; that "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities." That "in all their affliction He was afflicted"; and that "in His love and in His pity He redeemed them." And that because "He Himself bath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted"; and that "though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." Isaiah 53:4,5; 63:9; Hebrews 2:18; 5:8. In view of these statements, how can anyone say that God permits man to suffer while He Himself is unwilling to share this suffering with him?

### **Sin Must Cease**

While it is true that God suffers more than we do, as He is higher than we are, it is nevertheless true that man suffers and has suffered long because of sin. This ought not to continue indefinitely; indeed, it ought not to continue one moment longer than is necessary. But Satan's reign over the earth must be continued until he has had ample time to demonstrate what he will do to his subjects, and that his government is better than God's. When this demonstration is completed, the final reckoning and assize must come. There must be a balancing of accounts, and in this angels and men are especially concerned. Satan's government and plans and God's government and plans must be compared and evaluated. In this both men and angels must have an important part.

Nothing more dreadful can be imagined than living in a world where sin and iniquity will flourish forever. Some seem to think that the world is getting better, but the evidence does not support their claims. Even at this present moment men's hearts are



failing them for fear of what is coming on the earth. Unless God's Word and all signs fail, we are standing on the threshold of solemn events. The end of all things is at hand. The Lord is coming, and coming soon.

However, Jesus will not come till there has been one final demonstration both of the power of God and of the power of Satan. This is as it should be. Both God and Satan should present their finished product, that men may see it and judge the relative merits of the two antagonists. Only such a demonstration will satisfy the on looking universe. In Satan's first attack on the human race in the Garden of Eden, he used a serpent as his medium. In the last attack he will have recourse to a power which in the language of Revelation is called the "beast." Revelation 13:4. An image to the beast is also mentioned. Verse 14. The beast "had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed." Revelation 13:15. From this it can be seen that the war is one unto death. "As many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed."

This beast "causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." Verses 16, 17.

It is significant that in this last struggle there should be reference made to a mark, and that if a man does not receive the mark, he will be able neither to buy nor to sell. We know that God's people will have a seal in their foreheads. (Revelation 7:3) This seal is called "the seal of the living God." Verse 2. In the fourteenth chapter of this prophetic book the 144,000 are said to have the Father's name written in their foreheads. (Verse 1.) A seal must naturally have the name of the owner of the seal engraved on it, and as this seal is the seal of the living God, we accept the view that the seal and the name of God are the same, or rather, that the seal contains the name.

When we discussed the Sabbath, we called attention to a power that claims not only to have changed the day of worship from Saturday to Sunday, but also to have had divine authority for doing so. And the very fact that this power has changed the Sabbath and that the change is accepted by the Protestant church in general is cited as proof of its right to change the commands of God. This man-made Sabbath is the mark of the beast as opposed to the Sabbath of the Lord, which is the seal of God.

When Satan makes his last stand to oppose the people of God, he goes to "make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Revelation 12:17. Thus those who keep all the commandments have the seal of the living God in their foreheads, and have the Father's name written there. The others who disregard the fourth commandment also have a mark in their foreheads. It does not require great insight to understand that these two marks are connected with the law of God, one as the seal of God and the other as the mark of the apostate power. Thus the Christian world is divided between those who keep the commandments and those who do not. The observance of the Sabbath constitutes the dividing line. It is on this battle front that the last struggle will be fought.

It should not be thought, however that the struggle is, confined to the mere matter of a day; that is, whether the seventh day or the first day is the one to be observed as a day of worship. There is more involved than that. The roots of the controversy lie much deeper. They touch the question of evolution, of inspiration, of the integrity of the Word of God, of Modernism, or Fundamentalism, of the plan of salvation, of the sacrifice of the cross, of the government of God itself. The final choice made in view of these considerations decides the destiny of man and of mankind.

Four hundred years ago a young monk decided to take his stand on the Word of God, whatever the cost. Tradition had been his guide, but henceforth the Word of God and the Word of God only would be his lodestar. Whether he ever said the words attributed to him or not, the sentiment is surely his and that of a large body of Christians today: "Here I stand, I can do no other; may God help me." "Here I stand," he said, placing his hand on the Bible. And the "Bible and the Bible only" has from that time been the rallying, cry of true Protestants. When that ceases to be the case, Protestantism ceases to be.

We believe that the time has come for a new Protestant movement, one that will rally Bible believers in all churches and societies, and unite them in one body for the defense of the faith. Men have made void the law of God. It is time for Him to work. From one end of the earth to the other the call must sound. Protestantism has deserted its standards. A new Protestantism must arise.

### **Following Christ**

Christ's word, "There shall be one fold, and one Shepherd," will be fulfilled before the end of time. John 10:16. There are now many folds, and there are honest believers in all of them. This will not continue to be the case. The call will sound: "Come out of her, My people, that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues." Revelation 18:4. God will gather His own into one fold, and when the final struggle comes, there will be no doubt regarding where each stands. The people thus called out will keep the commandments of God-all of them-and have the faith of Jesus. (Revelation 14:12)

The question may be asked whether it is possible to unite all the true saints of God in one body. Which creed is to be accepted? What unifying factor will bind them together? Since so many different denominations are now in existence, is it unreasonable to conclude that there can never be a call sounded that will be strong enough to draw these diverse elements into one body?

Says Christ: "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd." John 10:16. Note: "They-shall hear My voice." As the Good Shepherd, Christ goes before the sheep. They follow Him. In these few words Christianity is summed up. "He goes before them, and the sheep follow Him: for they

know His voice.” Verse 4. Christianity is just that simple. To follow Christ is all the theology anyone needs for salvation. On that platform all Christians can unite. And as one follows Christ, and another follows Him, the two will walk together. And as all follow Him, there will be one fold and one Shepherd.

Will this ideal ever come to fruition in this earth? We believe so. As the nominal churches depart more and more from the faith of the living God, there will be those in every communion who are longing for consolation in Israel. They will see hundreds of churches with thousands of believers, each church holding a faith different from the others, and yet with people in it who are truly trying to serve God. They will be perplexed and wonder what they are to do and what they are to believe. In their perplexity these true children of God will turn to the Word, and it will suddenly dawn upon them, as though it were a new revelation, that Christ is the way, the truth, and the light, and that all they need to do is to follow Him and every problem will be solved. When they realize this, these men will break with every earthly tie and set out to follow the Lamb whither so ever He leads, and to their astonishment they will find that others are pursuing the same course. On the simple program and creed of following the Lamb, they will unite in divine fellowship, and God will set His seal of approval upon them. They follow the Lamb; they have the Father’s name written upon their foreheads; the Lord owns them as His; they are sealed for eternity.

It is against this company that the wrath of Satan -will be directed. It is against them that he will make war. And the struggle will be fierce in its intensity. The decree at last will be issued that whoever will not worship according to the command of the “beast” shall be killed. (Revelation 13:15)

Then will come the time of Jacob’s trouble. Satan will be determined to test the people of God to the utmost, and if possible to make them sin. If he should succeed, he would gain an important point; for God has determined to show His power in this very people. In and through them He intends to give a demonstration to the world of what the gospel can do for humanity.

In this company God stands justified. He has proved by them that His law can be kept under the most adverse circumstances. He has disproved Satan’s assertion that He is unjust in demanding that men keep His law. God is vindicated. Satan is defeated. The controversy is ended. All that remains is the balancing of accounts. And then-after the judgment is ended-comes the reign of God, unending, glorious. God speed that day!

## What Heaven Will Be Like

MANY people are not interested in heaven or in the future, for they know little about it, and what they know does not increase their desire to have any part in it. From their viewpoint they are not to be blamed. The preachers have not “sold” heaven to them; they do not know much about it themselves, and they are unable to convince the-common man that the future is worth what they say it costs.

Too’ many have a hazy conception of what the hereafter will be. As a boy I thought heaven was a kind of old people’s home. There the weary were at rest; there congregations would never break up-as the hymn had it. This did not appeal to me. The sermons I heard were generally too long, and if heaven was a place where congregations never broke up-what a place it must be! Go to church always, to sit still through an unending sermon; and the rest of the time, if there was any, to rest with all the other weary souls, was not a very inviting picture. That kind of heaven did not appeal to a boy who was not weary, who did not want to sit down, but was anxious to be up and doing. I was not interested in being good so that I could go to heaven.

I had a cousin, Charles, who died when I was about twelve years of age. We agreed on few things, and many were the quarrels and fights we had. But now that he was dead, I was sorry-a little, anyway. The preacher spoke about his having gone to heaven and about how he was enjoying the bliss of the saved. I had my doubts about this, for we had some unsettled scores, and he had no right to go to heaven until these were squared. But apparently he was in heaven and there was nothing I could do about it. However, upon further reflection I decided that might be all right. I was going out to play ball as soon as I could get away from church, but Charles could not go. He was in heaven, and there they did not play ball, but went to meeting all the time and had to sit still. Charles loved to play ball. Thus I was satisfied in part. It served him right to go to heaven; he ought to have had one more good whipping, but going to heaven was a fair substitute. I was sure that he would have a miserable time going to church while I was out playing.

A boy’s foolish and irreverent thoughts, you will say. Yes, but is it not a travesty on religion that a boy could imbibe such thoughts about heaven from the prevailing opinions of his elders and the preachers? Surely the boy was not nearly so much to blame as were his teachers.

But what about heaven? What about the future life? It should be noted that when we speak of heaven, we have in mind more than the term itself might suggest. For the truth is that while the saints will go to heaven and be with Christ there during the millennium, their permanent home will be the earth made new, the same earth that in the beginning was given to Adam and Eve. “The meek shall inherit the earth.” Psalms 37: 11. When we therefore speak of heaven, we use this as a convenient term and have in mind the future life, whether in heaven during the millennium or on the earth made new.

## **The Earth Is Our Home**

The fact that the earth will be our permanent home seems to me to give a clue to the nature of our future existence. God made Adam and Eve real beings and gave them a real home. The trees in the garden were real trees; the animals were real animals; the flowers, real flowers. Had sin never come in, Adam and his children after him would have continued this real existence till this day. There would then never have arisen any question regarding the so-called future state. It would merely be a continued existence on the plane that God originally intended. Sin has come in, and God's original plan has been delayed, or interrupted. But in the earth made new, life will be resumed and lived as God originally planned it for man.

If we admit that Adam and Eve were real beings and that the way God originally made man was the way He intended him to continue, we shall have solved many problems regarding the future. Shall we know each other then? is a question often asked. Well, why not? Adam certainly knew his wife and she knew him. Death has intervened since then, but it has only been as a dream, or a sleep, as the Bible calls it. When Adam and Eve awake, will they not know each other? Would it not be a strange heaven if we knew no one there? That could never be. Paul was certain that he would know others and that he himself would also be known. (1 Corinthians 13:12)

It is hard to understand how anyone could ever have conceived the idea that we would not know each other in the future state. If you have ever gone to a social gathering where you knew no one, you recall how uncomfortable you were because you were not acquainted. I am sure that if I should know no one in heaven, and no one would know me, I would be very lonesome indeed. I want my friends there. I want to know them. I want them to recognize me. I want to talk over many things with them. Much of the joy of heaven will be the privilege of associating with those we have here known and loved. Take that pleasure away and much will be lost.

Will we remember anything that has taken place here on earth? Surely. While there are many things which we will wish to forget-which we will be happy to forget-there are a thousand things that will ever be fresh in our memory. The former things that had to do with sin and disappointment will be of the past and forgotten; the things of the spirit, the things of the kingdom-those which have to do with the gospel and salvation-will never be erased from mind. Would it not be regrettable if the memory of our conversion were blotted out? Or if those whom we have been instrumental in bringing to Christ should forget their blessed experience and not even be able to thank the ones who were used of Christ to bring them the light? If the experience of conversion were ever to fade from the memory, we would be unable to give any reason for being in heaven. We would not be able to thank Christ for that which our minds could not recall. We would be sinners saved by grace, but would not know it. Such a thing could never be. Our memories are all that will connect us with our earth life. Let all evil and sin be forgotten; but let the blessed experiences of the gospel be deeply and ineradicably impressed upon the mind.

Older people who have lived a full life are likely to think of heaven in terms of rest, and the Bible does so speak of it. Younger people are not so much interested in rest. They want activity. They have no wish for an afternoon nap; they have little desire just to sit still; they are full of energy. In this respect, how will life be in the hereafter?

Nothing is more tiresome and monotonous than inactivity. We may all want rest, but we do not want too much of it. To be doomed to inactivity for a year would be torture to most people. They may have no objection to a period of rest; but having had that, they are ready to go to work. So it must be in heaven.

## **Never Grow Old**

Will there be old people in heaven? No, thank God, there will be no old people there. There will be many whom we have considered old, but they have learned the lessons of life, and now they are young again, ever to stay so. Blessed experience! They will no longer have to sit in the corner, neglected by the thoughtless young; they will no longer have to shrink into the background; they will no longer feel in the way; they will no longer be treated as non-composements and relegated to a small, cheerless, out-of-the way room. They are young and happy; they "belong" in a very definite way.

No, there will be no old people in heaven; nor will there be any sick, or infirm, or crippled. What a blessing! No sorrow, no pain, no infirmity. No parting, no death, no war. Peace, blessed peace; friendship; sweet communion; love; happiness supreme: "My cup runs over."

"A man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses." Luke 12:15. Never was a truer statement made than this. Life is not things; yet how often we make it so. With many it is things, things, things-more and more of them. And they apply the same principle to heaven. It is the "things" there in which they are interested. But life is not things. Moreover, life, even eternal life, is not mere extended existence. It is not how long a man lives that counts; it is how much he lives, how deeply he lives, that is important.

Eternal life, therefore, is not merely existence in finitely prolonged; it is not having a great many things, even though these things may be good in themselves. What, then, is eternal life? It is friendship, love, hope faith. It is sacrifice, unselfishness, understanding. It is impartation, work, giving. It is purity, joy, worship. It is these, and much more, all summed in that which cannot be bought with money-in short, the character of God.

We cannot imagine that the future life will be one of self-satisfied ease. The highest joy we have in this world is in service, in doing something for others. Can this be any less our joy in the world to come? If the Bible is true; if there are other worlds than this; if there are myriads of angels who "Desire to look into" the deep things of God; if it is true that "principalities and powers in heavenly places" (the angels) are to have imparted to them "by the church the manifold wisdom of God"; then it is clear that there will be a

work to do in the hereafter for those who here on earth have wrought with Christ in the salvation of souls and who have been saved by the abounding grace of God. (1 Peter 1:12; Ephesians 3:10.) Having had experiences that are denied even the angels, they are prepared to enter with Christ into the most holy place, and in the ages to come they will find their delight in serving. As they serve, their capacity for service, for learning, for teaching, and for spreading abroad the praises of Him who has called them from darkness into His marvelous light, will constantly enlarge.

No, heaven is not a place of selfish ease where the saints will enjoy the fruits of labor past. There is no busier place than heaven at the present time; and in ages to come it will not be a place of inactivity. There will be nothing unreal about it. We shall find there a real God and Savior, a real home, the earth made new and even more glorious than it was in the beginning - real people, real work, real life.

But we have not finished our task. There are some things-and vital things they are-that still remain to be said, but we must wait a little while to say them. In the meantime, farewell. Be of good courage. God has given us a wonderful truth. Be faithful to it. Maranatha.

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