**÷01-00 Definitions of Doctrine Volume I   
THE DOCTRINE OF GOD   
By   
CLAUDE DUVAL COLE**

"Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee" (*Job 22:21*).

Originally Printed by: Bryan Station Baptist Church 3175 Briar Hill Pike,   
Lexington, Kentucky 40516

This module was created by wlue777.

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÷01-00i INTRODUCTION

Pastor C. D. Cole has a doctrinal mind. He thinks doctrine, preaches doctrine, and loves doctrine. He is logical and methodical in all he does. But most of all he is a diligent student of the Scriptures, and knows how to correlate and systematize its teachings. There are few men who are so able along this line. His writings are easily grasped and readily understood. The teachings in this book are popular and most profitable. We had many testimonies of approval when his articles on doctrine were run in the Florida Baptist Witness. They created a wide interest among the readers. There were many requests for these articles to be put in book form. Brother Cole is a clear thinker, a ready writer, a strong preacher, and a man of positive convictions. We most heartily commend this book.

E. D. Solomon, Editor Florida Baptist Witness.

PREFACE

It requires the space of only one generation for a people to drift from their doctrinal moorings. One generation which knew not Joseph loosed its persecution on the children of Israel, reversed the national policy and started Egypt to her doom, hence the vital necessity of reiterating and confirming the doctrines of our faith in every generation. Truth crushed to earth will rise again, but only as it is known and believed by men who have the conviction and courage to proclaim it. That is why the apostle Paul said to his student Timothy: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (*2Ti 2:2*). As every generation must be evangelized, so must every generation be indoctrinated.

Pastor C. D. Cole renders a timely and an invaluable service to the people of God in the message of this marvelous book. He calls us back to a Scriptural study of the person, nature, and glorious attributes of our great God. The author wisely says, "The foundation of true religion is to have proper thoughts about God. The man who thinks right about God will not be far wrong in his thinking about other things. A thousand evils grow out of wrong conceptions about God." The present tendency is to emphasize the doctrines which deal with man. Psychology and Sociology are more popular than Theology. Such popular expressions as, "Competency of the human soul," "Creative thinking," "The dignity of man," "The value of human personality," "Social implications of the Gospel," "Enlisting our man power," and "Building a new world" indicate the tendency to magnify man and minimize God in religious thought and activity.

The small conception which some have of God makes them mere apologists for God. They speak of God's wanting to do this and trying to do that, of giving God a chance, of letting God have His way, as if God were the suppliant and man the sovereign. I heard a preacher say in pathetic tone, "I am sorry for God" as he pleaded with his congregation to give God a better deal. My dear brethren, study this book, read it's Scriptural references and absorb its message and you will never be sorry for God. He is revealed as One who is amply able to take care of Himself. You will pity those who discount His power, resist His will, and belittle His universal sovereignty.

Deep things of God as set forth here are not seen by the natural mind and are seldom discerned by the Christian who is superficial in study. The ponderous mass of the doctrines of our faith, like the submerged two thirds of an iceberg, is below the surface of popular thought and appreciation. Worldly statesmen praise the work of missionaries because they have built a reservoir of good will for America among the nations while they are blind to God's eternal purpose to visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. Five thousand ate loaves and fishes and wanted to make Jesus king, but only a dozen remained to hear Him preach on election, effectual calling, and the sovereignty of God. For lazy minds looking for ready material for popular sermons and pep talks this book will have little appeal, but for those whose hearts yearn for a deeper acquaintance with their God, it will be worth its weight in gold. My heart has thrilled, my soul has rejoiced, all that is within me has blessed the Lord, as I have read the manuscript. What a wonderful God is our God!

Such conception of God, as revealed in this book, will promote humility and reverence in our worship as no soft music, art, glass windows, mellow lights, or psychological schemes ever will. It will melt pride and banish formalism and ritualism from the churches. It will establish the preacher on solid ground of assurance and save him from despair in the presence of seeming failure by bringing him to rest the results of his ministry on the unfailing purpose of God. It will safeguard our evangelism against spurious methods and high pressure salesmanship. It will relax the spiritual tension in our religious activity. It will put triumph in the soul and cause us to shout with Paul, "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us who can be against us?" (*Rom 8:31*).

To the saints everywhere and especially to my Baptist brethren, I commend this book; May God speed it on its way to bless and strengthen our people in "The Once Delivered Faith."

Yours by Sovereign Grace,   
D. F. Sebastian, Plant City, Florida.

THE AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

The author of this book claims one qualification for offering a work on theology, his love for the subject. Any man who decries doctrine as impractical and uninteresting can't be qualified to deal with the teachings of the Bible. The person who speaks of solemn doctrine with a solemn sneer is at once disqualified as a teacher of the Scriptures. He who puts the Bible in the crucible of human reason and twists it to say what his reason thinks it ought to say has no place in a Christian pulpit.

More than twenty years ago the writer delivered addresses on the Divine Attributes in his own pulpit and at Bible Institutes in various churches. Some years later he taught theology to a group of ministers and included lectures on the attributes. And still later he wrote for the Florida Baptist Witness under the general caption "Definitions of Doctrine"; and this is the name given to the work on theology, which he expects to publish in three or four volumes. His first volume treats of THE DOCTRINE OF GOD, than which there is no greater or grander theme for study and meditation.

Bacon says that some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested. He who merely tastes this book is apt to disrelish it; it might not be safe to swallow it; but if it is chewed and digested, the writer believes it will strengthen the faith of the reader by revealing to him how great and wonderful is our God.   
CLAUDE DUVAL COLE December 19, 1944.

÷01-01 THE BEING OF GOD

We have no intention of making labored and elaborate arguments for the existence of God. We start where the Bible starts. The Bible assumes the existence of God, and we assume that our readers will do the same. There are so many witnesses to His existence that the Bible makes no effort to prove it. There is the outer witness in nature. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork" (*Psa 19:1*). The voice of these witnesses has been heard in every language and in all places of the earth. It is true that in times past God "Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways" (*Act 14:16*). "Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (*Act 14:17*). His eternal power and Deity are clearly seen in the visible things He has created: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:" (*Rom 1:20*).

There is also the inner witness of the human conscience. "For when the Gentiles (heathen), which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another; "(*Rom 2:14-15*). The voice of nature in creation and in conscience proclaims loudly the existence of the true and living and eternal God. And so, for all practical purposes, there is no necessity for proving the existence of God.

**THE SOUL FEELS GOD**

A man once sought to ridicule the idea of God. He asked his Christian neighbor if he had ever seen God. The believer admitted he had not. He was then asked if he had ever heard God speak, or if he had ever tasted God, or if he had ever smelled God. The believer admitted that with the physical senses he had never apprehended God, and then shut the month of the atheist by asking him if he had ever told a lie. And when he confessed he had, he was further asked how he felt. He admitted that he had an uneasy or apprehensive feeling. Now this feeling was the testimony of conscience telling him there was a God, a moral Lawgiver, to whom he must give account. This is the meaning of conscience money and other things men do to ease their conscience and placate an offended Deity. Every man feels God whose conscience has not been seared or otherwise tampered with. The atheist is the educated fool. There are no theoretical atheists among the heathen. There are no atheists among the demons; they believe and tremble: "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble" (*Jas 2:19*).

**SIN ORIGINATED IN THE AFFECTIONS**

The Scriptures do not reason with the atheist, but rather reprove him. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good" (*Psa 14:1*). The error is not so much in the understanding as in the heart. The theoretical atheist (the man who denies the existence of God) has tampered with his mind until he has made it agree with his heart. It is a case of the wish being father to the thought. While there are comparatively few theoretical atheists, every man in his natural and fallen state is a practical atheist, he does not want the true God. The fool of Psalms fourteen and fifty-three is the typical fool; he represents every unregenerate man. In the context the plural is used: "They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good" (*Psa 14:1*). "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: there is none that doeth good" (*Psa 53:1*). Sin originated in the affections or desires, and the darkened understanding is one of the effects by way of Divine punishment. "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; "(*Rom 1:28*). The true God, when known, was not the God men wanted. "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened" (*Rom 1:21*).

**MORAL DEVOLUTION**

The true evolution, morally, takes sin into account, and is the development or unfolding of a human nature that hates the true God. It is moral devolution. The progress of sin is given "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 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" (*Rom 1:18-32*).

First, men suppressed or held down the truth about God. They had the truth about God in the book of nature. His eternal power and Deity were clearly revealed in the things He had made, but men did not like this truth. They turned away from revelation and turned aside to their own reasonings. Second, they changed the truth about God into a lie, and made images or representations of God in the form of man and birds and beasts and creeping things. There was the Apollo of the Greeks, the eagle of the Romans, the bull of the Egyptians, and the serpent of the Assyrians. Men knew God and refused to worship Him, and idolatry followed as a psychological necessity. And third, idolatry was followed by sensuality. God gave them up to uncleanness and vile affections. He withdrew His restraining grace and suffered human nature to go its full length in immorality. The closing verses of Romans one reveal the terrible things men and women will do when given up by God. They not only do these things themselves, but are glad to see others do them. The lowest stage in depravity is reached when men take pleasure in seeing others sin.

**NO SAVING LIGHT IN NATURE**

The witnesses of God in nature do not constitute Gospel light. They are sufficient to render all men without excuse, but they are not efficient as means of salvation. They are sufficient to make men know they are sinners, but they have nothing to say about a Savior. There must be a further revelation of God before men can know Him in the forgiveness of sins. And this revelation is His written Word as a witness to the incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, by the knowledge of Whom many shall be justified. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities" (*Isa 53:11*).

**MAN IS A RELIGIOUS BEING**

Man is by nature a religious being. By training, apart from Bible teaching and the new birth, he will either become an atheist or an idolater. This is the best education can do apart from the grace of God. A mere cultural religion deifies humanity, denies the fall, and talks only of upward development. This is the religion of the evolutionist. The god of the sensualist is his belly, his inward desires. The only law he recognizes is the craving of a depraved nature. "Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things" (*Php 3:19*). This is the religion of the godless business man as well as of the drunkard and libertine.

It is as bad to invent a god in the imagination as it is to make one with the hands. The old form of idolatry had its gods made with hands; the new form of idolatry has its gods spun out of the imagination and harbored in the mind. The unknown God is still the true God. The Athenians of Paul's day had monuments to many gods, and in their religious zeal had a monument to the unknown God. The unknown God was the God Paul preached to them. The true God was unknown to them. (*Act 17:22-32*): "Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter."

It is the purpose of the following pages to present the God of the Bible in His nature and personal perfections. The reader is asked to test what is written herein with what is revealed in Holy Writ. And may the Spirit of truth guide us into the truth!

÷01-02 THE NATURE OF GOD or GOD'S MODE OF BEING

What is God? What constitutes the Divine nature? What is God's mode of being? These questions bring us to the burning bush and upon holy ground. We must tread softly, walk humbly, and avoid speculation. But we can go as far as Divine revelation goes.

There is a Divine nature. By nature we mean that particular character of being which makes one kind of being differ from another kind of being. Thus we speak of angelic nature, of human nature, and of brute nature. That nature may be predicated of God is suggested by Paul who says that the Galatians, before their conversion, served those which by nature were no gods. "Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods" (*Gal 4:8*). This clearly implies that one does exist who by nature is God.

**1. GOD IS A PERSONAL BEING.**

As a person God is distinguished from pantheism, the belief that all things in the aggregate are God, God is everything and everything is God. As a personal Being God is both immanent and transcendent, that is, He is both in and above His creation. He is a person in His creation, but separate and distinct from it. He is also above His creation, that is, He is bigger than creation, distinct from it and not a part of it. In his prayer dedicating the temple, Solomon paid tribute to the transcendent greatness of God in these words: "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?" (I King 8:27).

There are three marks of personality: self consciousness, self determination, and moral consciousness, and all these qualities belong to God.

**2. GOD IS A SPIRIT BEING.**

God is exclusively Spirit: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (*Joh 4:24*). The reader must grasp this truth firmly, or he will have trouble in understanding the trinity of persons in the Godhead. As a Spirit God can neither be divided nor compounded. As a Spirit He is invisible and intangible. "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (*Joh 1:18*).

ARGUMENT:

1. He is creator of spirits, and since a spirit being is the highest order of being, He must have the nature that belongs to that order.

2. The scriptures ascribe spirituality to God. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (*Joh 4:24*). "Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?" (*Heb 12:9*).

3. His spirituality may be argued from His immensity and eternity. He is infinite as to space and time. Matter is limited as to space and time, but God is both omnipresent and eternal.

4. His spirituality may be argued from his independency and immutability. That which is material can be divided, added to, or diminished. Matter is subject to change, but God is the unchangeable one. "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (*Mal 3:6*).

5. His spirituality may also be argued from His absolute perfections. A material body imposes limitations, and is not consistent with absolute perfection. We use the word perfection in a wider sense than sinlessness. The Savior, in his human body, had his limitations although He was sinless. He was not everywhere at the same time. He was not immune to hunger and thirst, weariness and pain.

OBJECTION:

Many passages of scripture ascribe bodily parts to God. They speak of His eyes, face, hands, feet, arms, etc. In reply it may be said that the language is figurative, and is used in an accommodation to human understanding. Such language is called anthropomorphism, the ascription of human characteristics to things not human.

**3. GOD IS A TRIUNE BEING.**

There is one Divine essence of being subsisting in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is a triunity, three in one. In the early part of the fourth century when Arianism threatened to prevail, a young theologian named Athanasius formulated the statement that was incorporated in the Nicene Creed. He said, "We worship one God in trinity and trinity in unity, neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance." This is a remarkable statement, profound in its clarity and simplicity. The Arian notion made the Father the Supreme God and the Son only Divine in a subordinate sense. The Son was like but not of the same substance with the Father, according to Arius.

The Sabellian notion is that God is one person, manifesting Himself sometimes as Father, sometimes as Son, and sometimes as Holy Spirit. But this would make Him cease to exist as Father when manifested as Son.

If God were a physical being as a trinity, He would be in three parts, and if these parts were persons, each person would be only a part of God. But as a Spirit He is three persons, but only one substance, and each person is all of God. Of the Son we read: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (*Col 2:9*). And again He is called: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature" (*Col 1:15*).

God is not three persons in the same sense that Father, mother, and daughter are three persons in one family. It could not be said of any one of three persons in a human family that he is all of the family.

God has three modes of Being, three centers of personal consciousness. He is one essentially, but three persons relatively. And in these relations He exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Dr. Strong puts it like this: In the matter of source, origin, and authority, He is the Father. In the matter of expression, medium, and revelation, He is the Son. In the matter of apprehension, accomplishment, and realization, He is the Spirit. Dr. Strong also sums up the characteristic differences between the work of the Son and the work of the Spirit in four statements, as follows:

1. All outgoing seems to be the work of Christ; all return to God the work of the Spirit.   
2. Christ is the organ of external revelation; the Holy Spirit is the organ of internal revelation.

3. Christ is our advocate in heaven; the Holy Spirit is our advocate in the soul.   
4. In the work of Christ we are passive; in the work of the Holy Spirit we are made active.   
**THE TRIUNITY A REVEALED DOCTRINE**

Just as man without the Bible has never discovered the one true God, without the Bible he has never discovered a trinity of persons in the Godhead. The triunity is indiscoverable by human reason, neither is there any rational proof of it.

It is said that on one occasion Daniel Webster and a friend listened to a sermon upon the Trinity. As they walked home from church the friend said: "Mr. Webster, is not that doctrine a mathematical impossibility?" Said Mr. Webster: "According to the mathematics of earth it seems to be; but I'm not acquainted with the mathematics of heaven."

The Bible gives us heavenly mathematics, and to it we should go in proof of the Triunity of God.

1. We have triunity in the plural names of God. The first name of God we meet with in the Bible is plural: "In the beginning God (Elohim, plural) created (singular) the heaven and the earth" (*Gen 1:1*). The plural noun with the singular verb shows trinity acting in unity. Charles Smith says the Bible begins with a forgery; that this first verse should read: "In the beginning the gods." Not so; the singular verb shows there was one Being acting, while the plural noun reveals three persons in one Divine essence. The plural for God occurs far more often than does the singular.   
2. We have triunity in the plural expressions used by God when speaking of Himself. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (*Gen 1:26*); "Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." (*Gen 11:7*)., ect.

3. A trinity of Divine persons was manifested at the baptism of Jesus. There was the incarnate Son being baptized; the Father was manifested by audible voice; and the Spirit appeared in the form of a dove. "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (*Mat 3:16-17*).

4. We have triunity in the baptismal formula: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" (*Mat 28:19*). It does not say, "baptizing them in the names (plural) of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Nor does it give us the equivalent of the plural by saying, "In the name of the Father, and in the name of the Son, and in the name of the Holy Ghost." Nor, on the other hand, does it say, "In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as if the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost might be taken as merely three designations of one person. Here is the reading: "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

**THE TRIUNITY REFLECTED IN CREATION**

While there is nothing in creation to explain or account for the triunity of God, the triunity does explain creation. This is a triuniverse, a three-in-one creation. One of the truly great books of our day is that book by Nathan R. Wood entitled "The Secret of the Universe." In this remarkable book the author shows that the universe is what it is because it was created by the triune God. He first shows that the physical or outer universe is a triunity. The basic things are space, matter, time; three modes of existence and, like God, each is all of the whole. And each of these basic things is a triunity. Space has three dimensions: length, breadth, and height. Each is the whole of space and yet there are three distinct dimensions. Matter is composed of three things: energy, motion, phenomena; three modes of existence; distinct and yet one, and each is all of the whole. And as a time universe there is absolute threeness: past, present, future; distinct and yet each is the whole. All of time is or has been future, the future includes it all. All of time is or has been or will be present. And all of time is or will be past.

The author then takes the soul or what he calls the inner universe, and shows that the soul of man is a triunity, that is, three modes of existence. He calls them nature, person, personality; distinct and yet each is the whole of the soul, absolute threeness and absolute oneness. And here the author shows how man as a soul reflects the triune God in a way that the physical creation does not. He makes God the key that unlocks the riddle of the universe. He says in a sort of summary: "The structure of the universe, the nature of space, of matter, of time, of human life, attest the Trinity. They reflect the Trinity. They demand the Trinity. The Trinity explains them."   
The author knocks the Einstein theory of relativity with the argument for the fourth dimension into the proverbial cocked hat. The difference between Einstein and Wood is the difference between the atheistic and the Christian approach to the secret of the universe.

÷01-03 THE NAMES OF GOD

The aim of this volume is to better acquaint its readers with the true and living God. If any of our readers feel that the author is lopsided, and does not maintain the balance of truth by emphasizing the responsibility of man, we would remind him that our thesis is God, not man.

There are several sources of knowledge about God. The heavens and the earth, the things He has made, reveal His eternal power and Deity, and declare His glory. The human conscience also testifies to His existence, as do the laws of nature. But the Bible is the chief source of information about God in His character and work.

The various names and titles given to God in the Bible reveal much concerning His character and government. In the Bible the names of persons, places, and things are of great significance; the names were chosen because of their meaning! We give names to our children today without any thought of what the name means, and very often the name is not appropriate to the character that wears it. Many men have worn the name Jesus, but to only one Man, Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God, is the name appropriate. All the names of God in the Bible are most appropriate and much can be learned about Him through the study of His names.

The study of names given to persons and places in the Bible is so entrancing that we must pursue it a little further before coming to our main theme—THE NAMES OF GOD. In the Bible names reveal the character of persons, and commemorate important events. To illustrate we are taking a number of names somewhat at random. At the battle of Aphek Israel was defeated by the Philistines, losing thirty thousand footmen; Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain; the ark of God was taken by the Philistines; and when the sad news came to the wife of Phinehas, giving her life in childbirth, on her death bed she named the child Ichabod, which means "inglorious, "thus signifying that the glory had departed from Israel: "And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband" (*1Sa 4:21*). The name Moses means "drawer out, "and was given him by Pharaoh's daughter, as "she said, because I drew him out of the water" (*Exo 2:10*). The name Samuel was given to the son of Elkanah and Hannah as a memorial to answered prayer. Samuel means "heard of God, "and was given him by his mother: "Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the LORD" (*1Sa 1:20*). The human name of Jesus was given to our Lord because it means "Jehovah saves." When the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph to quiet his fears and suspicions concerning his espoused wife, Mary, he announced the birth of a son, and said "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (*Mat 1:21*). The name Abraham means "father of a multitude, "and was given to Abraham by God when He promised him a numerous progeny. "Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee" (*Gen 17:5*). Adam called the creature, taken from his side, woman: "And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man" (*Gen 2:23*). When Adam and his wife became sinners by transgressing the law of God, the gospel was preached to them by God, the gospel that the seed of woman should bruise the serpent's head: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (*Gen 3:15*); whereupon, in faith, Adam named the woman Eve, which means "living, ""And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living" (*Gen 3:20*). Eve's firstborn was named Cain, which means "acquired", "And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD" (*Gen 4:1*). The word for man in the Hebrew is "ish, "which means a man of high degree, and it is probable that Eve believed Cain to be the promised Redeemer. If so, she was sadly disappointed, and when her next son was born, it must have been in a spirit of despair that she named him Abel, meaning "vanity or vapor." When Samuel had defeated the Philistines on a field of battle between Mizpeh and Shen, he planted a stone on the very spot of victory and called it Ebenezer, meaning "the stone of help, ""Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us" (*1Sa 7:12*).

**THE NAMES OF GOD**

Some names of God respect Him as subject: Jehovah, Lord, God; others are predicates, spoken of Him and attributed to Him: holy, just, good, etc. Some express the relations between the persons of the Godhead: Father, Son, and Spirit; and some express the relation of God to the creatures: Creator, Preserver, Governor, etc. Some names or titles are common to the three persons, as Jehovah, God, Father, Spirit. And some are proper names used to express His character and work.   
The name of God is what He IS; it stands for His character. But the Creator is so great that no one name can possibly be adequate to His greatness. If the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, how can a name describe the Creator? So the Bible contains a number of names of God which reveal Him in the several aspects of His marvelous personality.

ELOHIM (Pronounced El-lo-heem)

This is the first name of God in Scripture: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (*Gen 1:1*).Here it is in the plural form with a singular verb, denoting plurality of persons in unity of essence or being. This name is expressive of God's greatness and power. It is the creatorial name of God, and is used exclusively in the account of creation: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day. And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the third day. And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day. And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day. And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so. And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made. These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens"(*Gen 1:1-31*; *Gen 2:1-4*). Elohim is always translated "God" in our English Bible. According to the prevailing opinion of scholars the word is derived from a root in the Arabic language which means to worship. Weight is given to this opinion when we observe that the word is sometimes used improperly of angels, of men, and of false deities. In *Psa 8:5* "For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour" the word for angels is elohim, and angels are sometimes improperly worshipped. In *Psa 82:1*; *Psa 82:6* : "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods...I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High" elohim is translated gods, and is used of men. Also in *Joh 10:34-35* : "Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken". In *Jer 10:10-12* "But the LORD is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation. Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion." we have the true God (elohim) in contrast with "the gods (elohim) that have not made the heavens and the earth, "thus implying that none but the Creator is the proper object of worship.

EL-SHADDAI (Pronounced el Shad-di)

This compound word is translated God Almighty (El for God and Shaddai for Almighty). The title EL is for God in the singular, and means strong or mighty. EL is translated God 250 times in the Old Testament. The title is generally connected with some attribute or perfection of God; as, "Almighty God": "And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him" (*Gen 17:3*); "Everlasting God": "And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God" (*Gen 21:33*); "A jealous God": "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me" (*Exo 20:5*); "The living God": "And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites" (*Jos 3:10*).

SHADDAI, always translated Almighty, means sufficient or resourceful. It is thought the word comes from SHADDAY, meaning breasts. The word breast is used in the scriptures as an emblem of blessing and nourishment. In pronouncing his dying blessing upon Joseph, Jacob, among other things, said, "Even by the God (EL) of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty (Shaddai), who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb:" (*Gen 49:25*). Isaiah, describing the future excellency and blessings of Israel, says, "Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles (nations), and shalt suck the breast of kings: and thou shalt know that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob" (*Isa 60:16*). The people of God shall draw upon the resources of nations and kings because their God is EL-SHADDAI the One mighty to bless.

Satan is a competitor of God and a counterfeiter of His works. Therefore, we may expect to find in heathen religions imitations of God in the several aspects of His character and government. This point is well illustrated in the following quotation taken from the book by Nathan J. Stone on the "Names of God in the Old Testament."

"Such a conception of a god or deity was not uncommon to the ancients. The idols of the ancient heathen are sometimes termed sheddim in the Bible. It is no doubt because they were regarded as the great agents of nature or the heavens, in giving rain, in causing the earth to send forth its springs, to yield its increase, its fruits to maintain and to nourish life. There were many breasted idols worshipped among the heathen. One historian points out that 'the whole body of the Egyptian goddess Isis was clustered over with breasts because all things are sustained or nourished by the earth or Nature."the same was true of the idol of the Ephesian goddess Diana in the nineteenth chapter of Acts, for Diana signified nature and the world with all its products."

This name of God first appeared in connection with Abram: "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly" (*Gen 17:1-2*). Years before and on different occasions, God promised Abram that He would make of him a great nation and a numerous progeny. The years came and passed and no child was born to Abram and Sarah. Then he resorted to that fleshly expedient which brought Ishmael and Mohammedanism into the world. And God's promise was still unfulfilled. And now, according to the laws of nature, it is too late, Abram is ninety-nine and Sarah ninety. And then it was that God appeared to him as God- Almighty (EL-SHADDAI), and repeated the promise. And here it was that his name was changed from Abram to Abraham, meaning "father of many nations." "Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee" (*Gen 17:5*). Here was a staggering promise, but it did not stagger Abraham, "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; "(*Rom 4:20*). Abraham's strong faith was based upon this new revelation of God as God-Almighty (ELSHADDAI). "And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb:" (*Rom 4:19*). His thoughts were upon an All-sufficient God. Here is a fine illustration of the difference between nature's law and nature's God. The laws of nature could not produce an Isaac, but it was not too much for nature's God. It matters not if everything is against God; He is all- sufficient in Himself.

ADONAI (Pronounced A-do-ni)

This name or title of God is in the plural, denoting a plurality of persons in the Godhead. It is translated Lord in our King James version, and expresses the relationship of a master and slave. When used in the possessive it is an acknowledgment of God's ownership and authority. Slavery is a blessing when God is the Owner and Lord. And in the days of Abraham when slavery was the order between man and man it was not an unmitigated evil. The purchased slave had the protection and privileges not enjoyed by the hired servant. The bought slave was to be circumcised and allowed to eat the Passover: "But every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof" (*Exo 12:44*).

This word in the singular (ADON) is applied to man more than two hundred times in the Old Testament, and is variously translated lord, master, owner. This name for God is first used in the Old Testament in connection with Abraham. Abraham was the first man to address God as ADONAI. Abraham as a slave owner also acknowledges God as his Master and Owner. When Abraham had returned from the slaughter of the king's, and had rescued Lot, the king of Sodom wanted to reward him, but he refused the reward. "After these things the word of the LORD (Jehovah) came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, Lord GOD (Adonai Jehovah) what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?" (*Gen 15:1-2*). He who had slaves acknowledged himself to be the slave of God.

JEHOVAH (Pronounced Je-ho-vah)

This is the most famous of the names of God, and is predicated of Him as a necessary and self-existent Being. The meaning is: HE THAT ALWAYS WAS, THAT ALWAYS IS, AND THAT EVER IS TO COME. We have it thus translated in *Rev 1:4* : "John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne."   
Jehovah is the personal, proper, and incommunicable name of God. In *Psa 83:18* we read: "That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth." The other names of God are sometimes applied to creatures, but the name Jehovah is used exclusively of the true and living God.

The Jews had a superstitious reverence for this name of God and would not pronounce it when reading, but would substitute other names as Adonai and Elohim. This is the name of God in covenant relation with man. It occurs about seven thousand times and is usually translated "Lord" in our King James version. As already noted it includes all tenses, past, present, and future. The name comes from a root which signifies to be.

Of the relation between Elohim and Jehovah, A. W. Pink has some illuminating remarks in his book, "The Divine Inspiration of the Bible, "and we quote:

"The names Elohim and Jehovah are found on the pages of the Old Testament several thousand times, but they are never employed loosely or used alternately. Each of these names has a definite significance and scope, and were we to substitute the one for the other the beauty and perfection of a multitude of passages would be destroyed. To illustrate: the word God occurs all through *Gen 1:1-31*, but 'Lord God' in *Gen 2:1-25*. Were these two Divine titles reversed here, a flaw and blemish would be the consequences. 'God' is the creatorial title, whereas 'Lord' implies covenant relationship and shows God's dealings with His own people. Hence, in *Gen 1:1-31*, 'God' is used, and in *Gen 2:1-25*, 'Lord God' is employed, and all through the remainder of the Old Testament these two Divine titles are used discriminately and in harmony with the meaning of first mention. One or two examples must suffice. "And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life. And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God (Elohim, C. D. C.) had commanded him." 'God' because it was the Creator commanding with respect to His creatures, as such; but in the remainder of the same verse, we read, "and the Lord (Jehovah, C. D. C.) shut him in" (*Gen 7:15-16*), because God's action here toward Noah was based upon covenant relationship. When going forth to meet Goliath David said "This day will the LORD (Jehovah) deliver thee into mine hand (because David was in covenant relationship with him); and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcases of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth (which was not in covenant relationship with Him) may know that there is a God (Elohim) in Israel. And all this assembly (which were in covenant relationship with him) shall know that the LORD (Jehovah) saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands" (*1Sa 17:46-47*). Once more: "And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, It is the king of Israel. Therefore they compassed about him to fight: but Jehoshaphat cried out, and the LORD (Jehovah) helped him; and God (Elohim) moved them to depart from him" (*2Ch 18:31*). And thus it is all through the Old Testament."

**THE JEHOVAH TITLES**

The name Jehovah is often used as a compound with other names to set forth the true God in some aspect of His character in meeting the needs of His people. There are fourteen of these Jehovah titles in the Old Testament, but there is not space in this volume to treat each one separately. It must suffice for us to present them and give a few references where they are used:   
1. JEHOVAH-HOSEENU, "Jehovah our Maker" "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker" (*Psa 95:6*).

2. JEHOVAH-JIREH, "Jehovah will provide" "And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen" (*Gen 22:14*).

3. JEHOVAH-ROPHECA, "Jehovah that healeth thee" "And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee" (*Exo 15:26*).

4. JEHOVAH-NISSI, "Jehovah my banner" "And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi" (*Exo 17:15*).

5. JEHOVAH-M'KADDESH, "Jehovah that doth sanctify you": "Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you" (*Exo 31:13*); "And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I am the LORD which sanctify you" (*Lev 20:8*).

6. JEHOVAH-ELOHEENU, "Jehovah our God" "Exalt ye the LORD our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy...He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar: they kept his testimonies, and the ordinance that he gave them. Thou answeredst them, O LORD our God: thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions" (*Psa 99:5*; *Psa 99:7-8*).

7. JEHOVAH-ELOHEKA, "Jehovah thy God" "I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage: ...Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me...Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (*Exo 20:2*; *Exo 20:5*; *Exo 20:7*).

8. JEHOVAH-ELOHAY, "Jehovah my God" "And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee" (*Zec 14:5*).

9. JEHOVAH-SHALOM, "Jehovah send peace": "Then Gideon built an altar there unto the Lord, and called it Jehovahshalom: unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites" (*Jdg 6:24*).

10. JEHOVAH-TSEBAHOTH, "Jehovah of hosts" "And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, were there" (*1Sa 1:3*); "And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha" (*Rom 9:29*); "Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth" (*Jas 5:4*).

11. JEHOVAH-ROHI, "Jehovah my shepherd" "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want" (*Psa 23:1*).

12. JEHOVAH-HELEYON, "Jehovah most high" "I will praise the LORD according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the LORD most high" (*Psa 7:17*); "For the LORD most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth" (*Psa 47:2*); "For thou, LORD, art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods" (*Psa 97:9*).

13. JEHOVAH-TSIDKEENU, "Jehovah our righteousness" "In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (*Jer 23:6*); "In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness" (*Jer 33:16*).

14. JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH, "Jehovah is there" "It was round about eighteen thousand measures: and the name of the city from that day shall be, The LORD is there" (*Eze 48:35*).

**THE NAMES OF GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

1. THEOS. In the Greek New Testament this is the general name of God, and corresponds with Elohim of the Hebrew Old Testament. It is applied to all three persons of the Trinity, but especially to God the Father.

2. PATER. This title corresponds with Jehovah of the Old Testament and expresses the relationship we have with God through Christ. It is applied to God two hundred and sixty five times and is always translated Father.

3. DESPOTEES (English Despot). This title sets forth God in His absolute sovereignty, and is similar to Adonai of the Old Testament. It occurs only five times in the New Testament: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word" (*Luk 2:29*); "And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is" (*Act 4:24*); "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction" (*2Pe 2:1*); "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (*Jud 1:4*); "And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (*Rev 6:10*).

4. KURIOS. This word is found hundreds of times and is translated lord, Lord, master, Master, owner, and sir. In quotations from the Hebrew it is often used for Jehovah. It is a title of the Lord Jesus as master and owner.

5. CHRISTOS. This word means the Anointed and is translated Christ. It comes from chrio to anoint. It is the official name of the long promised and long expected Messiah or Savior. The New Testament applies this title to Jesus of Nazareth exclusively.

From all these names of the Supreme Being we learn that He is the eternal, immutable, self-existent, self-sufficient, and allsufficient being; and is the supreme object of fear, trust, adoration, and obedience.

To the author this study has been interesting, and at the same time tedious and difficult, and the reader will have to be a patient plodder if he is to get the most out of it. What a marvelous revelation we have of the great God in these various names!

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÷01-04 THE DECREES OF GOD

By the decree of God is meant His purpose or determination with regard to future events. It means that things come to pass according to a Divine purpose rather than by a fixed natural law or blind fate or capricious chance. To deny the decrees or foreordination of God is practically to dethrone Him. It puts Him on the sidelines as an interested but helpless spectator to what is going on.

"A universe without decrees would be as irrational and appalling as would be an express train driving on in the darkness without headlight or engineer, and with no certainty that the next moment it might not plunge into the abyss" (A. J. Gordon).

"Plan and purpose as we may, the plans and purposes will turn only to the final end which God has predetermined" (Henry).

"We give thanks to God for blessings which come to us through the free actions of others, but if God has not purposed these blessings, we owe thanks to others and not to God" (A. H. Strong).

"The Scriptures make mention of the decrees of God in many passages and under a variety of terms. The word 'decree' is found in *Psa 2:7* : "I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." In *Eph 3:11* we read of His 'eternal purpose':"According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord"; In *Act 2:23* 'determinate counsel and foreknowledge':"Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain"; In *Eph 1:9* of his 'good pleasure':"Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself." God's decrees are called His 'counsel' to signify they are consummately wise. "Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength" (Peter 8:14). They are called God's 'will' to show He was under no control, but acted according to His own pleasure. "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will" (*Eph 1:5*). When a man's will is the rule of his conduct; it is usually capricious and unreasonable; but wisdom is always associated with 'will' in the Divine proceedings, and, accordingly, God's decrees are said to be the 'counsel of His own will" (A. W. Pink).

"Victor Hugo, recognizing the overruling divine hand, said, 'Waterloo was God.' God in the exercise of His infinite wisdom and power, so personally directs and controls the free actions of men as to determine all things in accordance with His eternal purpose" (E. H. Bancroft).

**POSITIVE AND PERMISSIVE DECREES**

All things were not decreed in the same sense. Sinful acts of men were not decreed in the same sense as were righteous acts. God is the efficient cause of all that is good, while evil is only permitted and directed and overruled for His glory. The sinful acts of men which God decreed permissively will certainly be done, but in doing them men are giving expression to their own inherent depravity. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain" (*Psa 76:10*). The good deeds of men are decreed efficiently, which means that God works in them "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (*Php 2:13*).

"Careless seems the great avenger; History's pages but record   
One death grapple in the darkness, Twixt old systems and the Word. Truth forever on the scaffold; Wrong forever on the throne; But that scaffold sways the Future; And, behind the dim unknown Standeth God, within the shadow, Keeping watch above His own."

—Lowell.   
**GOD'S SECRET AND REVEALED WILL**

The decrees of God belong to His secret will; the commands of God belong to His revealed will. "The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law" (*Deu 29:29*). God's secret will is the rule of His actions; His revealed will is the rule of our actions. God's secret will embraces all things; His revealed will embraces all we ought to do. The secret will of God is His program, according to which all things come to pass; His revealed will gives us our program according to which we are to work.

The decrees of God are not addressed to men, and have nothing to do with human responsibility. It may be that God has decreed a poor crop year, but that is no reason for failure to plant and cultivate. God may have decreed a famine, but that does not justify idleness. God may have decreed the death of the writer this year, but that does not keep him from regarding the laws of health and safety. God decreed the death of His Son, but that did not make it the duty of men to crucify Him.

**GOD'S DECREES AND FREE AGENCY**

God's decrees determine the free actions of men, that is, the decree makes their actions certain but not a necessity. God's decrees are not executed by compelling man's will, therefore they are not inconsistent with man's freedom. "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done" (*Act 4:27-28*). God's decree made the death of Christ certain, but it laid no necessity upon any man. None of the men were compelled to do the foul deed. In crucifying the Lord of glory they were giving free expression to their thoughts and feelings toward Him. They were fulfilling the Scriptures, and executing God's eternal purpose, without knowing it: "Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (*1Co 2:8*). "I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me" (*Joh 13:18*). "But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar" (*Joh 19:15*).

**GOD'S DECREES ARE ETERNAL**

If God has any purpose concerning the happenings of the universe it must, of necessity, be eternal. To deny this is to suppose some unforeseen event that made it necessary for God to change His purpose. All of God's purposes were formed in wisdom, and since he has power to execute them, there is no reason for any change. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" (*Act 15:18*). "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:" (*Isa 46:9-10*).

**PRACTICAL VALUE OF THE DOCTRINE**

It magnifies God in His wisdom, power, and sovereignty. It puts Him on the throne where He should be and is ever and always. There are no crises with God, no perplexing problems to ponder, no forces beyond His control. He moves with majestic step toward the consummation of His eternal purpose in Christ to the praise of His glory.

The believer is humbled at the sight of such a great God, and his soul is bowed in adoring wonder and worship. It will save the believer from undue familiarity with God in prayer and other acts of devotion. Some men pray as if God were on their level; to them He is not the August Being the Scriptures represent Him to be. Much of the poetry and other literature coming out of this war is too irreverent and merely represents God as a sort of comrade in arms. But the Scriptures say that "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him" (*Psa 89:7*).

"This doctrine is one of those advanced teachings of Scripture which requires for its understanding a matured mind and a deep experience. The beginner in the Christian life may not see its value or even its truth, but with increasing years it will become a staff to lean upon. In times of affliction, obloquy, and persecution, the church has found in the decrees of God, and in the prophecies in which these decrees are published, her strong consolation. It is only upon the basis of the decrees that we can believe: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (*Rom 8:28*) or pray: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (*Mat 6:10*)." A. H. Strong.

÷01-05 THE WORD OF GOD (THE HOLY SCRIPTURES)

Christianity is the religion of a Book. Without this Book Christianity cannot be perpetuated. Wherever this Book has not gone there is no evidence of anything Christian. Salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ, and people cannot believe in Him of whom they have not heard: "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (*Rom 10:14*). And we are shut up to this Book for news about Jesus Christ. This Book is the Bible, and, in its original, is God's word to us today. Efface the teachings of the Bible from human thought and Christianity passes into oblivion. The Bible is an infallible Book, sufficient and authoritative in all matters of religious faith and practice: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (*2Ti 3:16-17*).

"Bring me the Book!" cried Sir Walter Scott on his death bed. "What Book?" he was asked. And this genius of the Scottish people replied, "There is but one Book; bring me the Bible!" When Queen Victoria was asked the secret of England's greatness, she took down a copy of the scriptures and said, "This Book explains the power of Great Britain."

**SCRIPTURE VS. TRADITION**

The word for Scripture in the Greek is "graphe" and means "a writing, "or "anything written." The expression "holy scriptures" occurs only twice in the New Testament: "(Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,)"(*Rom 1:2*); "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (*2Ti 3:15*); but wherever the Scriptures are referred to, the Divine writings are meant. The usual reference is to the Old Testament writings, but Peter speaks of Paul's epistles as Scripture: "As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (*2Pe 3:16*).

The Scriptures of our Lord's day were the writings of the Old Testament. The Bible of that time was the Septuagint, which was the Greek version of the Hebrew Old Testament. To our Lord and the apostles the Old Testament was the word of God. This was the Book Christ challenged the Jews to search: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (*Joh 5:39*). This was the Book He meant when He said "If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; "(*Joh 10:35*). This was the Book the Bereans searched to see if what Paul preached was true. "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (*Act 17:11*).

Our Savior charged that the "traditions of men" were against the Scriptures. The Scriptures were the verbally inspired writings of God; the traditions of men were the teachings handed down by the Jewish elders. When the scribes and Pharisees charged Jesus with transgressing "the traditions of the elders, "He turned on them with this question: "Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? (*Mat 15:2-3*). Before Saul of Tarsus became a believer in Jesus Christ: He was "exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers" (*Gal 1:14*). But when he became a believer he renounced the traditions and turned to the Scriptures. There are many traditions which need to be given up today, things handed down that are contrary to Scripture.

**REVELATION AND INSPIRATION**

These two words must not be confused. The word of God came to the prophets; that was revelation. Inspiration is the method by which the word came through them to us. It is by inspiration that the revelation to them became a revelation to us. Without inspiration we would have no revelation, for the word of God does not come today as it came to men of old. This inspiration has given us a written revelation. God's word which we have today is in the form or nature of a Book, the Bible.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:" (*2Ti 3:16*). This does not say the prophets were inspired; inspiration has to do with the words; the words of scripture came from God; they were God breathed. It is not our purpose to enter the controversy about theories of inspiration, except to say that we believe in the verbal inspiration of the scriptures, which means that the very words were selected by God, and the men spake as they were borne along by the Holy Spirit. They were not given conceptions or ideas of truth; they were given words of truth and directed by the Spirit to put those words of truth in writing.

The human element in the production of the Bible is fully recognized, the Book came to us through human agency, but the human element was not allowed to hazard the accuracy or infallibility of the Book. The Bible is as accurate and infallible as if God had written it without the human agent. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (*2Pe 1:21*).

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets" (*Heb 1:1*). The Old Testament is the Divine record of what God said at different times and in different ways to Israel through their prophets. The New Testament is the Divine record of God speaking in the Son. The comparison between the prophets and Christ is to point a contrast. God was using the prophets to give His word to Israel; but in Christ it was God Himself speaking. The prophets were many; the Son is one. The prophets were servants; the Son is the Lord. The prophets were temporary; the Son abideth for ever. The prophets spoke the word; Christ is the Word.

The Bible is in two editions, commonly called the Old and the New Testaments. They are not two but one book. The Old Testament is the New enfolded; the New Testament is the Old unfolded. In the Old Testament the New is concealed; in the New Testament the Old is revealed. The Old is patent in the New; the New is latent in the Old. The Old is prediction; the New is fulfillment. The two Testaments have the same Author: God; they have the same subject: Christ. The crimson thread runs through the whole Bible. You can begin anywhere and, preach Jesus. In both Testaments it is recorded that the Lord said: "Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me" (*Psa 40:7*); "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,)to do thy will, O God" (*Heb 10:7*). And in *Rev 19:10* : "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Martin Luther quaintly compared the two testaments to the two men who brought the branch with the cluster of grapes from the promised land. They were both bearing the same fruit; but the one in front did not see it, but knew what he was carrying. The other saw both the fruit and the man who was helping him. The prophets who came before Jesus testified of Him, although they did not see Him; and we who live since He came, see both Him and them.

**ARGUMENTS THAT THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD**

1. There is a presumption in its favor. Man needs a revelation from God, and if the Bible is not this revelation we have none. To be sure there are the sacred books of other religions, but they are like the gods they witness to, and are obviously not the revelation of the true and living God. Man needs the kind of revelation we have in the Bible. There is a revelation of God in nature, but this revelation is inadequate; it does not cover enough subjects. Nature reveals His eternal power and Deity, but has nothing to say about His moral qualities. Nature tells us there is a God, but it does not tell us what He is. A savage on an island far removed from civilization, finding a watch, might reach the conclusion that it was made by man, but he could not, by examining the watch, learn anything about the character of the maker. And man cannot learn the character of the Creator through the study of geology, biology, and astronomy. The Bible makes no effort to prove the existence of God, but it goes to great lengths in telling us what God is. He is revealed in His mode of existence and in His many moral perfections.   
Man is in darkness about himself. He needs a written revelation to tell him what he is, whence he came, and, whither he is bound. The Bible answers every question concerning the eternal welfare of the human soul. It convicts every man of sin and tells him how to be saved. Yes, there is a presumption in favor of the Bible. Man needs a revelation; God is able to give it, and the Bible is the kind of revelation man needs. The Bible satisfies the thirsty soul.

2. The Bible claims to be the Word of God. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (*Joh 1:1*). If the Bible is not what it claims to be it is a bad book. It is utterly inconsistent to extol the Bible as a good book, and at the same time deny its infallibility. All through the Bible runs the expression, "Thus saith the Lord." This expression or its equivalent is used fully two thousand times in the Old Testament.

3. The testimony of Christ argues for the authenticity of the Bible. The Old Testament was in existence in His day, and He accepted it and quoted it as the word of God. The very book most frequently attacked by the critics (the book of Deuteronomy) was the book from which He made every quotation when tempted by Satan: "And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live" (*Deu 8:3*); "Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God, as ye tempted him in Massah" (*Deu 6:16*); "Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name" (*Deu 6:13*), and compare with: *Luk 4:4-12* : "And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

4. The uniqueness of the Bible attests its Divine origin. It is different from all other books. To drink at this fountain of Truth is to taste the difference. It is unique in its teaching about God, about creation, about man, about sin, and about salvation. It has been said that man could not have written such a book if he would, and he would not if he could. Any honest man, who knows much about the Bible, will readily admit that it cannot possibly be a human production.

5. The frankness with which this Book deals with its heroes and authors, gives abundant evidence that it is the word of God. Human biographies give only the bright and best side of a man's life. They extol his virtues and praise his achievements, but say little or nothing about his weak points. But the characters of the Bible are painted in the colors of truth. The Bible does not whitewash.

6. The wonderful unity of the Bible is an argument for its inspiration. This is a miracle within itself. Penned on two continents, written in three languages, its composition and compilation extending through the slow progress of sixteen centuries, having about forty different authors; parts of it written in tents, palaces, dungeons, in cities and deserts; written in times of danger and in seasons of ecstatic joy; among its writers were judges, priests, kings, prophets, prime ministers, herdsmen, scribes, soldiers, physicians, and fishermen; yet in spite of these varying circumstances, conditions, and workmen, the Bible is one Book. It holds together. There is affinity one part for the other. The more this truth is pondered the more amazing is the Bible.

"Imagine forty persons of different nationalities, possessing various degrees of musical culture, visiting the organ of some great cathedral and at long intervals of time, and without any collusion whatever, striking sixty-six different notes, which when combined yielded the theme of the grandest oroatorio ever heard: would it not show that behind these forty different men there was one presiding mind, one great Tone-Master? As we listen to some great orchestra, with its immense variety of instruments playing their different parts, but producing melody and harmony, we realize that at the back of these many musicians there is the personality and genius of the composer. And when we enter the halls of the Divine Academy and listen to the heavenly choirs singing the Song of Redemption, all in perfect accord and unison, we know that it is God Himself who has written the music and put this song into their mouths"(A. W. Pink).

7. Fulfilled prophecies give testimony to the Divine origin of the Bible. Prophecy is the foretelling of events before they come to pass. This is the acid test of Divine revelation. God's appeal to fulfilled prophecy is made all through the Bible: "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him" (*Deu 18:22*); "Produce your cause, saith the LORD; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come. Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together" (*Isa 41:21-23*); "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (*2Pe 1:19-21*). Men may make some general predictions about the future, but the Bible contains hundreds of prophecies, which have been literally fulfilled hundreds of years after they were written.

7a) Prophecies about Christ. He is the one great subject of prophecy: "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (*Rev 19:10*); "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,)to do thy will, O God" (*Heb 10:7*). Micah predicted His birthplace: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (*Mic 5:2*). Isaiah said his mother would be a virgin: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (*Isa 7:14*). and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (*Isa 7:14*). 22: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him. But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly. Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help. Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. But be not thou far from me, O LORD: O my strength, haste thee to help me. Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns. I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee, " and *Isa 53:1-12* : "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." And in *Psa 16:10* : "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" we have His resurrection foretold.

7b) Prophecies about the Jews. These like the prophecies about Christ, are too many to enumerate. Frederick the Great once demanded of one of his marshals, who was a devout believer, proof of the truth of the Bible in one word. "The Jew, "was the laconic, unanswerable reply. The destruction of their royal city, Jerusalem, was foretold years in advance. "And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city" (*Mat 22:1-7*; *Mat 24:1-2*): "And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." and *Luk 21:5-6* : "And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. Read the account of the destruction of Jerusalem by Josephus, who was with Titus in this campaign and afterwards wrote the history of it. The wandering Jew has long been a proverb in human history, but it was a Divine prophecy a long time before.

7c) Prophecies about Babylon. "And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged" (*Isa 13:19-22*); "For I will rise up against them, saith the LORD of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the LORD. I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the LORD of hosts" (*Isa 14:22-23*); "Therefore hear ye the counsel of the LORD, that he hath taken against Babylon; and his purposes, that he hath purposed against the land of the Chaldeans: Surely the least of the flock shall draw them out: surely he shall make their habitation desolate with them. At the noise of the taking of Babylon the earth is moved, and the cry is heard among the nations" (*Jer 50:45-46*). Of all the cities in prophecy apart from Jerusalem, Babylon figures most prominently. Babylon is mentioned in Genesis and in Revelation. This city is Divinely threatened through Isaiah; at great length through Jeremiah, and there are further threatenings through John in the book of Revelation. It would be interesting and profitable for the student, by the use of concordance, to read all the Bible says about Babylon.

7d) One of the most interesting bits of prophecy is that concerning Josiah, the boy king of Judah, who reigned from   
637-608 B.C. When Jeroboam stood by his altar at Bethel to burn incense, an unknown prophet of God came out of Judah "And he cried against the altar in the word of the LORD, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee" (1 King 13:2). The date of this prophecy was 975 BC. Here is the prediction of the birth, and name, and deed of a later king of Judah, which took place three and one-half centuries later. The fulfillment is recorded in 2 King 23:15,16: "Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, and stamped it small to powder, and burned the grove. And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that were there in the mount, and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned them upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words". (2 King 23:15,16). The fulfillment took place 624 BC, or 351 years after the prophecy was spoken.

SOME GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BIBLE AS A DIVINE REVELATION

1. It is a religious Book. It is not a textbook on natural science, but a revelation of moral and saving truth. It was not written to tell men how to get on here, but to tell them how to prepare for the hereafter.

2. The Bible is an open Book. Its truths are not veiled in scientific language, but are given in the popular language of the people. If the Bible had been written in the scientific language of the first century it would have been out of date in the twentieth century. If it had been written in the language of the twentieth century nobody could have understood it until a few years ago. If written in scientific language only the scholars could understand it. The Bible was not written for scholars but for men. It is the people's Book. It was delivered to the saints, not to the pope, or priest, or cleric. If the gospel is veiled the veil is not on the Book but on the human heart. The best qualification for understanding it is a sincere and honest and Spirit-enlightened mind.

3. The Bible is a practical Book. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable" (*2Ti 3:16*). The value of the Bible is beyond human appraisal. This book came from God and takes us to God. I know it came from God because it treats the subjects beyond the human intellect. The Bible shows the way to God, and how to become righteous before his Holy law. It is a manual of life and conduct. It was not given to adorn a table, but to direct a life. Read this Book to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. As another has said, "know it in the head, store it in the heart, show it in the life, and sow it in the world."

4. The Bible is an immortal Book. All other books die. It can be said of the Bible as was said of Christ: "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth" (*Psa 110:3*). Time writes no wrinkles on the brow of the eternal Word. The Bible is the world's best seller and at the same time the most hated of all books. Every weapon from the arsenal of hell has been used against it. All the strategists of Satan's empire have collaborated in an effort to destroy it. But the Bible is a living and indestructible Book. It has survived the fires of pagan and papal Rome, and the sophistries of all opposing philosophers. It triumphed over the arguments of Ingersoll, the ridicule of Voltaire, and the reasonings of Tom Paine. "For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven" (*Psa 119:89*). The Bible is like the bush which Moses saw burning but not consumed, for God was in it. It is like the anvil that wears out all the hammers.

"Yes, like a solid anvil the sacred Scripture stands, And fiercely is it beaten by unbeliever's hands; With noise and show of learning they make a large display, But, like the blackemith's hammer they wear themselves away."

5. The Bible is an expensive Book. The cost to us is not much. We enter a book store and ask for a Bible; we lay down the price, one dollar, two dollars, or ten dollars as the case may be. But is that the cost of the Bible? God in providential mercy has made the costliest of all books cheap to us. We estimate the value of an article by the cost of producing it. The Bible is a costly Book in its human aspect. Men sank their lives in medieval monasteries to make copies of it for future generations. Then there was the cost to martyrs who laid down their lives for love of the truth when pope or pagan would try to sweep away every copy of it. The Bible also represents a cost to God. From Genesis to Revelation it is written in the blood of His Son. The Old Testament is the finger of prophecy pointing forward to Calvary; the New Testament is the finger of history pointing back to Calvary. To write the message of love we have in the Bible God broke the heart of His Son on the cross. In olden times the word of God was inscribed on parchment which was the skin of sheep and today it is written on paper. The parchment speaks of the Lamb slain that its skin might clothe and its blood might atone, and that its skin might also bear the news of gracious love to sinners. The paper made from wood crushed into pulp reminds us that the Tree of Life was cut down and crushed on Calvary, crushed and marred beyond all the sons of men, that He might bear the glad tidings of God's love.

**METAPHORS OR SYMBOLS OF THE WORD**   
It is both interesting and instructive to study the symbols or figures under which the Word of God is set forth.

1. It is likened to a lamp or light: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path...The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple" (*Psa 119:105*; *Psa 119:130*); "For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life:" (*Pro 6:23*). The word of God is to man morally what a lamp is physically. This world is in a state of moral darkness; ignorant of how to become righteous before God, but God's word is a light shining in a dark place, and every believer delights to say, "The entrance of Thy words giveth light" (*Psa 119:130*). 2. The Bible is a mirror: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (*2Co 3:18*); "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (*Jas 1:25*). This cannot be said of any other book. I look into the Bible and see myself, not as I think I am, but as I really am, guilty and ruined: "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (*Rom 3:19*). The Bible is a mouth stopper. The least way to stop a man's boasting is to have him look at himself in the mirror of God's holy word.

3. The word of God is a laver or wash basin: "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (*Eph 5:26*). The very Book that reveals moral dirt also provides for washing. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word" (*Psa 119:9*). "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (*Joh 15:3*).

4. The Bible is represented as food: "Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food" (*Job 23:12*). Every man by nature is a prodigal away from the Father's house and perishing with hunger; in the word of God we find the gospel table ladened with soul satisfying food. There is milk for babes, and strong meat for men. There is bread for the hungry and honey for those who can take the sweets. The fat soul is the one who feeds upon the word of God.

5. The word of God is compared to a hammer: "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (*Jer 23:29*). The best way to break stony hearts is to quote Scripture. These is no heart too hard for the word when wielded by the Spirit. It caused the hard hearted jailer to cry out, "What must I do to be saved?" (*Act 16:30*).

6. The word is called the sword of the Spirit: "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:" (*Eph 6:17*). It is a perfect weapon with which to resist Satan. And the Holy Spirit knows how to use it in cutting the sinner to the heart and killing his self-righteousness." For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (*Heb 4:12*).

7. The word is likened to seed: "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God" (*Luk 8:11*). In spiritual as in natural farming the seed must be sown. It is the commission of our Lord to sow this world down with the word of God. We must sow beside all waters, and at all seasons. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good" (*Ecc 11:6*).

"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (*Psa 126:6*).

"Say, Christian, wouldst thou thrive In knowledge of thy Lord?   
Against no Scripture ever strive, But tremble at His word.

"Revere the sacred page;   
To injure any part   
Betrays with blind and feeble rage, A hard and haughty heart.   
"If aught there dark appear, Bewail thy want of sight; No imperfection can be there, For all God's words are right.

"The Scriptures and the Lord Bear one tremendous name; The written and the Incarnate Word In all things are the same.

"For Jesus is the Truth,  
As well as Life and Way;   
The two-edged sword that's in His mouth Shall all proud reasoners slay.

"Why dost thou call Him Lord, And what He says resist?   
The soul that stumbles at the Word, Offended is at Christ.

"The thoughts of man are lies, The Word of God is true. To bow to that is to be wise; Then hear, and fear, and do."

—Joseph Hart.

÷01-06 THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD (Introductory)

By the attributes of God is meant those qualities and characteristics of the Divine nature which are essential to God as the Supreme Being. His attributes are His personal perfections without which He would not be the true and living God, the God of the Bible. The Divine attributes explain what God is and what He does.

The greatest and most important of all sciences is theology, the science that treats of God. The being of God is the foundation of all religion. If there is no God, religion is a foolish and unnecessary evil. If there is no God, who is the supreme Lawgiver and Ruler and Judge, then man is not a responsible and accountable being, and the logic is inescapable that every man may do that which is right in his own eyes, insofar as the eternal future is concerned. If there is no God, "Who will render to every man according to his deeds" (*Rom 2:6*), then every man may act according to his own pleasure without fear of future retribution.

Religion is true or false as it embodies the true conception of the true God. Religion, from re-ligo "to bind back" must have a true God to tie to, or it is worthless. Mere belief in a supreme being is not enough. God must be known in His glorious attributes, and these are revealed to us in the Bible.

**OUR PROPER STUDY**

It has been said that the proper study of mankind is man. But Job felt otherwise. He says, "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee" (*Job 22:21*). Jeremiah thought that a spiritual and saving knowledge of God is the greatest need of men: "Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD" (*Jer 9:23-24*).

Our Savior said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (*Joh 17:3*). Daniel tells us that: "And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits" (*Dan 11:32*). Spurgeon wrote that "Nothing will so enlarge the intellect, nothing so magnify the whole soul of man, as a devout, earnest, continued investigation of the great subject of the Deity." May we quote further from this prince of preachers:

"The proper study of the Christian is the Godhead. The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy, which can engage the attention of a child of God, is the existence of the great God which he calls his Father. There is something exceedingly improving to the mind in a contemplation of the Divinity. It is a subject so vast, that all our thoughts are lost in its immensity; so deep, that our pride is drowned in its infinity. Other subjects we can comprehend and grapple with; in them we feel a kind of self content, and go our way with the thought, 'Behold I am wise.' But when we come to this master science, finding our plumb line cannot sound its depth, and that our eagle eye cannot see its height, we turn away with the thought, 'I am but of yesterday and know nothing'"(Sermon on *Mal 3:6*) "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."

A study of the Divine nature should be attended with humility, caution, and reverence. The more we learn about God in His holy Word, the fuller we realize that He is incomparable and incomprehensible. Strikingly did the Puritan John Howe declare: "The notion therefore we can hence form of His glory, is only such as we may have of a large volume by a brief synopsis, or of a spacious country by a little landscape. He hath given us a true report of Himself, but not a full; such as will secure our apprehensions from error, but not from ignorance." The writer is saying that through the study of the Bible we may be saved from error concerning God, but not from ignorance. The finite mind will never be able to fully know the Infinite God. God is the most overwhelming of all truths.

**HOW GOD IS KNOWN**

Two things are necessary to man's knowledge of the true God. There must be a revelation of God, and man must have a capacity to know God. One of these without the other will not suffice. The Bible gives a revelation of God, and a regenerated man is the only person who has the capacity to know God. Both of these are the results of the Holy Spirit's work. The Bible was written by men who were moved by the Holy Spirit, and the regenerate man has been born of the Spirit. There is thus, for the believer, a twofold revelation of God; a revelation to him in the word of truth, and a revelation in him by the Spirit's illumination.

Wherever the Bible has not gone, men have searched in vain for the true God. Job asked: "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" (*Job 11:7*). Paul tells us that the worldly wisdom knew not God "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (*1Co 1:21*). This was after the philosophers of Greece had tried and failed. One of the philosophers being asked the question, "What is God?" required a day to think it over. When the day was up, he requested more time. The reason being asked for his delay, he replied that the longer he considered the question the more obscure it became to him.

But a mere objective revelation of God is not all that is needed. There must also be a subjective revelation. The Spirit must put light in the soul which has been darkened by sin. Many have the Bible who do not know God. "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (*Joh 3:5*); "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (*1Co 2:14*); "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (*Mat 11:27*).

**VALUE OF THE STUDY**

1. The study of the Divine attributes will go far toward delivering us from error on many doctrinal points. For example, opposition to the doctrine of eternal punishment comes from a perversion of His goodness and a denial of His wrath and justice. Opposition to the doctrine of election comes from a misunderstanding of the grace of God, a denial of human depravity, and a disregard for the sovereignty of God. 2. The study of the personal perfections of the Godhead will give a just view of God. The God of the masses is not the God of the Bible. The God of the imagination is not the true God. A. W. Pink uses strong words but we believe he speaks the truth when he says: "The God of this twentieth century no more resembles the supreme Sovereign of Holy Writ than does the dim flickering of a candle the glory of the midday sun. The 'god' who is now talked about in the average pulpit, spoken of in the ordinary Sunday School, mentioned in much of the religious literature of the day, and preached in most of the so called Bible Conferences is the figment of human imagination, an invention of maudlin sentimentality. The heathen outside the pale of Christendom form 'gods' out of wood and stone, while the millions of heathen inside Christendom manufacture a 'god' out of their own carnal mind. In reality, they are but atheists, for there is no other possible alternative between an absolutely Supreme God, and no God at all. A God whose will is resisted, whose designs are frustrated, whose purpose is checkmated, possesses no title to Deity, and so far from being a fit object of worship, merits nought but contempt."

3. A contemplation of God in His personal attributes will promote humility and reverence. When Job got a vision of God, he cried out, "Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (*Job 42:6*). When Isaiah saw the Lord on His throne, he cried, "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts" (*Isa 6:5*). The better view we have of God, the better will we know ourselves. In the light of His holiness we can better see our vileness. Humility is the effect of being occupied with those sterner attributes of God, such as His justice, wrath, holiness, and power. There has been such a lop sided view of the love of God, and neglect of the wrath of God, that there is little fear and reverence of God today.

4. To be occupied with thoughts about God as He is revealed in the Scriptures will increase our faith. Much that passes current for faith today is either sentiment or presumption. Faith must be based upon a true revelation of God, and we have this revelation in the Bible. The way to have strong faith is to have a great and mighty God. Nobody's faith can be stronger than he believes his God to be. I cannot have strong faith in a God who, I think, is weaker than men. If my God is weak, my faith of necessity will be correspondingly weak. I cannot have much faith in God if I believe He is being defeated on most battle fields. I cannot have much faith in God if I believe He is trying and failing; if I believe His will is being thwarted by the will of men; if I believe He is doing the best He can to accomplish as much good as He can, and to save as many as He can. But if like Job, I believe "But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth" (*Job 23:13*); then with Paul I can say "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (*Eph 3:20*).

**WHAT KIND OF A GOD DO WE PRAY TO?**

Do we pray for the conversion of loved ones or friends or even enemies? Then we must pray in faith that God is able to convict and convert them. But if we are to pray in faith we must believe that God is almighty, that nothing is too hard for Him. We must believe that God is irresistible whether He works in grace or in justice; in salvation or in judgment. With Isaac Watts we must say:

"His very word of grace is strong,

As that which built the sky; The voice that rolls the stars along, Proclaims it from on high."

And may grace be given both writer and reader to believe in grace as did Philip Doddridge when he wrote:

"Grace led my roving feet   
To tread the heavenly road;   
And new supplies each hour I meet, While pressing on to God."

**CLASSIFICATION OF THE ATTRIBUTES**

The Divine attributes are variously distinguished by theologians. Perhaps the best classification is that which divides them into communicable and incommunicable. The communicable attributes are those which God, in some measure, communicates or imparts to men, as love, power, wisdom, and holiness. The incommunicable attributes are qualities that belong exclusively to God, as infinity, independency, and immutability. These qualities distinguish the Creator from His creation.

÷01-07 THE INFINITY OF GOD

INFINITY, when applied to God, means that He is unbounded, unlimited, unsearchable, immeasurable, incomparable, and incomprehensible. These are big words, both in size and meaning, and big words are needed to describe such a great and glorious God. God is so great that in comparison with Him. "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (*Dan 4:35*). Infinity contrasts God with His creatures. God is infinite; man is finite. God is infinite in all His attributes, but infinity has chief respect to His omnipresence and eternity. God is not bound by space, therefore He is everywhere; nor by time, therefore He is eternal.

1. HIS ETERNITY.

God's infinity as to duration is called His eternity. He has neither beginning nor end. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." (*Rev 1:8*). This attribute is possessed by each of the three persons, who have a common and undivided nature. He is eternal whether you look backward or forward. God's nature is not subject to the law of time. God is not in time; time is in God. God gave existence to time. There is no succession of time with God; to Him past, present, and future is "one eternal now." "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (*2Pe 3:8*). It has been well remarked that God is no older now than in the days of David, or when the world was created; for time makes no changes in Him. "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him" (*Dan 7:13*), But not ancient in days. "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God" (*Psa 90:1-2*).

He is without end. This is not difficult to understand. We think of men as existing forever, so it is easy to believe this of God. That which has no beginning, obviously could have no end. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last" (*Rev 22:13*).

He is without beginning. At this point God is incomprehensible. But whether we can conceive of life without beginning or not, we are bound to attribute this kind of existence to God. This may be argued:

1. From His necessary self-existence. The existence of God is either arbitrary or necessary. If arbitrary, it must lie from His own will or from the will of another. If from His own will, this would suppose His previous existence, which would be a contradiction. If His existence is from the will of another, that other would be both prior and superior, and so be God. This would involve another contradiction. God then must necessarily exist. "Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me" (*Isa 43:10*). 2. That God is without beginning may be argued from His immutability. If God is not eternal, He must have passed from non existence into being, and this would involve a change. "But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end" (*Psa 102:27*). "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (*Mal 3:6*).

3. The eternity of God may also be argued from His attributes, several of which are said to be eternal. His power is expressly said to be eternal: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:" (*Rom 1:20*). His knowledge is from eternity: "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" (*Act 15:18*). His mercy is said to be from everlasting to everlasting: "But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children" (*Psa 103:17*). His purposes are eternal: "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:" (*Eph 3:11*). His love is called everlasting: "The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee" (*Jer 31:3*).

4. The eternity of God may be concluded from the covenant of grace which is styled an everlasting covenant: "Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow" (*2Sa 23:5*). It is called the everlasting covenant not only because it will endure immovable forever, but because it was from everlasting. It is sometimes called a new covenant, not because newly made, but because it is always new and never grows old.   
5. The incommunicable name of God is Jehovah, which means "The Existing One." "That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth" (*Psa 83:18*). God exists naturally and necessarily, which means that there is no cause of His existence. He is the great First Cause, and therefore cannot be the effect of any other cause. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (*Heb 13:8*). There are no wrinkles on the brow of the eternal God. There is no feebleness of old age with Him.

2. HIS OMNIPRESENCE.

This means that God is everywhere. He is not bound by space. "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me" (*Psa 139:7-10*). There is no escape from Him for the wicked and no separation from Him for the righteous. This may be proven:

1. From His power, which is everywhere, as appears in creation and providence. "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high:" (*Heb 1:3*).

2. From His knowledge. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (*Heb 4:13*); "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (*Pro 15:3*). The presence of God may be considered in different ways. He is not present everywhere in the same sense or way. His glorious presence is in heaven, where He displays Himself to angels and to the spirits of just men made perfect. His powerful and providential presence is with all His creatures, "upholding all things by the word of his power" (*Heb 1:3*). His gracious presence is with His people, regenerating, sanctifying, comforting, and blessing them. His wrathful presence is in hell, inflicting punishment upon the wicked. "If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there" (*Psa 139:8*). "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (*Rev 21:8*). God's omnipresence is particularly and fully expressed in *Psa 139:1-24* : "O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee. For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee. Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: depart from me therefore, ye bloody men. For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain. Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies. Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." This speaks of His essential presence. So immense is God that the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him: "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?" (*1Ki 8:27*). "Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?" (*Isa 66:1*).

**OBJECTIONS TO GOD'S OMNIPRESENCE**

It has been urged in objection to the omnipresence of God that Cain went out from the presence of the Lord: "And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden" (*Gen 4:16*), and that Jonah fled from God's presence: "But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD" (*Joh 1:3*). But in reply it may be said that Cain only went away from the place of worship where God's gracious presence was manifested. And Jonah was fleeing from the service of God, foolishly supposing that he could avoid being urged to do his duty. He soon found that God was everywhere, and could met with him on the sea as well as on the land.

The God with whom we have to do has no limitations. One of the sins charged against Israel was that they limited the Holy One of Israel: "Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel" (*Psa 78:41*), that is, they thought there were some things too much for Him; they circumscribed Him in their thoughts and in lack of faith.

There are no crises with God, and no secret places to Him. All things are naked and open to His eyes. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (*Heb 4:13*). There is no hiding from Him, and no withstanding Him when His anger is aroused and when He chooses to execute His wrath.

May both writer and reader say with the Psalmist: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (*Psa 139:23-24*).

÷01-08 THE INDEPENDENCY OF GOD

GOD is the one and only independent Being. We speak of rich men as being independent, but in reality no creature is independent. Webster defines the adjective "independent" as follows: "Not dependent; free; not subject to control by others; not relying on others; not subordinate; self-governing; sovereign; not contingent or conditioned, "etc. Now God is the only Being to whom this definition can be absolutely applied.

The independency of God does not preclude the employment of His creatures in accomplishing His will, but it means that He does not depend upon them; He does not have to use them. The popular expression, "God is depending on us, "makes Him weaker than we are. God may use us in furthering His cause, but what He does with us He could as easily do without us. God derives no power or wisdom from His creatures. "For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?" (*Rom 11:34-35*).

Paul says: "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (*2Co 4:7*). The Gospel is proclaimed by lips of clay, but the power of conversion is not in the man who speaks: "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (*1Co 2:4-5*). Faith is not the result of man's persuasive powers; it is a fruit of the Spirit: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, " (*Gal 5:22*). The new birth is not the result of man's will, or the will of the flesh: "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (*Joh 1:13*), "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" (*Jas 1:18*). For success in the ministry God does not depend upon the preacher; the preacher must depend upon God.

**THAT WORN-OUT FARM**

The story is told of a man who bought a run-down farm in Virginia. For three years he worked hard and finally was able to produce the necessities of life. One day he was visited by his pastor. As he took him over the farm, pointing out here and there patches and fields of good crops, the pastor remarked several times that it looked as if he and the Lord were partners in farming. As the preacher took his leave, the old farmer said, "Reverend, I agrees with all you say about me and the Lord being in partnership. I agree with every word. But reverend, I jest wishes you could a seen this place when the Lord was running it by Hisself!" This irreverent joke has no place in the pulpit as teaching that God had to depend upon the farmer for good crops. That worn out land was not God's exhibit of what He was able to do. It was natural retribution for the abuse of what God had made. The thorns and briars and weeds that had grown on that run down farm were a reminder of sin. "And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field" (*Gen 3:17-18*). They did not speak of what God could produce, but of what man deserves. God made the earth fruitful of good; sin caused it to abound in thorns and thistles. A run down farm does not represent the best God can do. God used the farmer in producing good crops, but He did not depend on Him.

Moses cautioned Israel against saying: "And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day" (*Deu 8:17-18*). Also our Savior taught us to pray: "Give us this day our daily bread" (*Mat 6:11*).

There must be some way to preach the truth of human responsibility without begetting pride in the creature and without dethroning God. We must not preach one truth at the cost of another truth. Man is a responsible creature. He is responsible to do all God commands. Man is responsible to work for his bread, but after all his work he is dependent upon God for his bread. No man, who can work, has the right to expect bread apart from work; not because God cannot give bread without work, but because He will not put a premium on laziness. "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat" (*2Th 3:10*). That God can give food apart from human work is seen in the fall of the manna in the wilderness, "And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat" (*Exo 16:14-15*) and the feeding of Elijah by the ravens. "And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there" (*1Ki 17:4*). Of God we can truly sing:   
"He sits on no precarious throne,

Nor borrows leave to be."   
To further amplify the subject of God's independence, let us divide it into two branches: Self-existence and Self-sufficiency.   
**GOD IS SELF-EXISTENT**

Every being must have a ground for its existence, either in or out of itself. The ground of man's existence is outside of himself; he does not cause himself to exist. Man is dependent on something outside of himself for existence, but God is not thus dependent. To be sure the self existence of God is incomprehensible to us, too much for the finite mind to grasp. But a self existent person is not as great a mystery as a self existent thing such as Herbert Spencer supposes the universe to be. It is easier to see how matter is derived from mind than to see how mind is derived from matter.

The ground of God's existence is not in His will, but in His nature. He did not will Himself into being; it is His nature to exist. He exists naturally and therefore necessarily.

**GOD IS SELF-SUFFICIENT**

The self-existent Being must, of necessity, be self sufficient. God is sufficient for His own support, glory, and happiness. "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (*Rom 11:36*). God comprehends in Himself all excellencies, perfections, and happiness. "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him" (*Col 1:16*). It is very necessary to distinguish between what God is in His essential being, and what He is declared to be by His creation. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork" (*Psa 19:1*), but they add nothing to it. Men are to ascribe glory to God in their eating and drinking: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (*1Co 10:31*), but this is not any addition to His glory, but a mere recognition and acknowledgment of it. In Judges we have the exhortation, but this does not denote that God was in need of man's help, but that it is man's duty to serve God. "Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel" (*Psa 78:41*), but this only imports their attitude of mistrust. They acted as though God was limited in power and could not take care of them in the wilderness. Moreover, they limited Him in His authority, that is, they acted as if He did not have the right to make certain commands upon them; they showed by their murmurings that they were displeased with His providences. "And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness" (*Exo 16:2*); "How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me" (*Num 14:27*). In the same passage it is charged that they tempted God, "Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice" (*Num 14:22*) that is, they acted as if He could be tempted. In unbelief they put Him to the proof.

**GOD IS ESSENTIALLY BLESSED**

He is called the blessed or happy God, "According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust" (*1Ti 1:11*); "Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; "(*1Ti 6:15*). This happiness can neither be added to nor destroyed. Sin merits and receives His displeasure, but it does not destroy His happiness. Righteousness in His moral creatures may and does receive His approbation, but it adds nothing to His essential happiness and glory. He was happy and glorious before there were any creatures, and He will remain happy even when hell is filled with the wicked. God's happiness rests upon three facts:

1. There is no moral conflict in God.

"Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite" (*Psa 147:5*). God is at peace with Himself. He is infinite in wisdom and spends no time in grieving over mistakes. He is infinite in holiness and knows no remorse for sin. While there are three persons in the Godhead, they are an absolute unity and in perfect accord. Peace is the great desideratum of the human race, but it belongs essentially to God. He is called the God of peace: "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant" (*Heb 13:20*). And there is harmony among all His attributes. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (*Psa 85:10*).

2. God knows no limitations.

He is never at the end of Himself. His resources are never diminished. He never faces an emergency. He knows nothing of crises. He never resorts to any new deal, for His plans and purposes are all eternal. Wisdom designed all His plans, and His power executes them, therefore "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" (*Act 15:18*). There never was a time when God wondered what He would or could do. He has no experiment station where He learns what is best, for He naturally knows what is best. In all these points man is in striking contrast to God. We are straitened in ourselves, often at our wit's end and helpless. We are limited in power and wisdom. We are limited in time, but God is the King of Eternity. Joshua wanted time to get his day's work done, and God lengthened the day for him. "Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day" (*Jos 10:12-13*). Napoleon, at Waterloo, saw the shadows of the evening falling upon his defeated army and is reported to have said, "O that I had the power of Joshua to retard the march of the sun one hour!"

3. God's happiness consists of His holiness.

Sin destroys happiness. Look at Adam and Eve in Eden "And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed" (*Gen 2:8*), before and after their sin. "And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden" (*Gen 3:8*). Nothing to mar their happiness until sin came. Sin promises happiness but cannot produce it. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (*Rom 5:12*). Sin is breaking with God, and since God is the fountain and source of all true happiness, when man broke with Him, he lost peace and joy. No man in his natural state, as a sinner, has any true peace and joy. These are fruits of the Spirit: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith" (*Gal 5:22*). The people of God will not be perfectly happy until they are completely saved, and this will not be until they are conformed to the image of Christ in resurrection glory. "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness" (*Psa 17:15*). "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (*Rom 4:8*). Satan gives a counterfeit happiness. He has built a fool's paradise in this world for his dupes. But the ever happy God will make His children genuinely and eternally happy in a real and lasting paradise. His grace has satisfied us with the imputed righteousness of His Son for justification, and has also created a thirst within us for personal righteousness, and that thirst will be satisfied when we are glorified. Here is His promise: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (*Mat 5:6*). What a joy to know that we shall some day be as good as we now want to be!

÷01-09 THE IMMUTABILITY OF GOD

"For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (*Mal 3:6*). Mutability belongs to all creation; immutability belongs to God alone. The visible heavens often change their appearance; sometimes they are clear, at other times they are covered with clouds and darkness. The face of the earth appears different at the various seasons of the year. The earth has undergone one great change by the flood, and will undergo another great change by fire: "For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (*2Pe 3:5-10*). The angels in their original state were subject to change, as the apostasy of many of them has shown. The elect angels have not changed, they have been confirmed in holiness but this is not due to their nature, but to the electing grace of God in Christ, Who is the Head of all principality and power: "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality "(*1Ti 5:21*). "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:" (*Col 2:10*). And when we consider man, the very acme of creation, his changeableness is so evident that no argument is needed to prove it. What man of us has not grieved at human fickleness? Many of us know what it is to be praised today and slandered tomorrow by the same pair of lips.

"Abide with me!   
Fast falls the eventide;   
The darkness deepens Lord, with me abide! When other helpers fail, and comforts flee, Help of the helpless, O abide with me!

"Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day; Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away; Change and decay in all around I see; O Thou Who changest not, abide with me!" —H.F. Lyte, 1847

The author of the foregoing lines was not a fool optimist, thinking of this present world as a "Utopia." Nor was he a sour pessimist, viewing the future without hope. But the ground of His hope was in the unchanging God, Who is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

**GOD IS IMMUTABLE IN HIS NATURE**

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (*Jas 1:17*). God cannot change for worse, for He is the eternally Holy One. He cannot change for better, for He is already the Holy and Perfect One. Time effects no changes with the eternal One. The self-existent, and self-sufficient, and ever-existing God is not bowed down with age, neither is there any faltering to His stately steppings. "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding"(*Isa 40:28*).

**GOD IS IMMUTABLE IN HIS ATTRIBUTES**

The power of God is ever the same, for we read of His eternal power: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:" (*Rom 1:20*). There is no increase to His knowledge, "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" (*Act 15:18*). His love is unchangeable: "Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end"(*Joh 13:1*); "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (*Rom 8:35-39*); "The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." (*Jer 31:3*), and His mercy endureth forever: "O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy endureth for ever. O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for his mercy endureth for ever. To him who alone doeth great wonders: for his mercy endureth for ever. To him that by wisdom made the heavens: for his mercy endureth for ever. To him that stretched out the earth above the waters: for his mercy endureth for ever. To him that made great lights: for his mercy endureth for ever: The sun to rule by day: for his mercy endureth for ever: The moon and stars to rule by night: for his mercy endureth for ever. To him that smote Egypt in their firstborn: for his mercy endureth for ever: And brought out Israel from among them: for his mercy endureth for ever: With a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm: for his mercy endureth for ever. To him which divided the Red sea into parts: for his mercy endureth for ever: And made Israel to pass through the midst of it: for his mercy endureth for ever: But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea: for his mercy endureth for ever. To him which led his people through the wilderness: for his mercy endureth for ever. To him which smote great kings: for his mercy endureth for ever: And slew famous kings: for his mercy endureth for ever: Sihon king of the Amorites: for his mercy endureth for ever: And Og the king of Bashan: for his mercy endureth for ever: And gave their land for an heritage: for his mercy endureth for ever: Even an heritage unto Israel his servant: for his mercy endureth for ever. Who remembered us in our low estate: for his mercy endureth for ever: And hath redeemed us from our enemies: for his mercy endureth for ever. Who giveth food to all flesh: for his mercy endureth for ever. O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for his mercy endureth for ever" (*Psa 136:1-26*). His veracity (truthfulness) is immutable, for He cannot lie "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; "(*Tit 1:2*). His holiness cannot be sullied (illtempered), and His faithfulness never fails. "Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail" (*Psa 89:33*). Though there has been such a profusion of blessings bestowed upon His creatures, and so many good and perfect gifts made to them, His goodness is still the same without any abatement.

**GOD IS IMMUTABLE IN HIS DECREES**

The purposes of God are eternal. No new resolutions are ever formed, and no new decrees are ever made by Him, for His counsels are of old. There is no Happy New Year with Him, for He is ever the blessed or happy God. His purpose cannot be frustrated, "The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations" (*Psa 33:11*). "There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand" (*Pro 19:21*). "The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:" (*Isa 14:24*). "But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth" (*Job 23:13*).

**OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED AND ANSWERED**

1. It has been offered in objection to the immutability of God that He must have changed at creation. But this is to confound change with manifestation. As I now write the sun is shining into my study; directly it will be gone, but this does not mean a change in the sun, the sun is the same; there is only a change in its manifestation. Then, too, a change in activity does not imply a change in character or nature. What God's activities were before creation we are nowhere told, but since He ceased from the work of creation He has been engaged in the work of administration and salvation, and in the future He will take up the work of judgment.

This is the day of salvation: "(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)" (*2Co 6:2*), "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; "(*Rom 2:5*); "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (*Act 17:31*). This is the day of God's patience, the day in which He tolerates the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: "What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:" (*Rom 9:22*); the day in which men defy God and seem to get by with it. The saddest story the writer ever heard from human lips was told him by a young woman whose father committed double homicide and suicide, killing the husband and mother of this daughter, and then taking his own life. According to the story this man had years before renounced his Christian profession, and had become a student of "black art." Confessedly selling himself to the devil, he would often defy God in the presence of his family and boast that God was not "man enough to handle him." And to all appearances he got by with his defiance of God, but in the coming day of judgment God will deal with all such rebels and boasters. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (*Rev 21:8*). In that day His wrath, now held back, will be manifested. But the changes in Divine activity do not argue a change in the Divine character and purpose.

2. It has been argued also that the incarnation of Christ involved a change in the Divine nature. But the incarnation was an assumption of human nature by the second person of the Godhead. The divine nature was in no wise affected. The Divine nature was not changed into human nature, nor the human nature into the Divine, nor a third nature made out of the two. In the incarnation Christ assumed what He was not, and remained what He was. The incarnation was necessary for His work of making atonement. The divine nature, as such, cannot suffer, so Christ assumed human nature that He might be capable of suffering. "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man...Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (*Heb 2:9*; *Heb 2:14*). But in His suffering there was no change in the Divine nature.

3. It is objected that the Scriptures represent a change in God by ascribing repentance to Him. "And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart" (*Gen 6:6*); "And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul: and the LORD repented that he had made Saul king over Israel" (*1Sa 15:35*); "And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies" (*Psa 106:45*); "The LORD repented for this: It shall not be, saith the LORD" (*Amo 7:3*); "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not" (*Joh 3:10*). But there are other Scriptures which plainly and positively deny that God repents. "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" (*Num 23:19*); "And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent." (*1Sa 15:29*). We would not make one Scripture recant before another, but putting all the passages together we conclude that repentance with God is not what it is with men. Repentance on the part of men is on account of sin and involves a change of mind and purpose, but with God, it cannot be because He has sinned, and therefore does not involve a change of mind and will. Repentance with God means a change of manifestation and activity, and this change is always in line with His immutable character and purpose. The immutability of God's holiness requires a change in attitude and treatment when the righteous become wicked. The sun is not changeable because it melts the wax and hardens the clay, the difference is not in the sun but in the objects it shines upon.

"Nor is the immutability of God, in His promises and threatenings, affected in that the promised good and threatened evil are not always done. For it should be considered, that they are either absolute or conditional. That anything promised or threatened, absolutely and unconditionally, is not performed, must be denied. In all cases where God does not do what He said He would do, a condition is either expressed or implied. "If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them." (*Jer 18:8-10*). Thus "For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it" (*Psa 132:13-14*), and the people of Israel should dwell in their land, and eat the good of it; but then it was provided they were obedient to God, abode in His service and worship, and kept His laws and ordinances: "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:" (*Isa 1:19*). But failing on their part. He departed from them, and suffered them to be carried away captive. There was a change of His dispensations, but none of His will. He threatened the Ninevites with the destruction of their city within forty days, that is, unless they repented. They did repent, and were saved from ruin, God repenting of what He had threatened; which, though a change in His outward conduct towards them, was no change of His will; for both their repentance and their deliverance were according to His unchangeable will "And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown‡ And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not" (*Joh 3:4*; *Joh 3:10*). In the case of Hezekiah, *2Ki 20:1-6* : "In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amos came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live. Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, saying, I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying, Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake" the outward declaration ordered to be made to him, was, that he should die and not live, as he must have done quickly, according to the nature of second causes, his disease being mortal; but the secret will of God was that he should live fifteen years longer, as he did; which implies neither contradiction nor change. The outward declaration was made to humble Hezekiah? to induce him to pray, and make use of means; whereby the unchangeable will of God was accomplished" (Dr. John Gill). "God's immutability is not that of a stone, that has no internal experience, but rather of mercury, that rises and falls with ever change of temperature. (The mercury does not change; it only reflects the change in the weather, C. D. C.) When a man bicycling against the wind turns about and goes with the wind instead of going against it, the wind seems to change, though it is blowing just as it was before"(Strong).

4. It is sometimes claimed that prayer changes God. We gladly subscribe to the blessed truth that God hears and answers prayer, but we deny emphatically that prayer changes God. This would make man sovereign and supreme rather than God. This would make prayer dictation rather than supplication. Prayer is a means of grace the results of which are always in harmony with God's will. "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:" (*1Jn 5:14*). In prayer we seem to conquer God, but in reality it is He who conquers us. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (*Rom 8:26*), therefore the Holy Spirit makes intercession for us according to the will of God. We even say in praying, "Not our will, but Thy will be done."

÷01-10 THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

When Massillon arose to deliver the funeral oration of Louis XIV, his opening sentence was: "Only God is great." Luther once told Erasmus that his thoughts of God were too human. A person criticized a certain preacher by saying that he did not make God big enough. We believe this is a general fault of the ministry in this, our day: we do not make God big enough in our preaching. God is great, incomprehensibly great, in every attribute. The Psalmist says that "Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite" (*Psa 147:5*).

The knowledge of God is called His omniscience, which means that His knowledge is universal, reaching to all things, to all persons, and to all events. The contrast between God and man is very marked. Man knows very little; his understanding has been darkened by sin. He begins his earthly career in almost complete ignorance, and after a lifetime of study knows nothing as he ought to know it: "And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know" (*1Co 8:2*). While in this world the wisest of men can hardly turn over the first page in the book of knowledge. And the smarter the man is, the more he realizes his ignorance. It is the fool who thinks he knows it all. Moreover, the more valuable a truth is, the denser is the ignorance of man concerning it. The truth about God and eternal things is the most valuable of all truth, and yet the ignorance of man is more evident here than on any other subject. Moral and spiritual truths are hid to the eyes of the wise and prudent and revealed to babes: "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight" (*Luk 10:21*). God hath made foolish the wisdom of this world with regard to spiritual things: "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" (*1Co 1:20*). The world by its own wisdom cannot know God: "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (*1Co 1:21*). To be wise every man must become a fool, that is, he must renounce his own reasonings and accept God's revelation about eternal things. "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding" (*Pro 3:5*).

Paul preached the gospel to both Jew and Greek alike to the natural, prejudiced Jew it was a scandal, and to the natural, proud Greek it was foolishness: "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; "(*1Co 1:23*). Before they could see the wisdom and power of God in the gospel of Christ, they had to be called; by which call their minds were illuminated by the Holy Spirit, so that the Gospel was no longer hid to them: "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (*1Co 1:24*); "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (*2Co 4:4*; *2Co 4:6*).   
God's understanding is infinite: "Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite" (*Psa 147:5*). The original reads, "Of His understanding there is no number." The objects of God's knowledge are beyond computation. The mind of man does not have a mind that can fathom the knowledge of God. David wrote concerning the knowledge of God and, after a few lines, said, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it" (*Psa 139:6*).

"Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off" (*Psa 139:2*). God observes us when we sit down to meditate, and when we arise to pursue the activities of life and He knows the thoughts that regulate all our ways. He knows our thoughts before we know them. Before a thought is our own, it is foreknown to God. God said of Israel, "And it shall come to pass, when many evils and troubles are befallen them, that this song shall testify against them as a witness; for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed: for I know their imagination which they go about, even now, before I have brought them into the land which I sware" (*Deu 31:21*). God knew what their thoughts and actions would be before He brought them into Canaan. Christ knew what Peter's thoughts and words would be and predicted that he would deny Him. "And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice...And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept" (*Mar 14:30*; *Mar 14:72*).

"Thou compassest my path and my Iying down, and art acquainted with all my ways." (*Psa 139:3*). God knows our path and our pallet. He knows us when we awake and when we are asleep. "For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether" (*Psa 139:4*). God knows our speech. He knows when men take His Name in vain, and has declared that He will not hold such a man guiltless: "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (*Exo 20:7*). He knows when men deny His word and "poke fun" at what He has caused to be written. And He hears the lowest whisper as well as the loudest cry. Men whisper when they wish to conceal their words, but God can hear our whispers, yea, even the mutterings of our heart.

"Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me" (*Psa 139:5*). David felt himself hemmed in by God. Truly there is no escape from God! "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy 10). He is behind us, recording our sins; or in grace blotting them out. He is before us, knowing all our deeds, and providing for all our needs. God is a prison house of punishment to the wicked, and a haven of rest to His weary people. Every person has to have dealings with God, therefore "prepare to meet thy God."

"O Lord, in me there lieth not but to Thy search revealed lies;   
For when I sit, Thou markest it; no less Thou notest when I rise;   
Yea, closest closet of my thought hath Open windows to Thine eyes."

**HOW DOES GOD KNOW?**

1. God does not have to acquire knowledge. His knowledge is not the result of observation, consultation, or laborious study. It is no effort for God to know. Knowledge with man is attended with much labor; with man lifetime is school time.

2. God does not increase in knowledge. He knows no more now than He did centuries ago. His understanding is infinite from all eternity. He has always had perfect knowledge of all things. God does not need to enroll in any man's university. There are no school days with God.

3. God knows naturally. Omniscience belongs to the very nature of God; it is one of His personal perfections. Calvin defines Omniscience as "that attribute whereby God knows Himself and all other things in one eternal and most simple act." God's knowledge is all direct and without any intermediaries: "For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?" (*Rom 11:34*).

**THE OBJECTS OF GOD'S KNOWLEDGE**

1. God knows Himself. Rational creatures are endowed by God with capacity to know themselves. Even fallen men know something about themselves, of the composition of their bodies, and of the faculties of the soul. And if creatures know something of themselves, then the Creator, whose understanding is infinite, must know Himself perfectly.

Moreover, there is perfect acquaintance among the three persons of the Godhead. The Holy Spirit knows the mind of God, and can make intercession for the saints according to the will of God: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." (*Rom 8:26-27*). Jesus, speaking of God the Father, said, "Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying." (*Joh 8:55*).

2. God knows His creation. He knows everything in nature. "He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names." (*Psa 147:4*). The sparrow does not fall without His knowledge and consent.

God knows everything in the realm of human experience. He knows the thoughts of men, and the ways of men, and the words of men.

"Before men we stand as opaque bee-hives. They can see the thoughts go in and out of us, but what work they do inside of a man, they cannot tell. Before God we are as glass bee-hives, and all that our thoughts are doing within us, He perfectly sees and understands."(Henry Ward Beecher).

God knows the deeds of men. Men can hide their deeds from one another, but they cannot hide them from God. No human eye saw Cain murder Abel, but God witnessed the crime. "And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground" (*Gen 4:9-10*). Achan no doubt thought he had committed the perfect crime when he stole the wedge of gold and hid it in the earth, but God brought his sin to light. "And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me. And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done" (*Jos 7:19-20*). David covered up his sin with Bathsheba, but God uncovered it, "Thou art the man!" "And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; ...Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife" (*2Sa 12:7*; *2Sa 12:10*). There are no secret sins to God; "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (*Heb 4:13*).

God knows the sorrows and trials of His people. "And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; "(*Exo 3:7*). Let us tell our sorrows to our Heavenly Father, for "Earth hath no sorrow that heaven cannot heal."

God knows all events, past, present, and future. He knows all the past and never forgets. "When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them: he forgetteth not the cry of the humble" (*Psa 9:12*). Here is a verse for Hitler and all other war lords. It is merciful that we can forget some things of the past. Some men brood over the past until they are driven insane. This is not the proper attitude for the believer. "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (*Php 3:13-14*). There is forgiveness with God through faith in His Son, and when God forgives us He remembers our sins against us no more forever. "Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back" (*Isa 38:17*). "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee" (*Isa 44:22*).

God knows the present and the future. He knows the future better than men can know the past. God's perfect knowledge of the future is illustrated in the hundreds of fulfilled prophecies. Prophecy is the recording of events before they come to pass.

**THE CONTEMPLATION OF GOD'S KNOWLEDGE**

There is no better exercise for the soul than the contemplation of the perfection's of God. Here is the secret of all true godliness. He who would live godly must be occupied with thoughts about God.

"The wicked hate the truth of God's knowledge. They wish there might be no Witness of their sins, no Searcher of their hearts, no Judge of their deeds" (A. W. Pink).

The wicked fail to remember that God remembers all their wickedness: "And they consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness: now their own doings have beset them about; they are before my face" (*Hos 7:2*)

The contemplation of the knowledge of God should fill the soul with adoring wonder. How great must be the One who knows all things! None of us knows what a day may bring forth, but God knows all that will take place in time and in eternity.

The infinite knowledge of God ought to fill men with holy fear. Everything we think, or say, or do, is known to Him to Whom we must give account. "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (*Mat 12:36*). Meditation upon this divine perfection will be a mighty check upon the waywardness of the flesh. In times of temptation we need to say as Hagar did, "And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?" (*Gen 16:13*).

To be occupied with the infinite knowledge of God will fill the child of God with humility, adoration, and praise. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God" (*Rom 11:33*).

The truth before us is an encouragement to prayer. There is no danger that our petitions will not be heard, or that our sighs and tears will escape the notice of God. No danger of the individual saint being overlooked amidst the throng of suppliants. An infinite Mind is capable of paying attention to millions as though only one man was seeking its attention. And we do not jeopardize our prayers by using inappropriate language, because God knows the thoughts and reads the intents of the heart. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (*Rom 8:26*).

÷01-11 THE FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD

"For whom he did foreknow (Gk. proginosko) , he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (*Rom 8:29*).

"God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew (Gk. proginosko). Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel" (*Rom 11:2*).

"Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before (Gk. proginosko), beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness" (*2Pe 3:17*).

"Which knew (proginosko) me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee" (*Act 26:5*).

"Who verily was foreordained (Gk. proginosko) before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, " (*1Pe 1:20*).

"Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge (Gk. prognosis) of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:" (*Act 2:23*).

"Elect according to the foreknowledge (Gk. prognosis) of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied" (*1Pe 1:2*).

In the foregoing Scriptures we have given every passage in the New Testament where the word "foreknowledge" is used. It will be noted that it is used five times in the verb form and two times in the noun form. In the verb form it is used three times of God and two times of man. One time when used of God it is translated "foreordain" (*1Pe 1:20*).

It is our candid judgment that there is hardly any doctrine more generally and more woefully misunderstood than the doctrine now before us. It is well to remember that the meaning of Bible terms is not determined by their current and popular use, or by reference to human dictionaries, but by their usage in the Scriptures. We are apt to assume that we know the meaning of a particular word and fail to test our assumption by the use of the concordance. Ask the average person what the word "flesh" means, and he will be quick to reply that it means the body of man or beast. But the word does not always have that meaning. It often refers to the sinful and fleshly nature. "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,)dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not" (*Rom 7:18*); "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (*Rom 13:14*); "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (*Php 3:3*). Most people think the word "world" stands for the human race, when, in fact, the word is seldom so employed in the Scriptures. "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (*Joh 15:18-19*); "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine" (*Joh 17:9*); "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness" (*1Jn 5:19*). Spurgeon says that the word "world" is used in some seven or eight different senses in the Bible. Again, take the word "immortality." The popular idea is that it refers to the indestructibility of the soul. But the word is never used of the soul; it always refers to the body. "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (*1Co 15:53-54*); "But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:" (*2Ti 1:10*).

**FOREKNOWLEDGE A DIVINE ATTRIBUTE**

A fresh study of the subject before us raised the question as to whether "foreknowledge" should be classed as one of the Divine attributes. A Divine attribute is a quality belonging to the nature of God, one of His personal perfections, something which belongs inherently to His character or nature. For example, love, mercy, grace, and wisdom are qualities of the Divine nature, and are therefore attributes. Our conclusion, after further study, is that "foreknowledge" is both an attribute and an act of God. When the word is used in the popular sense, in the sense most people use it, it refers to God's knowledge of events before they actually happen. In this sense "foreknowledge" is one of the Divine attributes like love, mercy, wisdom, grace, etc.

**FOREKNOWLEDGE A DIVINE ACT**

The word foreknowledge as used in the Bible can hardly be made to refer to a quality or attribute of the Divine nature. It is used in the sense of a Divine act rather than a Divine quality. We would not say that predestination and election are Divine attributes, but rather Divine acts. Foreknowledge, when used of events, is an attribute; when used of persons, it is an immanent act of God, an act remaining and operating within the divine nature. It is the difference between God's nature and God's activities; between what He is, and what He does. Foreknowledge, when considered as an attribute, is a branch of the Divine omniscience; and when considered as an act it is a branch of the doctrine of the Divine decrees.

After writing the foregoing paragraph, we turned to the article on "Foreknowledge" in The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, written by Dr. C. W. Hodge. And he states exactly what we have been trying to say. Let the reader study his statement along with what we have already written.

"The word 'foreknowledge' has two meanings. It is a term used in theology to denote the prescience or foresight of God, that is, His knowledge of the entire course of events which are future from the human point of view; and it is also used in AV and RV to translate the Greek words proginoskein and prognosis in the NT, in which instances the word 'foreknowledge' approaches closely the idea of foreordination. In the sense of prescience foreknowledge is an aspect of God's omniscience. God's knowledge, according to the Scriptures, is perfect, that is, it is omniscience."(C. W. Hodge).

**FOREKNOWLEDGE AND FOREORDINATION**   
When foreknowledge is used as a divine act, it is practically the same as foreordination. Let Dr. Hodge Speak again:

"While, therefore, the foreknowledge of God in the sense of prescience is asserted in the New Testament, this is not the meaning of the term when used to translate the Greek words proginoskein and prognosis. These words which are translated in the AV and RV by the word 'foreknowledge' and once by the word 'foreordain':"Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (*1Pe 1:20*), mean much more than mere intellectual foresight or prescience. Both the verb and the noun approach the idea of foreordination and are closely connected with that idea in the passages where these words occur."

When "foreknowledge" is applied to events, including the free action of men, it means God's foresight or knowledge beforehand. But when it refers to persons it signifies to regard with favour, denoting not mere cognition but an affection for the person in view. The word "foreknowledge" is not in the Old Testament, but the word "know" occurs often, and frequently means to love or choose or ordain.

"They have set up kings, but not by me: they have made princes, and I knew it not: of their silver and their gold have they made them idols, that they may be cut off" (*Hos 8:4*). "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." (*Jer 1:5*). "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities" (*Amo 3:2*). "For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish" (*Psa 1:6*). In these passages it is not acquaintance but affection or appointment that is meant. And the word "know" is often used in the New Testament in the same sense. "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (*Mat 7:23*). This means He did not know them savingly. "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine" (*Joh 10:14*). "But if any man love God, the same is known of him" (*1Co 8:3*). And again, "The Lord knoweth them that are his" (*2Ti 2:19*). In these verses the knowledge of Christ its limited to the saved, and therefore, cannot signify an acquaintance with, but rather an affection for. God is acquainted with everybody; there is no limit to His knowledge about people.

Now, the "foreknowledge of persons" means to foreknow with a benign purpose. It means to know with the intention of blessing. For God to foreknow a person is to regard that person with favor and with a purpose to save. The foreknown are to be finally glorified, because God foreknew them for this purpose. God's first act of benevolence towards sinners was to foreknow them. And His foreknowledge of them is the foundation (historically speaking) of all subsequent blessings. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son" (*Rom 8:29*).

God looked upon some poor sinners with gracious favor and determined to make them like His glorious Son. "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel" (*Rom 11:2*). On this verse Dr. A. T. Robertson, in his Word Pictures, makes this comment: "Probably the Hebrew sense of choice beforehand. The nation of Israel was God's chosen people and so all the individuals in it could not be cast off."

Here Dr. Robertson makes the word "foreknow" mean to choose beforehand. Those whom God looked upon with gracious favor, back in eternity, will not be cast away either in the present or in the future. They are the "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied" (*1Pe 1:2*). In this verse election is based upon the foreknowledge of God the Father. Those whom the Father looked upon with gracious favor were elected unto the obedience of faith and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. And this obedience is the result of the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. And may the reader note and remember, that while election is unto salvation, this salvation is not without faith in the blood of Jesus Christ. The elect are to be justified, but they are to be justified by faith. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:" (*Rom 5:1*); "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (*Rom 3:28*); "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (*Rom 4:5*), et al.

To be exact and critical, the writer believes that, although divine foreknowledge is close akin to and associated with such words as election, predestination, and foreordination, it has a distinct meaning of its own. The divine order in "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified" (*Rom 8:29-30*), is foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, and glorification. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied" (*1Pe 1:2*). The order is foreknowledge, election, and sanctification. So the foreknown are elected, predestinated, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified. And since every aspect of salvation is of grace, God's foreknowledge of persons is His gracious regard and love for poor sinners. And because of this gracious regard for them, He chose them unto salvation, predestinated them unto the adoption of sons, calls them by His grace, justifies them by grace through faith in the blood of His Son, sanctifies them by His Spirit, and will glorify them when the Lord comes. May every reader "give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall" (*2Pe 1:10*).

÷01-12 THE POWER OF GOD

"Lo, these are parts of his ways: but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can understand?" (*Job 26:14*).

Job gives a few illustrations of the power of God, and then says that these are only parts of His ways; and not withstanding His manifest greatness there is but little heard of Him. In Job's day men gave little attention to God; He was not in their thought and speech. And it is much the same today, for human nature never changes of itself. Man is ever the same proud, hateful, rebellious creature, apart from the in wrought grace of God. There is not much heard about God today, even in the average pulpit. And in most social gatherings the very name of God is taboo. Man is the theme of the popular discourses of the day; it is human virtues that are praised and human achievements that are celebrated. God is in His world providentially, but the world knows Him not.

God's power takes two directions and has two objectives: salvation and judgment. God's power in salvation is gracious; His power in judgment is righteous. God's power in salvation is the expression of His love; His power in judgment is the expression of His holy wrath. And God's power in grace is equal to His power in wrath, for "There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?" (*Jas 4:12*). If God is unable to save (convert) "the vessels of mercy, "He might also be unable to judge (punish) the "vessels of wrath." Those who deny irresistible grace cannot logically or consistently ask God to save (convert) sinner's; they can only ask Him to try to convert them, or to spare sinners who convert themselves. They cannot ask Him to bring sinners to the Savior; they can only ask Him to try to draw them, or deliver from punishment those who, of themselves, come to the Savior.

The popular view of God's power in grace is given by one writer after this fashion: "The banners of God's army halt outside the little fortress of our hearts inviting us to surrender; His mighty love and grace and power wait for our decision." This statement ignores the truth of the depravity of human nature, denies the need of any inward work of grace, and overlooks the truth of the power of the Holy Spirit. It is inconsistent in talking about the "little fortress of our hearts, "and at the same time talking about "His mighty love and grace and power." To the same effect are the words of another popular preacher: "We are bidden to make a choice. No man can choose for us. God Almighty cannot choose for you and me. I can put God who made me, and who gives me the breath I breathe at arm's length and say, 'I will not';or I can turn to Him, through the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit, and receive His salvation." What a strange medley of truth and error! We are bidden to choose and we ought to choose Christ as our Lord and Savior, but because of inherent depravity nobody makes such a choice apart from the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit in conviction and conversion. It is true that the sinner resists God until his resistance is overcome by the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit; an operation that makes the sinner willing to take Christ as Savior and Lord; an operation that imparts to the sinner a new mind and a new heart. As another has said: "It is simply preposterous to speak of God Almighty, and with the same breath to say, 'I can put God at arm's length."' But still another writer takes the prize for his description of a helpless God: "Omnipotence itself is powerless (a new definition of omnipotence, C. D. C.) in the presence of obduracy. Even a child can raise its hand and shake its tiny fist in the face of God Almighty, and God Almighty can do nothing." In *Pro 21:1* we are told that "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will, " but the foregoing statement makes Him helpless in the face of a child.

The power of God is a truth that ought to give peace and joy to the heart of the believer, and strike terror to the heart of the unbeliever. Whether Savior or Judge He is the Almighty. Both salvation and judgment call for a mighty God.

**THE NATURE OF GOD'S POWER**

1. God's power is absolute. There is nothing impossible with Him that is an object of power. He is able to do more than He does do. The exercise of His power is limited only by His desire. Job says, "But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth" (*Job 23:13*). John the Baptist tells us "And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (*Mat 3:9*). He could have kept Satan out of the garden and thereby spared our parents the temptation which resulted in the terrible ruin of the race but He did not desire to do so. Paul says "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, "(*Eph 3:20*). And Christ assures us: "But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible" (*Mat 19:26*).

2. God's power is original and essential. The power of man is a derived power, but power belongs inherently to God. The power of human governments lie in their armies and natural resources of the country. It is God's nature to be almighty. His power is not derivative, but creative and original. He gives power to His creatures, but derives none from them. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation" (*Rom 13:1-2*).

3. God's power is the life and activity of all His other attributes. All other attributes would be worthless without His power. Without power His mercy would be feeble pity; His justice would be a slighted scarecrow; His promises would be but empty sound; and His love would be as helpless as was the love of Darius for Daniel. And vain would be all His eternal counsels if power did not step in to execute them.

**THE MANIFESTATIONS OF GOD'S POWER**

Whatever qualities or characteristics inhere in the Divine nature will sooner or later be manifested or exercised, for there are no idle dispositions in God. His power has been marvelously exemplified in the past as it will be in the future.

1. Divine power appears in creation. "Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:" (*Jer 32:17*). At God's word nothing began to be something. He spake and it was done. He willed and it came to pass. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (*Rev 4:11*). The word for create means to make out of nothing. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (*Heb 11:3*). "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:" (*Col 1:16*). And yet all this work of creation did not make Him tired, for He is the Almighty. "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding" (*Isa 40:28*).

2. God's power is seen in the sustentation of all creation. "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high:" (*Heb 1:3*). By Him all things consist (are held together): "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (*Col 1:17*). In Him we live and move and have our being: "For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring" (*Act 17:28*). He gives rain from heaven and fruitful seasons "Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (*Act 14:17*). We are to look to Him for our daily bread: "Give us this day our daily bread" (*Mat 6:11*). But somebody says that all things happen according to natural laws. But God created the law of nature and can use it or work beyond it, and without it. His hands are not tied with any rope of nature.

3. The power of God may be seen in human redemption.

3a) In the birth of the Redeemer: "And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (*Luk 1:35*). What mighty power it took to bring a clean thing out of an unclean! But the Holy Spirit was equal to the task of the incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity, who became God with us; yea, God manifest in the flesh.

3b) In the miracles of Christ. They were all manifestations of Divine power. The blind saw, the lame leaped, the dead lived, because He willed it so.

3c) In the death of Christ. Here is the greatest of all miracles; the most stupendous and amazing act of power ever exercised: the power to die. Our minds are staggered at this thought: the power to die! Death among men is the very emblem of helplessness. The lives of men are taken from them in the ordeal of death, but Christ had power to lay down His life. He said, "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (*Joh 10:18*). The Lord Jesus Christ was the Actor in the drama of the ages, when He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself: "For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (*Heb 9:26*). Let nobody think of Him as the helpless victim of human hate. In His death He was performing the task assigned Him by the Father, as He said, "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (*Joh 10:18*).

3d) In the resurrection of Christ. He who had power to lay down His life had power to take it again. He triumphed over death, men, and demons. "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (*Psa 16:10*); "Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (*Act 2:27*).

3e) In His ascension. Our Saviour had the power to overcome the law of gravitation and ascend bodily to the Father. "And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven" (*Luk 24:50-51*). Hallelujah! what a Savior!

4. Almighty power is manifested in the regeneration of sinners. In regeneration men have new hearts and new desires created in them; new principles imparted to them; they are turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, being made willing in the day of God's power. When we consider the natural blindness and opposition of the sinner, and the weakness of the human agent (the preacher), and the means used (the foolishness of preaching), the work of conversion appears to be the effect of the power of God. "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (*2Co 4:7*); "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power" (*Eph 1:19*).

5. The final perseverance of every believer is proof of the power of God. "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (*Heb 7:25*). We are kept by the power of God: "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (*1Pe 1:5*). No one is able to pluck us out of His hand: "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (*Joh 10:28*). "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (*1Jn 5:4*).

6. Divine power will be displayed in the resurrection. What but the voice of the Almighty will be able to awake the dead? "And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go" (*Joh 11:43-44*). What but Almighty power can change this ugly, vile, humiliated, diseased body into a glorious, beautiful, and deathless body? "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (*Php 3:20-21*). What is it that can give us hope as we stand by the side of the open grave and see it swallow up the one so dear to our heart but the thought of an Almighty God who can and will raise the dead by the word of His power? "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (*1Co 15:54-57*).

7. The power of God will be manifested in the day of judgment. In that day it will appear how pitiably weak man is, and how great is the power of God's anger. Think of the power necessary to put down the rebellion of innumerable men and demons! But God will be equal to the task, "To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth" (*Isa 2:21*). "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion" (*Psa 2:1-6*).

"Great God, what do I see and hear? The end of things created!   
'The judge of all men doth appear, On clouds of glory seated:   
The trumpet sounds; the graves restore The dead which they contained before; Prepare my soul to meet Him.

"The dead in Christ shall first arise At the last trumpet's sounding Caught up to meet Him in the skies, With joy, their Lord surrounding: No gloomy fears their souls dismay, His presence sheds eternal day On those prepared to meet Him.

"But sinners filled with guilty fears, Behold His wrath prevailing;   
For they shall rise, and find their tears And sighs are unavailing:   
The day of grace is past and gone; Trembling, they stand before the throne, All unprepared to meet Him."

÷01-13 THE GRACE OF GOD

For every Christian God is to he thanked. "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world" (*Rom 1:8*). "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you" (*Rom 6:17*). Salvation is of grace both in its planning and working. God who made the plan also works the plan. And all is of grace, the unmerited and unmeritable favor of God. God is both the Architect and Builder of the house made of living stones. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (*1Pe 2:5*). Christ said, "I will build My church." If we may change the figure, God sets the Gospel table and also gives appetite for the bread of life. The Holy Spirit fills the Father's house by compelling them to come in. This is not external compulsion, which would destroy human free agency, but an inward compulsion by which the sinner becomes willing. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth" (*Psa 110:3*). And this willingness is the result of the Spirit conviction of sin and His revelation in the sinner of Christ as Saviour and Lord. In a word men believe through grace. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (*Eph 2:8*). When Apollos came into Achaia, bearing letters of recommendation to the disciples there this was recorded: "And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace" (*Act 18:27*).

A man was once speaking of himself as a self-made man. One who heard him in his boasting, said, "It's quite noble of you to say so. Most men would have blamed their luck, or their wives, or even laid the responsibility on the shoulders of the Creator." It seems natural and easy for a man to worship his Maker, and therefore, the self-made man naturally worships himself. But every believer is a grace made man. Paul, as a Christian, delighted to say, "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (*1Co 15:10*). In an experience of grace, the Holy Spirit, by the convicting power of the word, gives the sinner a sight of self, and then relieves the resultant distress by giving him, through the Gospel, a sight of Christ. An old Puritan once cried out, "Oh, where had I been if I had not spied out Christ?"

**DEFINITIONS OF GRACE**

The Greek word "charis" occurs in the New Testament more than one hundred and fifty times and is usually translated "grace" in our English Bible. It is not easy to take a word employed so many times and with such a diversity of application and develop a doctrine that will be uniform and consistent. Moreover, all the truth about grace cannot be compressed into a single sentence. Grace is one of the Divine perfections or attributes in the nature of God which is exercised in the salvation of sinners. Great and good men have grappled with the subject of grace in an effort to define and describe it. May we prayerfully ponder some of them: Dr. Dale: "Grace is love which passes beyond all claims to love." Grace is not the sinner's due; it is not something he earns; it is not something he can lay claim to.

Alexander Whyte: "Grace and love are essentially the same, only grace is love manifesting itself and operating under certain conditions, and adapting itself to certain circumstances. As, for example, love has no limit or law such as grace has. Love may exist between equals, or it may rise to those above us, or flow down to those in any way beneath us. But grace, from its nature, has only one direction it can take. Grace always flows down. Grace is love indeed, but it is love to creatures humbling itself. A king's love to his equals, or to his own royal house, is love; but his love to his subjects is called grace. And thus it is that God's love to sinners is always called grace." This quotation deserves repeated readings.

Alexander Maclaren: "The word grace is a kind of shorthand for the whole sum of unmerited blessings which come to men through Jesus Christ. Primarily, it describes what we, for want of a better expression, have to call a 'disposition' in the Divine nature; and it means the unconditioned, undeserved, spontaneous, eternal, stooping, pardoning love of God. But there are no idle dispositions in God. They are always energizing, and so the word glides from meaning the disposition, to meaning the manifestations and activities of it, and the grace of our Lord is that love in exercise. And then, since the Divine energies are never fruitless, the word passes over further, to mean all the blessed things in the soul which are the consequences of the Promethean truth of God's loving hand, the outcome in life of the inward bestowment which has its cause, its sole cause, in God's ceaseless, unexhausted love, unmerited and free." This quotation must be studied to get the most out of it.   
Phillips: "Grace is something in God which is at the heart of all His redeeming activities, the downward stoop and reach of God, bending from the heights of His majesty, to touch and grasp our insignificance and poverty."

In analyzing all these definitions and descriptions of grace, we find that the word is applied to three things in the Scriptures. First, God's attitude or disposition of love and favor towards a sinner is grace. It is said that "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (*Gen 6:8*). God's attitude towards him was a disposition of favor and love, and inasmuch as Noah was a sinner, that disposition of love was grace. Second, when God does something for the sinner's good, that is grace. "By grace have ye been saved" (R. V.). Third, the effects or fruit of the inwrought grace in the believer is also called grace. The graces or virtues in the saints are produced by the grace of God working in them. The disposition of the Macedonians to give so liberally is called grace: "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia" (*2Co 8:1*); and the money given for the poor saints at Jerusalem is also called grace: "For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem" (*Rom 15:26*). The changed lives of the people whom Barnabas saw at Antioch is called the grace of God. "Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord" (*Act 11:23*).

"Grace is a charming sound,   
Harmonious to the ear;   
Heaven with the echo shall resound And all the earth shall hear"

**HOW TO BETTER UNDERSTAND GRACE**  
Perhaps the best way to understand the meaning of grace is to see how it is contrasted in the Bible with other things:

1. It is contrasted with law in its origin and nature. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (*Joh 1:17*). Moses was the voice of law; Christ was the spokesman for grace. It is the nature of law to make demands; it is the nature of grace to bestow blessings. The law is a ministry of condemnation; grace is the ministry of forgiveness. The law puts man at a guilty distance from God; grace brings the sinner nigh to God. The law condemns the best man; grace saves the worst man. The law says, "Do and live; " grace says, "Believe and live." The law demands righteousness; grace provides righteousness. The law curses; grace redeems from the curse. As long as a man is under the law he is lost; the only way to get out from under the law is through faith in Christ, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (*Rom 10:4*). "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (*Rom 6:14*).

2. Grace is contrasted with sin in its issue. Sin reigns unto death; grace reigns unto eternal life: "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (*Rom 5:21*). Sin gets its damning power from the law: "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law" (*1Co 15:56*); grace robs sin of its damning power by giving Christ for the satisfaction of the law: "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (*1Co 15:57*). The one and only source of real danger is from violated law; the one and only way of escape is through a satisfied law. Christ satisfied the law for His people, that the law might be satisfied with them. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (*Rom 8:2*).

3. Grace is contrasted with works in the plan of salvation. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (*Eph 2:8-9*). Salvation is by the grace of the Creator rather than by works of the creature. Salvation by grace precludes the idea of any works either great or small, moral or ceremonial. Salvation by grace excludes boasting and gives all praise to God. "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work" (*Rom 11:6*). "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith" (*Rom 3:27*).

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

4. Grace is contrasted with debt or obligation as to the moving cause of salvation. "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (*Rom 4:4-5*). The thought here is this: the man who draws wages for his work does not have any grace shown him, but a debt or obligation paid to him. There is no grace where a man gets what he deserves or earns. Grace excludes the principle of debt or obligation. Salvation by grace means that God is not obligated to save. If there is obligation to save then salvation is not by grace as the moving cause. It was grace in God, and not a debt He was under, that caused Him to provide salvation for sinners. Toplady well says: "The way to heaven lies not over a tollbridge, but over a free-bridge; even the unmerited grace of God in Christ Jesus. Grace finds us beggars but leaves us debtors."

"High as the heavens are raised Above the ground we tread, So far the riches of His grace Our highest thoughts: exceed."

**GRACE IN THE TRINITY**

All three persons in the Godhead are equally gracious towards sinners. The grace of the Father, Son, and Spirit are equal in degree and extent, but distinct in operation and administration.

1. The Father is the fountain of all grace. He proposed the fact and plan of grace. He formulated the covenant of grace, and devised the means "whereby His banished should not be expelled from Him." He made choice by grace of the subjects of grace, and then in fulness of time sent His Son into the world to be the medium of grace. "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (*Gal 4:4-5*).

2. The eternal Son is the channel of grace. The only way the grace of God can reach the sinner is through the Lord Jesus Christ. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (*Joh 1:17*). Let no rejector of God's Son think himself to be the beneficiary of God's grace! His work reconciled Grace and Justice, as it is written, "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (*Psa 85:10*). John Bunyan, blissfully lost in the contemplation of the matchless grace of the Son of God, cried out in these words: "O Thou Son of the Blessed! Grace stripped Thee of Thy glory; grace brought Thee down from heaven; grace made Thee bear such burdens of sin, such burdens of curse as are unspeakable; grace was in Thy heart; grace came bubbling from Thy bleeding side; grace was in Thy tears; grace was in Thy prayers; grace streamed from Thy thorn crowned brow! Grace came forth with the nails that pierced Thee, with the thorns that pricked Thee! Oh, here the unsearchable riches of grace! Grace to make sinners happy! Grace to make angels wonder! Grace to make devils astonished!"

3. The Holy Spirit is the administrator of grace. Without the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit in conversion no sinner would ever become a beneficiary of grace. He takes of the things of Christ and gives them to the sinner. He quickens all the souls of the Father's choice, and leads to Jesus Christ all the sheep for whom the dear Shepherd laid down His life. "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (*Joh 10:11*). He conquers the stoutest hearts, and cleanses the foulest spiritual leper. He opens sin blinded eyes and unstops sin closed ears. The blessed Holy Spirit reveals the grace of the Father and applies the grace of the Son.

"We may listen to the preacher, God's own truth be clearly shown; But we need a greater teacher From the everlasting throne;

Application is the work of God alone."

÷01-14 THE GRACE OF GOD (Continued)

In the preceding chapter we gave several good and harmonious definitions of grace by others, and added our own thoughts in an attempt to help our readers understand the meaning of grace. In this chapter we wish to lead our readers into the various aspects of grace. Wherever grace operates it has a throne and so we shall write on

**THE REIGN OF GRACE**

"That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (*Rom 5:21*). Paul personifies SIN and GRACE and speaks of them as two royal figures, two queens on their thrones. He then shows what each gives to her subjects. Sin has death in her painted hand, while grace has eternal life in her white and charming hand.

1. Grace is more powerful than sin. Here is the sinner's only hope, although until quickened by the Spirit of grace, he does not know it. No man can rescue himself from the tyranny of sin. Sin is too much for any man. Men are taken captive by the devil: "And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will" (*2Ti 2:26*). Men may reform, but they cannot regenerate themselves. They may give up their crimes and their vices, but they cannot give up their sins. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (*Jer 13:23*).

2. Grace reigns lawfully. The reign of grace is a righteous reign. Grace is not against the law. Grace does not seek to destroy justice that would be to divide God against Himself. Grace honors the law by giving the Lord Jesus Christ, who satisfied the law by becoming our Surety, and bearing the guilt of our sins in His own body on the tree. God dealt with His Son in justice that He might deal with sinners in grace.

3. Grace reigns by Jesus Christ our Lord. Christ is not the source but the medium of grace. Grace has its source in the heart of God, and operates according to the sovereign will of God. The word reign suggests a king or a queen on a throne. And a throne speaks of power, and resources. The power of grace is the power of God. This makes it fitting to speak of irresistible grace. Surely we can speak of an irresistible God! The resources of grace are to be found in God. The blood of God's Son is the capital stock of grace. When His blood loses its value then grace has become bankrupt and the believer will be lost. But this shall never be!

"Thou dying Lamb, thy precious blood Shall never lose its power,   
Till all the ransomed church of God Be saved to sin no more."

4. Grace reigns in every phase and step of salvation. "Twas grace that brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home." Salvation is a comprehensive term, including within its scope all the aspects and stages of deliverance from sin. Every aspect and every stage of salvation is of grace, and this precludes human merit at any and every point. Salvation from beginning to end is of grace.   
4a) Grace reigns in foreknowledge. The first thing God ever did for His people was to foreknow them. In His foreknowledge He set His affection upon them. He foreknew them with the intention of blessing them. He loved them with an everlasting love, and this love was a gracious love, and in no wise was it merited.

4b) Grace reigns in election. Election is of grace: "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (*Rom 11:5*). Election was not on the ground of foreseen merit in sinners, but of gracious love in God. In *2Th 2:10* Paul speaks of "them that perish because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved; "and then exclaims with reference to the saints: "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (*2Th 2:13*). We have two things in this text: first, why men are saved; and second, how they are saved. They are said to be saved because God chose them unto salvation. And they are saved by being sanctified by the Spirit and by believing the truth, the truth of the Gospel. This is what made them differ from "them that perish: "because they received not the love of the truth." Had it not been for the choice of God and the sanctification of the Spirit, the Thessalonians would also have rejected the truth. Therefore, God is to be thanked for their salvation. Now, why did God choose them? Was the ground of God's choice foreseen faith, or some other good in them: or was it grace in Himself? *Rom 11:5-6* gives the answer: "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."

"Tis not that I did choose Thee, For, Lord, that could not be; This heart would still refuse Thee, But Thou hast chosen me."

4c) Grace reigns in predestination. To predestinate is to determine destiny beforehand. Predestination is never said to be unto damnation, but unto salvation. God causes nobody to be damned; sin is the thing that damns men. But God is the cause of salvation. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (*Rom 8:29*). Why were people predestinated to such glory? Was it because of their foreseen faith or goodness? In *Eph 1:5-6* we have the answer: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved."

4d) Grace reigns in our calling. "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified" (*Rom 8:30*). The word "called" is never in the New Testament applied to those who are the recipients of a mere external invitation of the gospel. It always signifies an inward and effectual call, a call that brings to Christ and salvation. And this call is of grace according to *2Ti 1:9* : "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, "and in *Gal 1:15* : "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace."

"Twas sovereign mercy called me, And taught my opening mind; The world had else enthralled me, To heavenly glories blind."   
4e) Grace reigns in justification. Justification may be defined as the judicial act of God in which He declares the believer to be no longer under condemnation, but to have a standing of righteousness before Him. Justification and condemnation are antonyms. The justified person is free from the guilt of sin. Is this blessing a matter of merit or of grace? *Rom 3:24* : "Being justified freely (without any cause in me, C. D. C.) by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified" (*Rom 8:30*).

4f) Grace reigns in conversion. In conversion a change is wrought in the sinner. There is a change from darkness to light, from death to life, and from the power of Satan unto God. There is a change of opinion so that he believes what he once rejected; a change of affection so that he loves what he once hated. What explains such a change? Does the sinner convert himself? Does darkness create light? Does death beget life? Does filth produce purity? Then, and not till then, can the sinner convert himself. If God converts the sinner, does He do it as a matter of obligation or grace? Paul gives grace credit for his conversion. After speaking of himself as a persecutor of the saints, he says, "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (*1Co 15:10*).

"O to grace how great a debtor Daily I'm constrained to be"

4g) Grace reigns in glorification. "Whom he justified them he also glorified" (*Rom 8:30*). Glorification is the complete deliverance from every aspect and vestige of sin. It is the crowning work of redemption by which we will become personally glorious and in glorious surroundings. It takes in the body as well as the soul. Our salvation is not complete as long as these bodies of ours remain in the grave or, if living, continue mortal. Let time write wrinkles upon the brow; let sorrow's scalding tears wet the cheeks; let sickness and pain twist and torture this body into a shapeless mass; and let death turn it into a veritable dust-heap; still grace shall win for us and fashion it into a glorious body like unto that of our dear Lord. "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (*1Pe 1:13*). "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (*1Jn 3:2*).

**PROVISIONS OF GRACE**

Grace, like the Good Samaritan, not only meets the present emergency, but provides for future and eternal blessings. Let the trembling sinner be told that there are ample provisions of grace in the Lord Jesus Christ. Every one who feels the plague of his own heart may come to Jesus Christ for healing. He gives all a gracious invitation and assures a hearty welcome. Hear His words: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (*Joh 6:37*). Though vile as Manasseh, filthy as Magdalene, guilty as the cross thief, He will not turn away the poor in spirit. He turns no real beggar from his gate, though full of sores and vermin. His heart is lined with sweet compassion, and His hands are filled with the richest gifts. He has supplies for all needs: legs for a lame beggar, eyes for a blind one, cordials for a faint one, garments for a naked one, a fountain for a filthy one; Yes, and a rope for a sham beggar who asks for mercy and talks of merit. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (*1Ti 1:15*).

"How firm A foundation, ye saints of the Lord, Is laid for your faith in His excellent word; What more can He say than to you He hath said- To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?"

**GOD'S GRACE IS MANIFOLD**

There is sustaining grace for seasons of sorrow, triumphing grace for times of temptation, persevering grace for days of discouragement. There is teaching grace, living grace, and dying grace. But time and paper would fail me to tell of the sin of frustrating grace by teaching salvation by works, and of abusing grace, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, by pleading grace as a license to sin. Grace has delivered every believer from the guilt of sin, from the love of sin, and will yet deliver from the very presence of sin. Until the dear Lord returns to complete His work of grace, every believer will experience with Paul the inward workings of sin, and confess with him, that "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I" (*Rom 7:15*).

"Grace all the work shall crown, Through everlasting days;   
It lays in heaven the topmost stone, And well deserves the praise."

÷01-15 THE GRACE OF GOD (Concluded)

Practically all professing Christians profess to believe that salvation is of grace. You can hardly find a member of any denomination who will out and out deny that salvation is by grace. The Bible so often and so positively declares salvation to be by grace that few men will boldly deny it. But the trouble is that many think and speak of grace in such a way as to frustrate it. The grace they think of and talk about is not grace at all. It is so mixed with human work and merit that it is no more grace. "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work" (*Rom 11:6*). There is quite as much in Roman Catholic literature about grace as there is in Baptist literature, but there is wide difference as to what the two groups mean by grace. In preceding chapters we have sought to tell what grace is, and where grace reigns, and what grace provides; and in this chapter we shall endeavour to show:

**HOW GRACE SAVES**  
Before coming directly to the question, we shall lay down some principles from which to reason:

1. Salvation by grace destroys all room for boasting. No man is sound on grace who boasts of anything he has ever done or can do as the ground of his salvation. If your idea of salvation allows you to boast you may be sure it is wrong. No man can even boast of his repentance and faith, for they are the gifts of His grace. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (*Act 5:31*); "Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?" (*Act 11:17*); "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?" (*1Co 3:5*); "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power" (*Eph 1:19*); "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (*1Jn 5:4*). All of our graces are fruit of the Spirit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (*Gal 5:22-23*).

2. Salvation by grace means that God is to have all the praise for our salvation. The Father is to have all praise for providing the Savior; the Son is to have all the praise for performing the work of salvation; and the Holy Spirit is to have all the praise for promoting salvation in us by convicting us of sin and bringing us to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. Salvation by grace does not give license to sin. There are two dangers concerning grace: one is the danger of frustrating it, the other is the danger of abusing it. We frustrate grace when we teach that righteousness comes by keeping the law: "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (*Gal 2:21*). We abuse grace when we use it to justify a life of sin. One is the danger of Arminianism, the other is the danger of Antinomianism. The one sets grace aside, the other uses grace wrongly. He who justifies his sinning on the ground that he is not under law but under grace, does not have the grace of God in him. "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid" (*Rom 6:14-15*). The child of grace hates sin and strives against it, and when he falls into it, confesses it and forsakes it. Sin is not the habit and practice of his life. There is no sin that he hugs to his bosom and takes to glory with him. There is no sin that is a sweet morsel under his tongue. The man of grace neither boasts of keeping out of sin, nor justifies himself when he falls into sin.

In approaching our question:   
**HOW DOES GRACE SAVE?**   
We make a negative approach:

1. Grace does not save by enabling us to perfectly keep the law of God. It is our judgment that this is the way many people think grace saves. They confess that no man can of himself keep the law, but that grace enables him to keep it, and in this way grace saves. To be logical and consistent, and to have any place for grace in their plan, this must be the position of all who believe in salvation by keeping the law. Now, it is admitted, that if God should eradicate every vestige of our sinful nature, and cause us to live without sin, that would be grace indeed that would be the unmerited favor of God. It would be grace for it would be doing for us that which we do not deserve. But this is not the way grace saves, and we must voice our objections to it:

1a) That would not satisfy justice for sins already committed.

God is just as well as gracious, and grace never acts contrary to justice. If the sinner should quit sinning justice would condemn him for sins he had committed in the past.

1b) That would rob Christ of any part in our salvation. If grace saves by making us sinless in character and conduct, then salvation would be by grace, but apart from Jesus Christ, for "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (*Gal 2:21*).

1c) If grace saves by enabling us to keep the law, then the Holy Spirit would be the Savior rather than Christ. The Holy Spirit is the Administrator of inward grace; it is by His strength we worship and serve God. The Holy Spirit, through the word, shows us the Savior, and makes Him precious to us, but the Holy Spirit is not the Savior. In announcing the birth of the Savior, the angel said, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (*Mat 1:21*).

1d) In the new birth the sinful nature is not eradicated, but a sinless nature is implanted. In the saved man there is a warfare between two conflicting natures; "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (*Gal 5:17*). And Paul said, "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me." (*Rom 7:21*). And this is the testimony of every true child of God, for "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (*1Jn 1:8*).

2. Grace does not save by overlooking our sins. If God took no account of our sins, that would be grace indeed but in doing that He would abdicate His throne in favor of His enemies. Our sins deserve punishment, but if God overlooked them and never punished them, that certainly would be grace that would be the unmerited favor of God. But this is not the way grace saves, for several reasons:   
2a) Because it would be at the expense of justice. There can be no sacrifice of justice in salvation. Sin must and will be punished. If God overlooked sin He would be gracious, but at the same time unjust.

2b) There would have been no need of Christ's coming to earth and dying on the cross. There is forgiveness with God, but it is on the ground of satisfied justice. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities" (*Isa 53:11*). Grace saves by satisfying justice. "In whom have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (*Eph 1:7*).

2c) It would cause man to admire one attribute of God and despise another attribute. If grace saves apart from the satisfaction of Divine justice, the sinner would naturally admire the grace of God, and at the same time despise His justice. To deal with sinners in such a way, God would be putting a premium on sin. We would not think much of a human judge who would overlook the crimes of men and let them all go free. Such a judge would be despised and deposed. Such procedure would be an invitation for everybody to commit all the crimes he pleased, because they would be overlooked, and no harm would come to the criminal. How would you, dear reader, like to live in a country like that?

3. Grace does not save by giving us ordinances to observe. The ordinances of ceremonies of Christ are for those already saved. They are declarative and symbolical; not procurative and sacramental. They are for the saints; not for the world, The most terrible heresies have come from false conception of the ordinances. Millions of men have lost their lives because they would not subscribe to these false conceptions. I quote from an article on "The Sacraments, "as found in the Roman Catholic Mass Book published by the Paulist Press, New York City:

"The sacraments are the ordinary means whereby God's grace is brought to one's soul. We depend on the grace of God not only to reach heaven after death, but to lead a life well pleasing to God on this earth. What the winds are to the sailing vessel, grace is to our soul."

"The Sacraments are seven different ways by which special graces are applied to our soul. They are all instituted by Christ. By His death on the cross our Blessed Lord created a great reservoir of grace. From this reservoir there are seven channels, each carrying grace of a special quality, and when we need a particular kind of Divine help we go to the Sacrament which provides it. Baptism regenerates the soul and makes us children of God. It has the effect of washing away the sin we were born in, as well as any other sin we have committed. Confirmation strengthens the soul so as to enable it to fight valiantly. Holy Eucharist, being Christ Himself, the Living Bread, is the Food and Nourishment of the soul. Penance brings us God's pardon. Extreme Unction gives us grace to die well. Holy Orders raises men to the dignity of God's service and gives them strength to persevere. Matrimony gives grace to husband and wife to love each other and bring up their children in the grace and knowledge of God. Throughout our life on this earth the Sacraments provide spiritual nourishment without which it is impossible for us to merit the happiness and the glory which God has prepared for us in heaven."

What a strange medley of truth and error! What a frustration of the true grace of God! What an awful misrepresentation of grace! What a travesty of the truth! The article speaks of grace enabling one "to merit the happiness and the glory" of heaven. To merit a thing is to deserve it, or to get it by way of debt, and whatever is reckoned as a debt is not of grace. "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt" (*Rom 4:4*). The Bible says that salvation is of faith that it might be by grace: "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all" (*Rom 4:16*). "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (*Eph 2:8*), but this article does not have the word faith in it.

We will now attempt a positive answer to our question: How Does Grace Save?" What is the "modus operandi" of grace? What does grace do in salvation?

1. Grace saves from the guilt and penalty of sins by placing them on Christ. Grace saves by punishing Christ instead of the sinner. He put away the guilt of our sins by the sacrifice of Himself. "For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (*Heb 9:26*). He bare our sins in His own body on the tree. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (*1Pe 2:24*). He died as the Just One for the unjust ones that He might bring them to God, that is, into His favor. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (*1Pe 3:18*).

Justice says that my sins must be punished, and they have been punished in my Surety, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Surety of that better covenant "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (*Heb 8:6*). "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission" (*Heb 9:22*). It was in matchless grace that the Lord Jesus liquidated our sin debt, and He shall have all the praise.

"Our sins, our quilt, in love Divine   
Confessed and bourne by Thee;   
The gall, the course, the wrath were Thine, To set Thy members free."

"Grace, "cried Spurgeon, "is everything for nothing;   
Christ free, pardon free, heaven free."

2. Grace saves us from the love of sin and from a darkened understanding. This may be called internal salvation, and is the work of the Holy Spirit in us. In this work the Holy Spirit opens the soul's blinded eyes to see the truth of the Gospel. Paul said that his gospel was hid to the lost because their minds were blinded. "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (*2Co 4:4*). The death of Christ does not benefit the man who lives and dies without faith in it. And every man of us would so live were it not for the light giving and life giving work of the Spirit. Spiritual truths are foolishness to the natural man, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (*1Co 2:14*), even though he be a university professor, and none but the Holy Spirit can make a man spiritual.

By nature and training Saul of Tarsus was a proud, persecuting, self righteous Pharisee, but grace wrought in him the graces of repentance and faith. It was grace that made him sick of self and fond of Christ. He had been depending for salvation upon his Hebrew ancestry and the rite of circumcision, and upon his orthodoxy as a Pharisee, his zeal as a persecuting patriot, and his law righteousness; but when grace revealed Christ to Him in all His worth, he counted all these things as "dung, " rejoicing in the righteousness which is by faith in Jesus Christ. "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe. Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: " (*Php 3:1-9*).

Conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit, and His work in us is as much of grace as was the work of Christ for us on the cross. Christ wrought for us on the cross to liquidate our sin debt; the Holy Spirit wrought in us conviction for sin, and faith in the blood of Christ as the one and only remedy for sin. "Grace, "said Spurgeon again, "is the morning and evening star of our experience. Grace puts us in the way, helps us by the way, and takes us all the way."   
Anna Steele, (1760), has memorialized the gracious work of the Holy Spirit in the following lines on the next page:

"How helpless guilty nature lies, Unconscious of its load;   
The heart, unchanged, can never rise To happiness and God.

"Can ought beneath a power divine   
The stubborn will subdue?   
'Tis thine, eternal Spirit, thine To form the heart anew.

"Tis thine the passions to recall, And upward bid them rise, And make the scales of error fall > From reason's darkened eyes.

"To chase the shades of death away, And, bid the sinner live;   
A beam of heaven, a vital ray, 'Tis thine alone to give.

"O change the wretched hearts of men, And give them life divine;   
Then shall their passions and their powers, Almighty Lord, be thine."

÷01-16 THE MERCY OF GOD

"Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth" (*Rom 9:18*).

It is not the author's aim to attempt an exhaustive treatment of this text, but rather to write in a more general way on the Divine attribute of mercy. The text does make it plain, however, that the mercy of God is not universal; it does declare that God is sovereign in bestowing mercy; it does affirm that He consults His own pleasure as to the objects of mercy. This does not mean, however, that mercy will be denied any sinner who comes to Jesus Christ. This cannot be, for Christ hath said, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (*Joh 6:37*). Every sinner who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ will find mercy with God, and "whosoever will" may come.

Let it be observed that the text puts the exercise of mercy in opposition to hardening as divine acts. It will, therefore, aid us in understanding one action if we can understand the opposite action. Whatever God does in hardening a sinner, He does the opposite in exercising mercy. Observe also that the context speaks of "vessels of wrath, "and "vessels of mercy." "What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory" (*Rom 9:22-23*).

**THE HARDENING OF SINNERS**

In hardening sinners, God does not put any sinful principle in them; this would make Him the author of sin. The sinful principle is already there; we are children of wrath by nature: "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (*Eph 2:3*). But in hardening sinners, God leaves them to act out their own sinful desires, only controlling them so that their sinful desires shall not produce those particular actions that might overthrow the purpose of God. To illustrate: In the death of Christ, His murderers were acting out their own sinful wishes, but they were controlled by God, so that their deeds were the fulfillment of His prophetic word and the accomplishment of His eternal purpose. This explains why they parted His garments and cast lots for His vesture and gave Him vinegar mingled with gall to drink. It also explains why His bones were not broken, and why His side was pierced. God was in control of those who put His Son to death so that they did the particular things that the prophets had predicted. "But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken" (*Joh 19:33-36*); "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture" (*Psa 22:18*); "They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink" (*Psa 69:21*); "And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots" (*Mat 27:35*).

In *Act 14:16* we read that God "who in times past suffered (permitted) all nations to walk in their own ways, which means that He left them to their own depraved wills. Now, the showing of mercy is the very opposite of leaving sinners to act out their own sinful natures. It is the putting of something good in them, a holy disposition and a good principle, by which they repent of their sins and believe on Christ. Showing mercy to those who come to Christ and plead His blood is objective mercy; "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (*Php 2:13*), is subjective mercy. "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth" (*Rom 9:18*).

In *Eph 2:3-5* : "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)"And in *Tit 3:5* : "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." It was in mercy that Christ died for us, and it was also in mercy that the Spirit enlightened our sin darkened understanding.

HUMILITY vs. PRIDE

The contemplation of God's mercy fills the redeemed soul with humility and praise, two virtues of great value in the sight of God. And whatever God values ought to be sought after by us. If God hates pride, I ought to seek to be humble. If God is pleased with a spirit of thankfulness, I ought to seek after a thankful spirit. It is natural to seek those things which are prized by men; it is supernatural to seek that which God approves. The world admires the proud and self sufficient spirit, and therefore, it is men like Napoleon and other men of war who are the world heroes. But it is the meek and quiet spirit that is of great price in the sight of God: "But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (*1Pe 3:4*). And there is nothing that will make us more humble and thankful than the contemplation of divine mercy. Mercy reminds us of our miserable condition as children of wrath. Mercy explains our salvation: Without mercy we would be consumed by the wrath of God's justice.

**MERCY DEFINED**

Webster defines mercy as the compassionate treatment of an enemy. Robert Haldane says that mercy is that adorable perfection in God by which He pities and relieves the miserable. Men are in a miserable condition because they are in rebellion against God and deserve punishment. Mercy implies that the sinner has nothing to say in his own defense. We understand the meaning of mercy when the defendant throws himself on the mercy of the court. That means that he is guilty and has nothing of merit to plead before the law. And this is exactly the condition of every man before the bar of divine justice. Mercy is our only hope. We may plead for justice before our fellowman, but to ask God for justice (to ask God to give us what we deserve) is the same as asking for a room in the regions of the damned.

**MERCY DESCRIBED**

The mercy of God is variously described. His mercy is said to be great: "And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day" (*1Ki 3:6*), and plenteous "For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee" (*Psa 86:5*). and tender: "Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us" (*Luk 1:78*), and abundant: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (*1Pe 1:3*), and rich: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us" (*Eph 2:4*), and everlasting: "But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children" (*Psa 103:17*). It is so comforting for us poor sinners to know that God is so rich and abundant in the very thing we so greatly need as sinners. No wonder the Psalmist said, "But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble" (*Psa 59:16*).

**MERCY DISTINGUISHED**

1. Mercy and grace have much in common, and yet there are shades of distinction between them. Grace views man without merit; mercy views him as miserable. Grace can be exercised where there is no sin; mercy can be shown only to sinners. This distinction is seen in the divine dealings with the unfallen angel. God has never exercised any mercy towards them, for they have never sinned, and are not, therefore, in a miserable condition. And yet they have been the objects of grace. It was in grace that God chose them out of the whole angelic race: "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality" (*1Ti 5:21*). It was in grace that He made Christ their Head: "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power" (*Col 2:10*); "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him" (*1Pe 3:22*). And it was in grace that He gave them such honorable commissions: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (*Heb 1:14*). God has dealt with the holy angels in grace, for they have not merited His favors. If holy angels cannot merit His favors, what hope is there that sinful men can do so?

2. Mercy and love are distinguished in the Scriptures. Love may be for an equal; mercy can only exist for an inferior. Mercy goes no further than giving relief from misery; love predestinated is unto the adoption of sons. Mercy may cause a king to pardon a traitor; it would require love in the king to make the traitor his adopted son.

3. There is also a distinction to be made between mercy and patience. There is a general mercy of God which is more nearly like patience. This mercy is temporal and is over all His works: "The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works" (*Psa 145:9*). This general mercy belongs to His essential nature by which He supplies the needs of His entire creation, "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (*Mat 5:45*). But His covenant mercy is exercised sovereignly through Christ and is everlasting.

**MERCY DEMONSTRATED**

1. The mercy of God is demonstrated in the gift of His Son to die for sinners. "Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us" (*Luk 1:78*). It was not justice but mercy that sent Christ to redeem us from the curse of the law. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (*Gal 3:13*). Christ did not bring the mercy of God to us; it was the mercy of God that brought Christ to us. Christ is the channel of mercy, but not the cause of mercy. The death of Christ makes it possible for God to righteously bestow covenant mercies on His people, justice having been fully satisfied by Christ the Surety. Mercy comes from God, but it comes only through Jesus Christ.

2. The mercy of God is also seen in the regeneration of sinners. Making us alive when we were dead in sins was as truly an act of mercy as was the giving of Christ to die for us. "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by grace ye are saved" (*Eph 2:1-5*). This does not picture the sinner as doing something to cause God to regenerate him, but it pictures mercy triumphing over human depravity. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (*Tit 3:5*). "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (*1Pe 1:3*). As a sinner we did no more to merit the new birth than we did to merit the death of Christ.   
We have a concrete example of the mercy of God in the regeneration of Saul of Tarsus. He attributes his conversion to the mercy of God. "According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief"(*1Ti 1:11-13*). This does not mean that ignorance and unbelief were the ground of mercy, but the evidence that his salvation was an act of mercy. Ignorance and unbelief cannot merit salvation, therefore, Paul's conversion was an act of mercy. Paul was the chief of sinners, but he obtained mercy. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (*1Ti 1:15*). There is no sinner too bad for mercy to save.

Here is the obligation of saints: we owe our salvation to the mercy of God in Christ. No man can appreciate the mercy of God who feels that he deserves salvation. Deserving mercy is a contradiction of terms. In humility and praise let us attribute our salvation to the mercy of God!

The mercy of God is the proper appeal of the pastor to his people. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (*Rom 12:1*). The order in Romans is sin, misery, mercy, and grateful service. The first chapters are devoted to the sinful and miserable condition of sinners; the next section is devoted to the great doctrines of grace, which Paul calls "the mercies of God, "and the closing chapters give exhortation to practical Christian living because of the mercy of God. The pastor is not a man with a big stick; he is God's man with a big Book, and a mighty appeal.   
*Psa 136:1-26* is a threefold exhortation to give thanks for the mercy of God. From God's side the punishment of the wicked is an act of justice. >From the sinner's side it is an act of equity; he gets what he deserves. But from the standpoint of the redeemed, the punishment of the wicked is an act of mercy. The redeemed Israelites were told to give thanks, "To him that smote Egypt in their firstborn: for his mercy endureth for ever" (*Psa 136:10*).

**THE MERCY-SEAT**

The mercy seat of the Old Testament, and the mercy seat of the New Testament are quite distinct, and must not be confused. The one is the type; the other is the antitype. Under the ceremonial law the mercy-seat was the lid or covering to the ark of the covenant: "And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly" (*Heb 9:5*). This mercy seat was the meeting place between God and Israel. Without this provision of mercy, His presence among them would have been their doom, they would have been consumed by His holy wrath. He could show them mercy and let them live because His justice had found satisfaction in the death of their sin offering, the lamb upon whose head their sins had been confessed and in this way transferred from the sinner to the lamb. The lamb thus made responsible for their sins had to die. Its blood on the mercy seat was the basis of peace between a sinful people and a holy God. Now this blood of the bulls and goats could not take away sins except in a typical and ceremonial sense, and then only for a year. "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (*Heb 10:4*). Its value was in pointing to a better sacrifice, "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (*Joh 1:29*).   
The New Testament mercy seat is not a place but a person, the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no place to which a sinner can flee to escape the justice of God. Men may flee to other countries to escape the judgment of human courts, but there are no fugitives from divine justice. God has jurisdiction in all countries, for He is judge of all the earth. There are no sacred spots of mercy on this earth. Salvation is not a matter of geography. If one could find the very tomb in which Jesus lay, and hide in it in the hope of mercy, the hounds of justice would find him and punish him. A sinner might kneel at the very foot of the cross of wood on which Jesus died and yet not find mercy with God.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the true Mercy Seat and sinners must flee to Him for mercy. The very word that describes the Old Testament mercy seat: "And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly" (*Heb 9:5*) is applied to Christ in *Rom 3:25* : "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (mercy seat) through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" The word means that which appeases the wrath of God. Christ made appeasement by bearing the wrath of God on the cross. The wrath due us fell on Him. The mercy seat, therefore, is Christ in His atoning death. He could not remain in glory and be our mercy seat. He could not be a mercy seat in His infancy or as a man going about doing good. His vicarious death was an absolute necessity. He was speaking of Himself when He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (*Joh 12:24*).

There is no physical approach to Christ, the true Mercy Seat. It is a mental and heart approach. If the mercy seat were a material object like a seat of wood, or stone, or gold, then the approach would be physical. We come to Christ, the true Mercy Seat, when we look to Him and trust Him for acceptance with God.

We fear many people are hoping in the general mercy of God apart from Christ. They reason that a merciful God will not send anybody to hell. This was once the best hope the author had, but he came to see that it was a vain hope. A minister once visited a sick man and sought to interest him in Christ. But the man was indifferent, telling the minister that he had no fear, that he was depending on a merciful God and did not believe such a God would send him to hell. The preacher left with a sad heart. But a few days later the same sick man sent for the minister who, when he came, found the sick man greatly disturbed. Said the sick man: "I have been depending on the mercy of God, but it has just occurred to me that God is just as well as merciful, and if He should deal with me in Justice instead of showing mercy, I would certainly be damned for my sins. Oh tell me how I can be sure He will deal with me in mercy!" Then the minister presented Christ crucified as the one and only mercy-seat. All who fail to trust the Lord Jesus

÷01-17 THE FAlTHFULNESS OF GOD

"Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; "(*Deu 7:9*).

Faithfulness is one of the sweetest and most comforting of the divine attributes. Faithfulness belongs to God; fickleness characterizes sinful men. The faithfulness of God is a practical truth for the believer. It is a pillow for his weary head, a stimulant for his fainting heart, and a brace for his feeble knees. In all the exigencies of life God can be safely relied upon. He will never disappoint the trusting soul. He will never suffer His faithfulness to fail. The faithfulness of God coupled with His mighty power is our everlasting hope. Men disappoint us because they are lacking either in faithfulness or power. But we can look above the wreck and ruin caused by the unfaithfulness of men and behold One who is great in faithfulness. "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)"(*Heb 10:23*).

Unfaithfulness is one of the outstanding characteristics of these evil days. Who has not suffered at the hands of unfaithful men? And where is the man who has not been guilty, in some measure at least, of this very sin? In the economic world nearly all failures are the results of unfaithful debtors or employees. In the social realm marital infidelity has become a terrible scourge; the sacred bonds of wedlock are broken with the ease of discarding an old garment. In the political world pre- election promises are broken as flippantly as they are made. In international affairs treaties between nations are treated as mere scraps of paper. There is fear and alarm everywhere as men learn that they cannot trust one another. And in the religious realm unfaithfulness is as evident as anywhere else. Multitudes who profess to believe the Bible are ignoring great portions of it, pronouncing other parts out of date, and withal seeking to explain much of it away.

**SICK OF HUMANITY**

A reporter for one of the big American dailies, who, witnessed the battle of the Alcazar in war torn, bullet riddled and blood soaked Spain, lying upon his hospital bed in France, spoke to his manager across the ocean, and said, "I'm sick of humanity!" The human race began its downward career in the garden of plenty by unfaithfulness to its Creator, and by the same sin is destroying itself. Here is a question for heart searching: Have we been the cause of grief to others by our unfaithfulness? Has wife, husband, child, parent, neighbor, pastor, brother, or anyone else been brought to grief by our unfaithfulness? Remember the tears caused by wrong doing are kept in God's bottle to be brought as evidence in the day of judgment.

**THE FAITHFUL GOD**

There is One who is great in faithfulness. Faithfulness is a perfection in God by which He is true to His word and to all His covenant engagements. He never breaks a contract with Himself or with His creatures. What He has purposed that will He do, and what He has promised that will He perform. Lying is one of the most prevalent sins of all times. It was the belief of a lie that caused the ruin of the human race. Adam and Eve turned away from God's word and followed the father of lies. And all their children have followed in their steps. The children of Israel, in the long ago, would actually beg their prophets to preach lies to them. "Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits:" (*Isa 30:10*). In our day Iying has been camouflaged with the big word propaganda.

It is said that in Siam they have a law, that when man lies his mouth is sewed up for three days. Bro. R. G. Lee says that if such law were in effect in this country many business men would not be able to answer the telephone and some of the women would be going around with pretty embroidered mouths.

The proneness to tell and believe lies is one of the most startling facts of human history. Of only one man has it ever been truthfully said that there was no deceit in His mouth. And this was the God man, Christ Jesus, the Truth incarnate. "And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth" (*Isa 53:9*).

**GOD IS FAITHFUL TO HIMSELF**

Of God we read "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself" (*2Ti 2:13*). This means that He will faithfully perform all that He has purposed. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (*Rom 8:28*). Back in eternity there was a people foreknown and predestinated whom God purposed to call and justify and glorify. This was a secret purpose known only to God and not a promise made to men, for as yet man had no actual being. Now, if God should fail to call and justify and glorify the foreknown and predestinated, He would not be faithful or true to Himself. It would be as if a man purposed to do something and then failed through lack of constancy or ability. God is faithful to His own purpose, and has ample power to execute all His plans. "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (*Dan 4:35*).

**GOD IS FAITHFUL TO HIS SON**

There were certain promises made to Jesus Christ, the spiritual David, on condition that He perform His duties as Mediator of the better covenant. And God has sworn that He will not lie unto David, that is, Christ, the spiritual David. He was to see His seed and the travail of His soul and be satisfied. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities" (*Isa 53:11*). Concerning the covenant of grace entered into by the three persons of the Godhead, we can do no better than to quote B. H. Carroll: "Before there was any world, a covenant of grace and mercy was entered into between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the evidences of which covenant are abundant in the New Testament and the parts to be performed by each Person of the Godhead are clearly expressed, viz: The Father's grace and love in agreeing to send the Son, His covenant obligations to give the Son a seed, His foreknowledge of this seed, His predestination concerning this seed, His justification and adoption of them in time. The Son's covenant was the obligation to assume human nature in His incarnation, voluntarily renouncing the glory He had with the Father before the world was, to become obedient to the death of the cross. The consideration held out to Him, as a hope set before Him, inducing Him to endure the shame of the cross, and the reward bestowed upon Him because of that obedience, was His resurrection, His glorification, His exaltation to the royal priestly throne and His investment with the right of judgment. And the Spirit's covenant- obligations were to apply this work of redemption in calling, convincing, regenerating, sanctifying, and raising from the dead the seed promised to the Son, the whole of it showing that the plan of salvation was not an afterthought; that the roots of it in election and predestination are both in eternity before the world was, and the fruits of it are in eternity after the judgment. The believer is asked to consider this chain, test each link, shake it and hear it rattle, connected from eternity to eternity. Everyone that God chose in Christ is drawn by the Spirit to Christ. Everyone predestinated is called by the Spirit in time, justified in time, and will be glorified when the Lord comes."

**THE DEATH OF CHRIST NO EXPERIMENT**

The death of Christ was not an experiment, uncertain in its results. The work of the Holy Spirit is not a mere trial to see what can be accomplished. We cannot subscribe to the doctrine of an unfaithful Father, a defeated Holy Spirit, and a disappointed Son. We believe in a faithful God, an invincible Spirit, and a victorious Christ. Spurgeon says: "That every soul for whom Christ shed His blood as a substitute He will claim as His own and have as His right, I firmly believe. I love to hold and I delight to proclaim this precious truth. Not all the powers of earth or hell, not the obstinacy of the human will, nor the deep depravity of the human mind, can ever prevent Christ seeing the travail of His soul and being satisfied."

But better still are the words from the lips of incarnate Truth; Hear ye Him: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day" (*Joh 6:37-40*). And again He said, "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him" (*Joh 17:2*).

**THE GROUND OF OUR SECURITY**

The ground of our security is God's faithfulness to His Son. "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (I Cor.r 1:9). According to covenant engagements Jesus Christ was to have fellows or companions. Now, by the calling of God (the effectual call of the Spirit by the word) we were first admitted into fellowship with Christ, and the ultimate objective is our presence with Him in glory. And this is guaranteed by the faithfulness of God, "Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (*1Co 1:8*), for the called are to be justified and glorified. The called and justified are safe as long as God keeps His word to His Son. Freedom from chastisement depends upon the believer's good behavior, but certainty of glory rests upon God's faithfulness to His Son.

"If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me" (*Psa 89:30-36*).   
What a firm foundation for our faith! Our safety does not rest upon our faithfulness to God, but upon God's faithfulness to His Son. HALLELUJAH!

**GOD IS FAITHFUL TO HIS SAINTS**

God has made promises to poor, helpless, mourning believers in Christ and He will faithfully perform every promise He has made. "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (*Rom 11:29*). This means that God is true to His covenant promises, and will not fail to glorify all the called. "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us" (*2Co 1:20*).

**PRESERVATION**

God is faithful in preserving His people. "For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off" (*Psa 37:28*). "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; *Joh 10:27-29*). Whatever is preserved is helpless to keep itself. The saints are weak, but they are kept by the power of God: "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (*1Pe 1:5*). God's promise to the believer is everlasting life. And this is not everlasting existence, but everlasting favor or justification so that he will never come under condemnation again. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (*Joh 5:24*).   
"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." (*1Th 5:23-24*). Here the believer's complete sanctification and deliverance from sin is made to depend upon the faithfulness of God. The called are not only justified; they will also be glorified, for God is faithful. God is not going to call sinners with the effectual, life giving call and then leave them stranded on the highway to glory. There is no "coffin corner" for the souls of the saints. Neither will their evacuation be a "Dunkirk." Those who have fled to Jesus Christ as a refuge from the storm of Divine wrath have God's word and His oath, "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us" (*Heb 6:18*).

"There's never a heartache and never a groan, Never a tear drop, and never a moan; Never a danger, but there on His throne, Moment by moment He thinks of His own."

**DISCIPLINE**

God is faithful in disciplining His people. The psalmist cries: "I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me" (*Psa 119:75*). Here David submits to God's dealings with him and acknowledges that they are right and good. In David's creed there was no place for luck or chance. He believed that God ordered all that befell him. His afflictions were most painful, but He saw God's hand in them and believed they were for his good. But he goes further and says that God was faithful in sending them. God was acting in the best interests of David and knew what he needed. God was as faithful to His own in chastening as He is in preserving then. God is no unfaithful and indulgent Eli. He will not allow His children to sin without correction. "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes" (*Pro 13:24*).

We ought to praise God for His faithfulness in using the rod to bring us back to Himself and into the path of obedience. The saints have the wayward nature of a sheep and are prone to go astray. God is a faithful Shepherd who knows how to use the rod to bring us back. Hear David again: "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word" (*Psa 119:67*). And the doctrine is the same whether in the Old Testament or the New Testament. In *Heb 12:11* we read, "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." This glorious truth is put in verse by one of the Puritans, Thomas Washburn (1606- 1687).

"The saint like a silly sheep doth often stray,   
Not knowing of his way—   
Blind deserts and the wilderness of sin   
He daily travels in.   
There's nothing will seduce him sooner than Afflictions to his pen.   
He wanders in the sunshine, but in rain   
And stormy weather hastens home again.

"Thou, the great Shepherd of my soul,   
O keep me, Thy unworthy sheep from gadding:   
If fair means will not do it,   
Let foul, then, bring me to it.   
Rather than I should perish in my error, Lord, bring me back with terror;   
Better I be chastened with Thy rod and shepherd's staff, Than stray from Thee, my God.   
"Though for the present stripes do grieve me sore At the last they profit more   
And make me to observe Thy word,   
Which I neglected heretofore;   
Let me come home by weeping cross   
Than still be at a loss.   
For health I'd rather take a bitter pill   
Than eating sweet meats to be always ill."

As the saint grows in knowledge of the truth about God and man, he will become more and more sick of self and fond of Him. When the truth about God and self reaches the inward parts, then will we do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before God. "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (*Mic 6:8*).

Oh, how much do we, His blood-bought people, need to be more faithful to Him who never suffers His faithfulness to fail toward us! This is what He requires of us as stewards of His goods. "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (*1Co 4:2*). It will not matter much when we come to die whether we have had much of this world's goods and honor or not, but it will matter much whether or not we have been faithful to our Redeemer. May the faithfulness of God become a spring in us from which shall flow waters of faithful service to Him!

"O love that will not let me go, I rest my weary soul on Thee; I give Thee back the life I owe, That in Thine ocean depths its flow May richer, fuller be."

÷01-18 THE WISDOM OF GOD

"O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches" (*Psa 104:24*). "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (*Jas 1:5*).

The foundation of true religion is to have proper thoughts of God. Of the wicked it is said that God is not in all his thoughts: "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts" (*Psa 10:4*). Malachi tells of a remnant that think upon His name: "Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name" (*Mal 3:16*). The man who thinks right about God will not be far wrong in his thinking about other things. A thousand evils grow out of wrong conceptions about God.

Wisdom belongs to God as an intelligent Spirit. It is a more comprehensive attribute than knowledge; it not only supposes knowledge, but directs and uses it in the best manner. There are men who know much, so much that they may be regarded as walking encyclopedias, but they have little wisdom; they do not know how to use their knowledge. This is what is meant when a man is referred to as a man of book learning, but without common sense. He knows a lot, but he is without wisdom. But God is both all knowing and all wise. "For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding" (*Pro 2:6*).

1. WISDOM IS A PERSONAL PERFECTION IN GOD.

An unwise being cannot be the true God. Even Pythagoras, a heathen philosopher, said: "No man is wise, but God only." And Job declares, "With him is wisdom and strength, he hath counsel and understanding" (*Job 12:13*). "Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding" (*Dan 2:20-21*). He is three times called the only wise God: "To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen" (*Rom 16:27*); "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen" (*1Ti 1:17*); "To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen" (*Jud 1:25*). The angels when compared with Him are charged with folly: "Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly" (*Job 4:18*). His wisdom is unsearchable: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out" (*Rom 11:33*).

2. WISDOM APPEARS IN THE DECREES OF GOD.

God's purposes and decrees are called His counsels. "O LORD, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth" (*Isa 25:1*). Resolutions and determinations of men are the wisest which are formed after mature deliberation and consultation. "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety" (*Pro 11:14*). But God's counsels are without consultation, and His determinations are without deliberation. Being naturally and infinitely wise, He requires no time to deliberate; nor does He need some one with whom to counsel. "For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor" (*Rom 11:34*); "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ" (*1Co 2:16*).

God's counsels are immutable. There is no change necessary, for they were formed in wisdom. "There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand" (*Pro 19:21*). "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (*Isa 46:10*). God can declare the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things to pass, and nothing can overthrow His counsel or thwart His will. "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us" (*Heb 6:17-18*).

3. THE WISDOM OF GOD IS MANIFESTED IN CREATION.

"In wisdom hast thou made them all" (*Psa 104:24*). We look into the starry heavens and there see a marvelous display of wisdom. Man, after centuries of gazing into the heavens with the naked eye, and after decades of poking at the stars with the telescope, is still a mere tyro in the subjects of astronomy and astrology. We look into the airy region, from whence comes rain and snow, which God wisely distributes on the earth. We look upon the earth and everywhere we see design that testifies to the wisdom of God: "cattle upon a thousand hills; "pastures covered with flocks; valleys clothed with grass for beasts and herbs for men. We look into the bowels of the earth, and we see coal here, oil there, gold yonder, all wisely distributed for the use of men. Truly all His works praise Him!

4. THE WISDOM OF GOD IS SEEN IN PROVIDENCE.

There are returning seasons: seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, night and day, all of which evidences supernatural wisdom. This world is not run by capricious chance, in or by cold fate, nor by natural law; it is run by its Maker. "It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in" (*Isa 40:22*) and wisely orders all things for His own glory. "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (*Rom 11:36*). Providence may be defined as God's superintendence of His creation. It is God at work bringing to pass what He eternally purposed should come to pass. Purpose is the determination of His will; prophecy is the declaration of His will; and providence is the execution of His will.

Providence is mysterious because it is the expression of infinite wisdom. A finite being cannot understand the ways of an infinite God. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out" (*Rom 11:33*).

5. THE WISDOM OF GOD IS DISPLAYED IN THE WORK OF HUMAN REDEMPTION.

Paul says that in our redemption by Christ, "Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence" (*Eph 1:8*). It was in wisdom that "Grace first contrived the way to save rebellious man." Salvation was not planned by human wisdom. And when planned by God and plainly revealed by Him in His word, it is foolishness to the natural man. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (*1Co 2:14*). The wisdom of God is seen:

5a) In the discovery of the person to be our Redeemer. Here stands a sinner, just any sinner! He has violated the law of God; he has rebelled against the Divine government; he has tried to dethrone the Judge of all the earth. What is to be done with this sinner? Justice says, Cut him down; he deserves to die. Truth says, He or I must perish, for I have declared that "the wages of sin is death" (*Rom 6:23*). Holiness says, I hate the workers of iniquity. Mercy, in soft and plaintive tones, cries, Spare him! What? is there to be a conflict among the Divine attributes? Yes! unless Wisdom had come, leading One like unto the Son of Man saying, "Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom" (*Job 33:24*). When man was wallowing in his own blood, it was Wisdom that said, "Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people" (*Psa 89:19*). Who but God, infinite in wisdom, could have discovered such a fit Redeemer as we have in Christ Jesus? Our Redeemer was not a sinful man, nor a holy angel, but the Son of God, who is every way qualified to save us. And the discovery of such a person must be ascribed solely to the wisdom of God. Had all men been called together, and told that God was willing that they should be redeemed, if they could find a proper person for this gigantic task; and had all the holy angels been called into consultation upon the matter; they would never have been able to propose one fit for such a tremendous task. Ponder these thoughtful words of Jonathan Edwards:   
"Who would have thought of a trinity of persons in the Godhead; and that one should sustain the rights of the Godhead; and another should be the Mediator; and another should make the application of redemption? Who would have thought of a way for answering the law, the law that threatened eternal death, without the sinner suffering eternal death? And who would have thought of any such thing as a Divine Person suffering the wrath of God? And if they had who would have contrived a way how he should suffer, since the Divine nature cannot suffer?"

5b) The wisdom of God appears in the persons fixed upon to be redeemed. Redemption is not universal. There its no redemption for the Devil and his angels. If redemption were universal, then salvation would likewise be universal. *Rev 5:9* is explicit and conclusive as to the truth of particular redemption, even among fallen men: "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." Christ redeemed particular persons. We cannot understand why one was selected rather than another, for all were by nature children of wrath, and of the same common clay. "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (*Eph 2:3*); "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" (Rom.m 9:21). Distinguishing grace is a profound mystery, but it is a Scriptural doctrine. Our Savior memorialized the wisdom of God in distinguishing grace, when He said, "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight." (*Mat 11:25-26*). 5c) The wisdom of God may be seen in the time of man's redemption. The Redeemer came in the fullnes of time, the time agreed upon between the Father and the Son. Four thousand years of human history fully revealed the need of a redeemer. It is an inexorable truth "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission" (*Heb 9:22*). And all the blood on Jewish altars had been to no avail, "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (*Heb 10:4*). It was not because of the value of animal sacrifices, but "through the forbearance of God, "that sins of Old Testament saints were remitted: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (*Rom 3:25*).

The blood of beasts only typified and adumbrated the blood of God's Lamb, the only blood that could be the righteous basis for redemption.

When the Gentile world was covered with darknesss, superstition, ignorance, and wickedness of all kinds when immorality, formality, hypocrisy, and contempt for the word of God among the Jews prevailed then Christ said "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (*Jas 1:5*).

÷01-19 THE LOVE OF GOD

Henry Drummond says that love is the greatest thing in the world. And from our point of view love is the greatest thing in God. Without love His justice would cut us off; His holiness would put us out of His sight; and His power would destroy us. Love is the one hope of sinners, and our great concern should be to discover God's love to us.

With regard to His moral nature, God is said to be two things: light and love. "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (*1Jn 1:5*). In Scripture, "darkness" stands for sin and ignorance, and "light" is a symbol of holiness and understanding. "God is love": "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (*1Jn 4:8*). Light and love are balancing perfections in the Divine nature. Because God is light, His love is not amiable weakness or good natured indulgence. Because God is light, His love is a holy love and not a mere sickly sentiment. God's love never conflicts with His holiness. Because God is light, He never overlooks sin even in His own people, "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (*Heb 12:6*).

The love of God may be defined as that eternal principal of His nature by which He is moved to bestow eternal and spiritual blessings. Love is the moving cause of all His acts of mercy and grace. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us" (*Eph 2:4*). The love of God is the guarantee that all things work together for the ultimate good of His people; it is the basis of all His redeeming activities.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD'S LOVE**

1. It is eternal. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee" (*Jer 31:3*). Here we have the secret drawing of the sinner to the Savior explained. He draws because He loves. "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple" (*Psa 65:4*). The love that bought us also sought us and brought us to the place of safety, even to the Mercy Seat; Jesus Christ. There was never a time when God did not love His people, and there will never be a time when He will not love them. He loved us as much before we were saved as He does since we have been saved, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (*Rom 5:8*).

2. God's love is immutable. God changeth not and there can be no change in His love. "Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end" (Jno. 13:1). God's love for His people had no beginning and blessed be His Name, it shall have no ending. It is like Himself, from everlasting to everlasting. Paul's grand argument for the security of the believer is based upon the fact that nothing can separate us from the love of God nothing in the grave of the past, nothing in the perils of the present, and nothing in the womb of the future. The love of God is subject to no vicissitude.

"His love no end nor measure knows, No change can turn its course, Eternally the same it flows

>From one eternal source."

3. God's love is sovereign. This is self evident. God Himself is a Sovereign, consulting His own imperial pleasure, and working all things after the counsel of His own will. And it necessarily follows that His love is sovereign. He alone selects the objects of His love. If He loves Jacob and hates Esau, who is to criticise Him? If He loves fallen sinners of the human race and hates fallen angels, who is to gainsay His right to do so. "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth" (*Rom 9:18*); "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" (*Rom 9:20*).

There is absolutely nothing in sinners to cause God to love them; nobody can claim the right to God's love; His love is sovereign and free. What was there in this poor sinner to attract the heart of God? Absolutely nothing! On the other hand there was everything to merit His hatred; everything for which He might have loathed me.

"What was there in me that could merit esteem,   
Or give the Creator delight?   
'Twas even so, Father, I ever must sing,   
Because it seemed good in Thy sight."

4. The love of God is effectual. This is obvious, for it is the love of the Almighty. It means something; yea, it means everything, to be loved by God. We are often loved by those who are helpless to help us. They are powerless to do for us what they would like to do. Their love is helpless because they lack power to make their love effectual. Darius loved Daniel but was powerless to save him. But we are loved by the Almighty, with whom nothing is too hard. The objects of God's love are eternally safe. He who can make sure that God loves him may also be assured of a home in heaven. Here is a most important question: How may I know that God loves me? How can I be assured that all things work together for my good? By making sure that I love God. My love for God is inward evidence of His love for me. "We love him, because he first loved us" (*1Jn 4:19*). His love for us created our love for Him. "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is (Gk. has been) born of God, and knoweth God" (*1Jn 4:7*).

**MANIFESTATIONS OF GOD'S LOVE**

God is love and He manifests what He is. There are no idle attributes in God. There is no such thing as secret love. Love will win out, whether it is the love of God or the love of man. Love is an acting, working principle of life.

1. God's love to sinners was manifested in the gift of His Son. Love gives. Love gives the best. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (*Joh 3:16*). Christ so loved the church that He gave Himself for it: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (*Eph 5:25*). "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (*Joh 10:11*). As a typical Jew, Nicodemus thought God loved nobody but Jews, but our Lord told him that "God so loved the world (Gentile as well as Jew), that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever (Gentile or Jew) believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (*Joh 3:16*). Until they were taught better, Christ's own apostles thought all the sheep were among the Jews, but the Savior corrected them by saying, "As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And 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" (*Joh 10:15-16*). The sheep among the Jews were in a fold, a ceremonial enclosure which distinguished them from the Gentiles. The sheep among the Gentiles had not been subjected to ceremonial laws. In saving the sheep among the Jews Christ led them out of the fold (Judaism), and made them one with the Gentile sheep that heard His voice, so that there is only one flock and one Shepherd. All of God's people are one in Christ, for "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (*Gal 3:28*). This does not teach that there are no distinct spheres of service, but it means that all the saved have a common salvation.

2. God's love is manifested in the new birth. By nature we are children of wrath; by a supernatural birth we become the children of God. "That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed" (*Rom 9:8*). John says, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not" (*1Jn 3:1*). We are not only named children, but we are made children of God by the new birth. We are children by a Divine call; that effectual call which comes in connection with the new birth.

3. God's love is manifested in discipline. Discipline is an expression and proof of love. "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (*Heb 12:6*).   
Here is ample evidence that none of God's children are perfect. They all need the Father's chastening rod. The word for "chasten" means to train as a child, and the word for "scourge" means to whip or flog. Children need training and whipping, and the love of God will give us what we need. Chastisement is from the loving hand of a wise Father; condemnation is from the truthful lips of a just Judge. "But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (*1Co 11:32*). Chastisement is not pleasant, but it is profitable; it increaseth the fruit of righteousness and maketh us partakers of His holiness: "For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." (*Heb 12:10-11*).

**VARIOUS ASPECTS OF GOD'S LOVE**

Some theologians speak of several kinds of Divine love, but we prefer to think of one Divine principle with varying emotions, according to the object upon which the love is bestowed. We like what Dr. Kerfoot has to say on this point:

"If the object loved is lovely, then the emotion of loving is that of complacency. If the object loved is one needing kindness or beneficence, the emotion is that of benevolence. If the object is in distress, the emotion is that of compassion or pity, etc. Just as the active principle of fire is the same, whatever may be the character of the material upon which it lays hold, so the principle of love is always the same."

1.When God's love terminates upon Himself or upon innocent creatures, it is the love of complacency. This is the aspect of His love for His Son with Whom He is always well pleased, "And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me lone; for I do always those things that please him" (*Joh 8:29*). "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (*Mat 3:17*), and in whom He ever takes delight. His love for the holy angels is likewise a love of complacency and delight.

2. When the love of God is towards sinners as objects of misery, then it is the love of compassion or pity. "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)" (*Eph 2:3-5*). In mercy He quickens dead sinners into life, and this marvelous mercy is on account of His great love. Great love for sinners fruits in "plenteous mercy, "and "abounding grace."

A dirty, drunken, ragged harlot, howling and filling the air with obscene language, was being dragged down the street by policemen. A refined and elegantly dressed woman stepped out into the street and kissed the vile wretch. Startled into sobriety for the moment, the vile creature asked in surprise: "What made you do that?" "Because I love you, "was the prompt reply. Are you surprised at this example of love? Then remember that the moral distance between God and the sinner, any and every sinner, is far greater than that between these two women; and yet He stoops to give us the kiss of reconciliation.

"I've found a Friend; O such a Friend! He loved me ere I knew Him;   
He drew me with the cords of love, And thus He bound me to Him. And round my heart still closely twine Those ties which naught can sever; For I am His and He is mine,   
Forever and forever."

÷01-20 THE WILL OF GOD

In all intelligent beings there is a will, men and angels and God have wills. In men the will is the faculty of the mind by which choice is made of a future action determined upon. In willing a man has the purpose of action in view. And his will is the cause of the action, else he would be a mere machine or automation. If I take a gun and shoot another man, the will worked before the hand did; the purpose was before the act. But if I am held by another man, and a gun is placed in my hand, and another hand moves my finger to pull the trigger, that is not my act because I did not will or choose to do it. In that act I was not a responsible being, but a mere machine or tool of another.

In God the will is the attribute by which He determines and executes future events. "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day" (*Joh 6:39*). His will includes "whatsoever comes to pass, "hence everything that comes to pass is providential and not accidental so far as God is concerned. "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (*Eph 1:11*). The sparrow does not fall without the will of God.   
Webster defines Providence as an event divinely ordained. Now it is well known that events happen in sequence, that is, they are related in order of time and one event is the cause of another event. So it seems evident, that if some events are ordained then all events are ordained. It is usual for men to distinguish events as providential and accidental. Even Christians are prone to classify their experiences either as providential or accidental. They associate providence with good things, and accident with evil things; therefore, they speak of having an accident. The Rickenbacker party regarded their rescue at sea as providential, but the writer regards the whole of their experiences as providential. The fall of their plane into the sea was as much providential as was their rescue. We need to see God's will in our afflictions as well as in our blessings. Job was speaking of both "And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (*Job 1:21*). And when his wife pleaded with him to curse God and die, "But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips" (*Job 2:10*). And when he had lost all earthly comforts; seeing God's hand in it all he said, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him" (*Job 13:15*).

The will of God includes the wicked actions of sinful men, but does not take away their blame worthiness. We may not see how this can be, but the Scriptures declare it and we should believe it. The Scriptures were not written to confirm our reasoning but rather to correct it. On the day of Pentecost Peter said, concerning Jesus, "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel (will) and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (*Act 2:23*). And on a later occasion he said that "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel (will) determined before to be done" (*Act 4:27-28*). We may not be able to see how God can will or determine a sin without becoming the author of sin, but the fact remains that the greatest of all sins, the slaying of the Son of God, was divinely ordained.

**DISTINCTIONS IN THE WILL OF GOD**

Theologians have made many distinctions in the will of God; some of them are false, others are vain and useless, but there is one distinction that is necessary, and which will prove helpful in rightly dividing the word of truth. This is that which distinguishes between God's decretive will and His preceptive will, or His will of purpose and His will of command. God's will of purpose is always done; His will of command is often left undone. God's will of purpose cannot be thwarted, for this would mean His dethronement; His will of command is often violated, for men are in rebellion against Him. If the human will is greater in power than the Divine will then, of course, this human rebellion will succeed and God will be dethroned. If human rebellion can overthrow the government of God, we have no supreme Being at all. To further amplify the distinction between God's decretive and preceptive wills we will consider each separately.

**GOD'S WILL OF PURPOSE**

1. It is eternal. God is not forming any new purposes, for His counsels are of old: "O LORD, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth" (*Isa 25:1*). His purpose in Christ is said to be eternal: "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:" (*Eph 3:11*). What is to be will be, therefore, "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" (*Act 15:18*).

2. It is effectual. God's will of purpose is always accomplished. God is not man that He should engage in wishful thinking. There are no mere wishes with Him which He cannot perform. "The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand: That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders. This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?" (*Isa 14:24-27*). For example, back in eternity God willed or determined the death of His Son, and centuries after time began we see Him controlling and directing the free actions of sinful men to bring this event to pass. Moreover, He predestinated and predicted the detail when, where, and how His Son should die. And so in the four gospels we are told that this and that was done to Him that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

3. It is immutable. God never changes His will of purpose. There are only two possible reasons for anybody changing his will; it must be either because he sees that what he purposed was not wise, or that he sees it cannot be accomplished. But neither of these reasons can apply to God. He was All wise in planning and is All powerful in performing.

Prayer does not change God's will, but it does change things. Changes wrought by prayer are all within the circle of God's purposing will. "And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (*Rom 8:27*). Answered prayer is made in the energy of the Holy Spirit. A man may pray without the Spirit and get what he asks for, but it would not be in answer to prayer. Two generals on opposing sides may pray for victory in the coming battle, but both could not be praying in the Holy Spirit, and it is possible that neither of them are. In all true prayer this thought is implied or expressed: Not my will but Thine be done.

"Thy way, not mine, O Lord,   
However dark it be;   
O lead me by Thine own right hand, Choose out the path for me.

"I dare not choose my lot;   
I would not if I might;   
But choose Thou for me, O my God, So shall I walk aright.

"Take thou my cup, and it   
With joy or sorrow fill;   
As ever best to Thee may seem, Choose Thou my good and ill.

"Not mine, not mine the choice,   
In things of great or small;   
Be Thou my guide, my guard, my strength, My wisdom, and my all."

4. God's will of purpose was the cause of our conversion. I am a converted or saved man. I have been born again. What is the explanation of this tremendous change? Back of every performance or action there must be a will. Did I will myself into a new man? Did some other man effectually will my second birth? "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (*Joh 1:12-13*). Saving faith does not originate with our parents, nor with ourselves, nor with some other man; it is the gift and work of God. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" (*Jas 1:18*).

**GOD'S WILL OF COMMAND**

1. God's preceptive will refers to what He has prescribed as our rule of thought and conduct. The will of God is expressed in all Divine law. In Eden it was God's will that determined what kind of law would be given to Adam and Eve. At Sinai God did not consult Moses or the children of Israel about what laws they would be under. In a democracy the people make their own laws through chosen representatives who serve in legislative halls. This gives rise to pressure groups and class legislation because men are selfish; they do not love their neighbors as themselves. But in our relation to God we are not dealing with a democracy but with a Theocracy. In God's will of command we have the sovereignty of authority; in God's will of purpose we have the sovereignty of power.

2. It is God's will of command and not His will of purpose that men are responsible to perform. It was His will of purpose that Christ should be crucified, but it was not His will of command. In putting Jesus Christ to death men were fulfilling the purpose of God, but they were not obeying any command of God. There can be no sin in doing what God has commanded. Peter tells us that they put Christ to death with wicked hands; "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (*Act 2:23*); therefore, they were not obeying a command of God. What God purposes is the determining factor; what He commands is our duty. It seems easy for men to see this distinction in everything except religion. A man who can see only one side of the truth will say, "If it is God's will or purpose to save me, He will save me; therefore, I will sit down and do nothing about it." Now this same man would not dare reason this way about other things. Concerning this year's crop, God's will of purpose determines the harvest, but His command is to plow and plant, cultivate and reap. God's will of purpose determines whether we live or die: "For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (*Jas 4:15*), but it is His will of command that we regard the laws of health. Nobody quits eating because he believes God's will of purpose determines whether he lives or dies. God's will of purpose will determine the outcome of this war, but it would be foolish to sit down and say: "If it is God's will we will win, if not we will lose; therefore, let us strike and stop mining coal and producing steel." God's will of purpose determines the result of our witnessing for Christ. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good" (*Ecc 11:6*). "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (*Isa 55:10-11*). It is God's will of command that we sow beside all waters, to preach the Gospel to every creature, and His will of purpose will take care of the results and make it accomplish what He pleases.

It is God's will of purpose that determines whether I am saved or not, but it is folly to sit down and say that if I am one of the elect I will be saved; therefore, I need not take any interest in the matter. God's will of command is to repent and believe, and this is every man's responsibility. We are commanded "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:" (*2Pe 1:10*). We are commanded to "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (*Luk 13:24*). The man who takes no interest in his soul and has no concern for his salvation; if he persists in this attitude will surely land in the lake of fire; for he that believeth not shall be damned. Much of God's will of purpose belongs to His secret will, "The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law" (*Deu 29:29*).

÷01-21 THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

"Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places" (*Psa 135:6*). "But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased" (*Psa 115:3*).

We have been writing without conscious fear or favor of men. We endeavor to write each chapter as if the Lord were present personally, looking over our shoulders and passing judgment upon what He sees. We believe the honest reader will agree that what we have been, and are writing is honoring to God our Creator and Lawgiver. We are trying to magnify Him in the eyes of the reader and show what a great God we have to fear and love and worship and serve.

The writer is an old-fashioned Baptist without any frills or modern notions. He has lived in spirit with, and has learned much from such men as Paul, Augustine, Bunyan, Gill, Fuller, Carey, Judson, Spurgeon, Graves, Jeter, Boyce, Strong, Carroll, and Mullins. He is in fellowship with those who wrote our various Confessions of Faith, such as the London, the Philadelphia, and New Hampshire.

We began our Christian career, as most men do, in Arminian togs, but with an inward experience that made us susceptible to Calvinistic teachings. It should be well known that there are two and only two schemes or systems of divine grace, unalterably opposed to each other, and mutually exclusive. The two systems represent the only two possible positions or views on the subject of grace. Whether or not one is willing to wear either name, does not alter the fact that he is either Calvinistic or Arminian in his views. Calvinism stands for the truth that salvation is of the Lord; Arminianism makes salvation the result of human merit, The one system postulates irresistible grace; the other postulates inherent human goodness.

A good way to locate or label oneself is to turn to Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, where the two systems are fairly set forth. Here are the five points of Calvinism: unconditional election or predestination, limited atonement or particular redemption, total depravity necessitating prevenient grace, effectual calling or irresistible grace, and preservation or perseverance of the saints. And the writer does not hesitate to subscribe to all five points. Nor does holding the five points cause him to deny human responsibility or to be lax in missionary endeavor.

If we may judge by Confessions of Faith or public utterances of their leaders, the champions of Arminianism are the Catholics, the Methodists, the disciples of Mr. Campbell, the Free Will Baptists, and many other smaller groups. Judging by the same standards, the champions of Calvinism are the Missionary Baptists, the Anti-Mission Baptists, the Episcopalians, the Presbyterian and Reformed churches, and a few smaller bodies. It is doubtless true that many preachers in the Calvinistic bodies have departed from their historic faith, and no longer teach what they took an oath to teach. In many cases it is a Calvinistic creed and an Arminian clergy.

**SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD A BIG DOCTRINE**

Sometime ago we read where somebody called for "big doctrines." Well, the doctrine of Divine Sovereignty is a big doctrine. It is almost too big for us to attempt to define. But the two texts (as do many others) at the head of this chapter declare and affirm it. Mr. Spurgeon delighted to proclaim this big doctrine, and he could do it about as well as anybody we know. The reader will do well to read and ponder the following paragraph from the pen of this prince among preachers:

"There is no attribute more comforting to His children than that of God's sovereignty. Under the most adverse circumstances, in the most severe trials, they believe that Sovereignty has ordained afflictions, that Sovereignty over rules them, and that Sovereignty will sanctify them all. On the other hand there is no doctrine more hated by worldlings, no truth of which they have made such a football, as the great, stupendous, but yet most certain doctrine of the Sovereignty of God. Men will allow God to be everywhere except on His throne. They will allow Him to be in His almonry to dispense alms and bestow blessings. They will allow Him to be in His workshop to fashion worlds and make stars. They will allow Him to sustain the earth and bear up the pillars thereof, or light the lamps of heaven, or rule the waves of the ever moving ocean; but when God ascends His throne, His creatures gnash their teeth, and when we proclaim an enthroned God, and His right to do as He wills with His own, to dispose of His creatures as He thinks well, without consulting them in the matter, then it is that we are hissed and execrated, and then it is that men turn a deaf ear to us, for God on the throne is not the God they love. But it is God upon the throne we love to preach. It is the God upon the throne Whom we trust."

Oh for a Spurgeon today to reach the masses with this God honoring and man humbling truth! God is nothing more than a big man with a lot of people, and with many He is not even a very big man. Of old God complained to an apostate Israel, "These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes" (*Psa 50:21*). This is the trouble today: people's conception of God is too human. And we believe this accounts for much of the alarming irreverence in the average congregation. "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him. O LORD God of hosts, who is a strong LORD like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee? Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them" (*Psa 89:7-9*).

**THE MEANING OF SOVEREIGNTY**

The Sovereignty of God may be defined as the exercise of His supremacy. God is the one supreme and independent Being. He is the only one in all the universe who has the right and the power to do absolutely as He pleases. He sits on no precarious throne, nor borrows leave to be. He is the only one who has the right to act for His own glory. The sovereignty of God means that He does as He pleases, always as He pleases, and only as He pleases. God is in control of all things and people, and is directing all things after His own will and to the praise of His own glory. He even makes the wrath of man to praise Him, and the wrath of man that does not praise Him, He does not allow. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain"(*Psa 76:10*).

There is no alternative between an absolute sovereign God and no God at all. A man once wrote that he believed God was a sovereign, but not an absolute sovereign. A woman once talked of two supreme beings. But we believe in a sovereign God whose will is not subject to veto by His creatures. In his poem, "There Always Will Be God, " Albert Leonard Murray describes Him as a Sovereign:

"They cannot shell His temple, Nor dynamite His throne; They cannot bomb His city, Nor rob Him of His own.

"They cannot take Him captive, Nor strike Him deaf and blind, Nor starve Him to surrender, Nor make Him change His mind.

"They cannot cause Him panic, Nor cut off His supplies;   
They cannot take His kingdom, Nor hurt Him with their lies.

"Though all the world be shattered, His truth remains the same,   
His righteous laws still potent, And 'Father' still His name.

"Though we face war and struggle And feel their goad and rod, We know above confusion   
There always will be God."

**SOVEREIGNTY IN CREATION**

God acted as a Sovereign in His work of creation. He did not create from necessity, but from His own imperial pleasure. And in creating, He was free to create whatever He pleased. He did not create for the sake of creatures, for creatures in view must exist for their Creator, and not the Creator for the creature. "The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil" (*Pro 16:4*). "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (*Rom 11:36*). "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (*Rev 4:11*).

**SOVEREIGNTY IN ADMINISTRATION**

God is the Sovereign Ruler in His universe. He is in control of all things and of all men, of demons and the Devil. He rules everywhere as seemeth good to Himself. He seeks counsel from none. He controls and directs in the realm of nature. The Scriptures rarely ever use the expression "it rains"; they speak of God sending rain. "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (*Mat 5:45*); "Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (*Act 14:17*); "When he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder" (*Job 28:26*).

The Bible does not ascribe the recurring seasons to the laws of nature; it says that God changeth the times and the seasons: "And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding" (*Dan 2:21*). Job did not talk about his disease as the cause of death, but looked up to God and said, "For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living" (*Job 30:23*). In the face of the many foes, who sought his life, David cried to God and said, "My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me" (*Psa 31:15*).

And there have been demonstrations of God's control over, and direction of, irrational creatures. He locked the jaws of the lions so that Daniel was not hurt. "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt" (*Dan 6:22*). He directed the cock to crow just when He said it would. "Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew" (*Joh 18:27*). He caused the cows, contrary to natural instinct, to leave their calves and make a "beeline" for the borders of Israel with the ark of God. "And the ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines seven months. And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, What shall we do to the ark of the LORD? tell us wherewith we shall send it to his place. And they said, If ye send away the ark of the God of Israel, send it not empty; but in any wise return him a trespass offering: then ye shall be healed, and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you. Then said they, What shall be the trespass offering which we shall return to him? They answered, Five golden emerods, and five golden mice, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines: for one plague was on you all, and on your lords. Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods, and images of your mice that mar the land; and ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel: peradventure he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land. Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed? Now therefore make a new cart, and take two milch kine, on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them: And take the ark of the LORD, and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold, which ye return him for a trespass offering, in a coffer by the side thereof; and send it away, that it may go. And see, if it goeth up by the way of his own coast to Bethshemesh, then he hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that smote us: it was a chance that happened to us. And the men did so; and took two milch kine, and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home: And they laid the ark of the LORD upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their emerods. And the kine took the straight way to the way of Bethshemesh, and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left; and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Bethshemesh" (*1Sa 6:1-12*).

God also controls men, all men, whether good or bad, individually or collectively. He exerts upon the wicked a restraining power. He does not allow them to do all their nature would lead them to do. God said to Abimelech, "And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her" (*Gen 20:6*). How often it is said that God will not infringe upon man's free will. But if God had not controlled the will of Abimelech, that heathen king would have harmed Sarah. Yes, even "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will" (*Pro 21:1*). God was controlling and directing the will of Cyrus, king of Persia, when he ordered the building of the temple at Jerusalem: "Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah." (*Ezr 1:1-2*). God was controlling and directing Titus and his army in the destruction of Jerusalem; yea, they are called "His armies": "And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city" (*Mat 22:1-7*).

**SOVEREIGNTY IN SALVATION**

By this we mean that God was under no obligation to save His rebellious creatures. His purpose to save was entirely free to the praise of His grace. He could send every sinner to hell and remain absolutely just. Salvation cannot be of grace and of debt too. "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt" (*Rom 4:4*). Sovereignty in salvation also means that God saves whom He pleases. "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth" (*Rom 9:18*). "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him" (*Joh 17:2*).

"Tis not that I did choose Thee For Lord, that could not be; This heart would still refuse Thee, But Thou hast chosen me.

"T'was sovereign mercy called me, And taught my opening mind; The world had else enthralled me, To heavenly glories blind."

**SOVEREIGNTY IN PHYSICAL HEALING**

We believe most heartily and sincerely in Divine healing, but we have neither patience nor respect for men who pose as Divine healers. All healing is Divine, whether with or without the use of medicine. God's usual method is to bless the means that are used, but sometimes He heals without medicine. Moreover, He heals some and keeps others on the sick bed, or brings them to death. "For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living" (*Job 30:23*). "And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee" (*Exo 15:26*). He is sovereign both as to whom and how He heals.

In the days of public miracles, Paul had the gift of healing, but he could not always exercise that gift. "And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them" (*Act 19:11-12*), we read of special miracles God wrought by the hands of Paul, but "Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick" (*2Ti 4:20*). Isaiah prescribed a fig poultice for Hezekiah's boil and God blessed it to his cure. "For Isaiah had said, Let them take a lump of figs, and lay it for a plaister upon the boil, and he shall recover" (*Isa 38:21*). Paul prescribed a little wine for Timothy's poor stomach. "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities" (*1Ti 5:23*).

God heals whom and when and how He pleases. Let the sick saint pray, "Lord, if Thou wilt thou canst heal me." "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him" (*Jas 5:14-15*). It may be His will for you to be sick for your good and for His glory. It may be His will for the thorn in the flesh to remain to the praise of the sufficiency of grace.

The very order and safety of creation itself rests upon the sovereignty of God. If God is not in control, working all things after the counsel of His own will, then an absolute blackout is ahead for all of us!

÷01-22 THE LONGSUFFERING OF GOD

The most stupendous and overwhelming subject for human study is the Godhead. The contemplation of the Divine perfections will warm the very cockles of the heart, provided, of course, that we are His children, born of His Spirit. God is a perfectly balanced person. All His attributes work harmoniously to the praise of His glory. Every man of us by reason of sin is in some measure unbalanced. The prodigal is typical of all of us by nature, and he had to come to himself before he would say, "I will arise and go to my father" (*Luk 15:18*). Sin is a form of insanity; in conversion we get a sound mind. "Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid" (*Luk 8:35*). All of God's attributes are perfectly blended and go to make Him the great and glorious Being He is and ever shall be. God is so great that we can study only one perfection or attribute at a time.

God cannot be found by searching. You may sail the unclouded sky and soar to the greatest heights and yet not find God: "It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in" (*Isa 40:22*). You may sail upon all the seas and circle the globe without finding Him. You may study bugs and flowers and still be ignorant of the God who made them. You may take samples of His works into the laboratory and study them without coming to know Him, Whom to know is life eternal. God cannot be discovered by the physical senses.

All of God's works give witness to His existence, but they have nothing to say about His character or moral perfections. His works tell us that He is, but do not tell us what He is. God, in His character, can only be found where He has revealed Himself, and this is in His word, the Bible. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork" (*Psa 19:1*), but they give no testimony about Him as moral Lawgiver. In the study of what the Bible has to say about God, we find that the attribute of patience or longsuffering belongs to His very nature. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith" (*Gal 5:22*).

**GOD REVEALED HIMSELF TO MOSES**

When God gave Moses the tables of the law the second time, He came down and stood with him on the mount and proclaimed His Name, that is, He described His character in moral government. And this is what God said to Moses: "And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth" (*Exo 34:6*). God did not reveal Himself in any physical features, but in His perfections as a Spirit. And when Israel sinned by murmuring against God, and God threatened to exterminate them, and offered to make of Moses a greater nation; Moses, the typical mediator, pleaded the character of God as revealed to him on the mount. And this is what Moses said to God: "And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying. The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation" (*Num 14:17-18*). God as a moral Governor is patient or longsuffering.

**"LONG OF NOSE"**

The longsuffering of God is a quality in the Divine nature that makes Him slow in dealing with His enemies. God does not fly into a rage at the least provocation. The Hebrew word, which is sometimes translated "longsuffering, "and sometimes "Blow of anger, "literally means "long of nose" (or "breathing"). Anger is indicated by rapid and violent breathing through the nostrils, and the opposite is longsuffering or slow of anger. A snorting, charging bull is an emblem of passionate anger. But God is not like a bull or prancing horse, eager to go, in the work of judgment. God is in no hurry to punish His foes. He is not like a cruel, nervous dictator, in a hurry to have his enemies shot at dawn. God is patient with rebels, and this patience belongs to His nature. A general or universal atonement is not necessary to account for the long delay in the punishment of a wicked and rebellious. The devil, as well as man, has defied God for ages and is still at large, not because Christ died for him, but because God is patient. God is waiting to judge, not until His patience runs out, but for the human cup of iniquity to fill. The time of judgment is left to His sovereign will and does not depend upon any degree of His patience. "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain" (*Jas 5:7*). He is infinite in patience, and judgment will not be an act of impatience, but of stern justice.

**POWER OF SELF-CONTROL**

Longsuffering may be defined as God's power of self control. This is what Moses meant when he said, "And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying, The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation" (*Num 14:17-18*). God's great power is not only seen in His control over His creatures, but over Himself as well. God is not quick tempered; He does not lose His head and fly off the handle. He has perfect poise and balance. He knows nothing of impatience. His justice, to be sure, is inexorable, but He does not have to be in a hurry to judge His enemies. He waits in perfect patience to vindicate His honor and satisfy His justice. Arthur W. Pink says "Divine patience is that power of control which God exercises over Himself, causing Him to bear with the wicked and forebear so long in punishing them." And Charnock, one of the noblest of the Puritans said:

"Men that are great in the world are quick in passions and are not so ready to forgive an injury, or bear with an offender, as one of the meaner rank. It is want of power over that man's self that makes him do unbecoming things upon provocation. A prince that can bridle his passions is a king over himself as well as over his subjects. God is slow to anger because great in power. He has no less power over Himself than over His creatures."

**ILLUSTRATIONS**

There are many illustrations of Divine patience in Bible history as well as in events of general observation. God's patience has been signally exhibited through the long centuries of human and satanic rebellion.

1. The time of Noah was a period of Divine longsuffering. "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water" (*1Pe 3:20*). Those were wicked days, but God was slow to punish. Even after He announced His purpose to destroy the world, He waited one hundred and twenty years before sending the flood. "And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years" (*Gen 6:3*). Those were days when sexual immorality ran riot; days when Divine warning was ignored; days of fun poking at God's preacher of righteousness; "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence" (*Gen 6:11*), yet God waited to punish because He is a patient God.

2. The whole of the Old Testament dispensation was an era of Divine forbearance. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (*Rom 3:25*). We learn that the sins of that dispensation were remitted through the forbearance of God. The sins of the Old Testament believers were passed over until Christ should come and make atonement. "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (*Lev 17:11*). God did not punish them for their sins because He was waiting to punish them in the person of His Son. Their sins were remitted before they were paid for. It was like this: Christ, in eternity past, became the Surety for those given to Him by the Father in the everlasting covenant, agreeing to assume human nature, pay their debts and thus make satisfaction for their sins to Divine justice. This was announced immediately after the fall: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (*Gen 3:15*), but it was four thousand years to the fulness of time, when Christ, the Surety of the better covenant, should come to obtain redemption of transgressions that were under the first covenant: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (*Heb 9:15*). And all this time was one of patience or forbearance. God did not stir up His wrath and execute judgment upon sinners because He had reserved it for His Son, their Surety. And while waiting for the Surety to come and make satisfaction for sins, He appointed animal sacrifices, which could not satisfy justice and take away Sin."for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (*Heb 10:4*).

3. God's dealing with Pharaoh is another instance of His longsuffering. Paul defends God from criticism in His dealing with Pharaoh, by saying, "What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction" (*Rom 9:22*). The will of God referred to here is His will of purpose. God's will of purpose, concerning vessels of wrath, is to display His wrath and power in their judgment, but in longsuffering He endures or tolerates them until by their sins they are fitted to destruction.

"How often do men wonder that God endures so much sin as appears in the world. Why does not God immediately cut off transgressors? Why does He not make an end of them at once? The answer is, He endures them for His own glory, and in their condemnation He will be glorified. To short sighted mortals, it would appear preferable if God would cut off in childhood all whom He foresaw would continue in wickedness. But God endures them to old age, and to the utmost bounds of wickedness for the glory of His own name" (Robert Haldane).   
4. God's dealing with Paul illustrates His longsuffering towards "vessels of mercy." "And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory" (*Rom 9:23*). We will let him tell it: "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting" (*1Ti 1:16*). Of all the unbelieving Jews, the conversion of Saul of Tarsus seemed the most unlikely, "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief" (*1Ti 1:13*). But in the purpose of God he was a vessel of mercy afore prepared unto glory, and in dealing with him God gives a pattern of His longsuffering.

And Peter has these same vessels of mercy in view when he explains the long delay of our Lord's return. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (*2Pe 3:9*). Most certainly the reference is to His will of purpose that none of those denominated "us" should perish. The "us" of the text are the same as the "beloved" of verse one, and are distinguished from the "scoffers" of verse three. And verse fifteen lends weight to this interpretation: "And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation." God's longsuffering issues in the salvation of the vessels of mercy. It is like this: We who are now saved were by nature children of wrath, even as others, and needed to repent. If Christ had returned before we repented we would have perished. When He returns, the day of salvation will be over and judgment will begin; and if He had come five, ten, or twenty years ago many of those now saved would have perished in their sins, and God's will would have been thwarted.

**GOD'S PATIENCE IS GREATLY ABUSED**

The exercise of this attribute leads men to sin more boldly. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (*Ecc 8:11*). Men confound the patience of God with their belief in His non-existence. Because they sin and get by with it for a time, they conclude there is no moral Lawgiver to Whom they must give account. A farmer thought he had proven there is no God. He selected a certain piece of ground on his farm for an experiment. He broke the ground on Sunday, he planted the seed on Sunday, he did all the cultivating on Sunday, and on the first Sunday in October he reaped a larger harvest than on any other part of the farm. He wrote to his newspaper editor the results of his experiment, scoffing at the idea of any God. The editor replied briefly but to the point in these words: "May I remind you that God does not settle His accounts on the first Sunday in October."

Bob Ingersol thought he had demonstrated there is no God when he challenged Him and gave Him five minutes by the watch to strike him dead. When a great preacher in England heard what the upstart had done, he remarked: "Does the gentleman from America think he can exhaust the patience of God in five minutes?"

If the believer does not understand this attribute of longsuffering, he will fretfully wonder why God does not crush His enemies and put an end to so much wickedness. Blessed be His Name! He will, but in longsuffering waits for His purposes to ripen. And while He waits some are fitting themselves to destruction, and some are being fashioned by His grace to be vessels of glory. "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and 37). "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (*Heb 11:6*). In much humility and gratitude may both writer and reader say with the poet:

"Lord, we have long abused Thy love, Too long indulged in sin,   
Our aching hearts e'en bleed to see What rebels we have been."

÷01-23 THE HOLINESS OF GOD

"Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? (*Exo 15:11*). "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?" (*Hab 1:13*).

We are living in a day of mental and moral and spiritual indolence, and therefore a time of superficial thinking in things relating to God and eternal matters. The Divine attributes have been discarded, even in theological schools, to the junk heap of dry and uninteresting and unprofitable subjects. The feeling largely prevails that the proper study of mankind is man. In the popular mind the God who does wonders is eclipsed by man whose breath is in his nostrils. This is a restless, nervous, and jittery age, and the very atmosphere seems surcharged with enemies to the quiet, meditative, and studious spirit.

**THE FUNDAMENTAL OR BASIC ATTRIBUTE**

The holiness of God is the purity and rectitude of His nature. He is necessarily and essentially holy. His very being is the sole source and standard of right; therefore, whatever He wills is ethically right. There is no standard for God; He Himself is the standard of holiness. God is under no law of holiness; He Himself is the law of holiness.

The attribute of holiness gives glory and harmony to all the rest of His attributes. Without holiness, wisdom and knowledge would be but craft and cunning. Without holiness, power would be but tyranny, oppression, and cruelty. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (*Heb 12:14*).

There is an emphasis given to this attribute above all the other attributes. There are certain attributes we prefer, because of personal benefit derived from them. We esteem God's love, mercy, and grace before His justice, wrath, and anger. But, in the Bible, the holiness of God has preeminence over all others.

1. No other attribute is spoken of with such solemnity and frequency by the angels: "And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" (*Isa 6:3*); "And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come" (*Rev 4:8*).

2. God singles out this perfection to swear by. "Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David" (*Psa 89:35*). "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath" (*Heb 6:17*). Here is a grand argument for the security of the believer: God says, in effect, "I will lay My holiness in pawn for your security. If I fail to keep you safe, then I will cease to be holy."

God's holiness is the beauty and glory of His being. He is "glorious in holiness." "Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" (*Exo 15:11*). We also read about the "beauty of holiness." "Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness" (*1Ch 16:29*). "And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever" (*2Ch 20:21*). "Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness" (*Psa 29:2*). When we take a picture of a man we take the most beautiful part, his face, which is the member of the greatest excellency, and that which distinguishes his personality. So when God is pictured in the Bible, He is drawn in this attribute as being the most beautiful perfection. Power is His hand; "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand" (*Joh 3:35*). omniscience His eye; "The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD'S throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men" (*Psa 11:4*), mercy His bowels, "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies" (*Php 2:1*), eternity His duration; "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (*Isa 57:15*), and holiness is His beauty. "O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth" (*Psa 96:9*). Moral distance from Divine holiness is sin. His holiness is in view when it is said that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (*Rom 3:23*). In sinning man was deprived of the glory or holiness of God.

**THE HOLY TRINITY**

Holiness belongs equally to the three persons of the Godhead, they partake of the same common and undivided nature. The Spirit is usually called the Holy Spirit. Our Lord Jesus Christ addresses the Father under the endearing title of "holy Father": "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are" (*Joh 17:11*). The Lord Jesus is called "the holy One of Israel" more than thirty times in Isaiah alone. "Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee" (*Isa 12:6*). The devil himself said to Him, "Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God" (*Mar 1:24*). The Holy Spirit is the Author of holiness in men. Man, in his natural and fallen state, is chaotic morally; his understanding is darkened, "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (*Eph 4:18*): and he is spiritually deformed and ugly. The Holy Spirit is the Divine Person who restores to normalcy; He brings order and beauty out of chaos; He dispels the darkness and diffuses spiritual light by means of the gospel. The saved man is indebted to the blessed Holy Spirit for all the light he has on spiritual things. "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (*1Co 2:9-14*).

**THE MANIFESTATION OF DIVINE HOLINESS**

1. The Holiness of God appears in creation. There was not a flaw in creation when it came from His hand. Everything was beautiful and glorious. "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day." (*Gen 1:31*). And again, "The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works" (*Psa 145:17*). So far as is known there are only two kinds of moral beings: angels and man, and these were created morally holy. But sin has marked and defaced God's handiwork, so that nothing is like it was when created except, perchance, the holy angels. Man is ruined and fallen, by nature a child of wrath. And the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain, waiting to be delivered from the curse of sin. "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (*Rom 8:22*).

2. God is seen in His holiness as a Lawgiver. A holy God gave a law that was just and holy and good. Any other standard for His creatures would be inconsistent with His holiness. We are not commanded to be as wise or powerful as He is, but we are commanded to be as holy as He is holy: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation. Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." (*1Pe 1:15-16*).

3. There is a display of Divine holiness in redemption. His holy nature will not allow Him to look upon sin with the least degree of allowance. Salvation is not at the expense of His holiness. The Redeemer must bear the wrath due the sinner, for wrath is the exercise of His holiness. God's hatred of sin was as much manifested in redemption as it will be in judgment. The only difference is that in redemption the guilt of the sinner is transferred to the Savior. The wrath that fell upon the Savior on Calvary had its source in the holiness of God.

4. God's holiness appears in human conversion. "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (*Eph 4:24*).

5. Holiness will be displayed in the glorification of the believer. When our salvation is consummated we will be restored to the holiness of God. We will not have His power, nor His wisdom, but we will have His holiness. The Psalmist said, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness" (*Psa 17:15*). This likeness will be both moral and physical, and the moral likeness to God will be holiness. The believer, while here on earth, struggling against sin, rejoices in hope of the glory of God. "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (*Rom 5:2*). Sin is an awful burden to the believer; salvation is the restoration to his original holiness in creation.

6. The holiness of God will appear in all its purity in the day of judgment. Because God is holy, His wrath will he hot. His holy face will be too much for sinners to look upon. "And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb" (*Rev 6:16*).

**EXHORTATIONS TO HOLINESS**

The Scriptures abound in exhortations to holiness. "Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (*1Pe 1:16*). We are exhorted to lift up holy hands in prayer: "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting" (*1Ti 2:8*). "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (*Heb 12:14*). "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children" (*Eph 5:1*). All these exhortations to holiness are addressed to believers, and show that we are not personally 'holy.' "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness" (*Psa 17:15*). We are holy in Christ now; we will be personally holy when we are glorified, for our glorification will be our personal holiness.

It is a principle of universal recognition that all imitation of others is from an intense love and admiration of their persons. And we become like those with whom we associate. The heathen are so wantonly wicked because their gods are represented as vulgar and vicious. It is said that Plato wanted to have all the poets banished, because, in their poems, they dressed the gods in such wicked and vicious garb, thus encouraging the people to commit crime.

**TAKE TIME TO BE HOLY**

Believers, in the pursuit of holiness, must take time to meditate upon the holiness of God. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night" (*Psa 1:1-2*). It takes time to be holy. Sin cannot be banished by a single gesture or an occasional look at the good and beautiful. Meditation upon the holiness of God will develop a spirit of meekness and humility, "But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (*1Pe 3:4*). Comparing ourselves with ourselves may lead to pride and boastfulness, but when we are occupied with thoughts of the holiness of our Savior we will be filled with reverence and godly fear. "What torch can be proud of its own light when compared with the light of the sun?"

The temple of Incas at Cuzco, Peru, consisted of three walls, north, south, and west. The eastern side of the structure was open. The walls were smoothly plastered, and overlaid with finely hammered gold. These people were sun worshippers, and this was the way they worshipped: they would come to the temple just before dawn and stand in the opening to the east, facing the western wall. In front of them and on either side was a golden mirror. The sun would rise at their backs, and long before they could see it directly they could see its reflection in the western wall, and be covered with its golden light. Their faces would be illuminated, and their bodies would be literally bathed in light. Now the Gospel covenant is a mirror into which the believer looks with unveiled face at the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, and ultimately will be entirely conformed to His image. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (*2Co 3:18*). Occupation with the holiness of the Lord will change us from one degree of holiness to another degree of Holiness."and the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints" (*1Th 3:12-13*). "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness" (*1Th 4:7*). "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (*Heb 12:14*)

"Holy God, we praise Thy name! Lord of all, we bow before Thee; All on earth Thy scepter claim, All in heaven above adore Thee; Infinite Thy vast domain,   
Everlasting is Thy reign.

"Hark! the loud celestial hymn, Angel choirs above are raising: Cherubim and Sehaphim   
In unceasing chorus praising, Fill the heavens with sweet accord Holy! holy! holy! Lord!

"Holy Father, Holy Son,   
Holy Spirit, three we name Thee, While in essence, only one, Undivided God, we claim Thee; And, adoring, bend the knee, While we own the mystery."

÷01-24 THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

Polytheism, Tritheism, Dualism, Monotheism, and Atheism are religious terms to express the varying beliefs of humanity about God. Polytheism is the doctrine of many gods; tritheism is the belief that there are three gods; dualism is the teaching that the universe is under the dominion of two opposing forces or principles; monotheism is the belief in one God; and atheism is the teaching that there is no God at all. These varying beliefs witness to the sad fact of human depravity, and prove that the human mind is in a state of darkness concerning the true God. If I, myself, were not a Christian with the Bible, I would probably be a dualist. I look about me and see a world of conflict. I see two opposing forces, one good and the other evil. Or I might be an atheist as a result of pure reason, for there really seems to be no Supreme Being. Nobody appears to be in control, but there seems to be many powers competing for dominion. On every hand when people begin to reason, independent of the Scriptures, they ask, If there is a God, who is good and almighty, why does He allow things to be as they are? Why does He not triumph over evil? Why does He not kill the devil? Why does He not stop this war? and so on, ad infinitum.

The Christian believes what he does because he has the Bible and a certain inward experience. And God is the Author of both. The Bible is God's objective or external revelation, and the experience is God's subjective or internal revelation. The Bible without this inward experience (truth in the inward parts) will not make one a Christian. On the other hand a religious experience which is out of harmony with the Bible is both false and dangerous. Saul of Tarsus was religious long before he became a Christian, and thought that he ought to do many things contrary to Jesus Christ. People may be subject to evil spirits as well as to the Holy Spirit. Paul judged the Thessalonians to be the elect of God, :"For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake" (*1Th 1:5*). As a Christian with the Bible, I am a monotheist, a believer in the one true and living God who is absolutely supreme. The monotheistic religions are the Jewish, the Mohammedan, and the Christian, and all three have at least a part of the Bible. Thus it appears that no people will be monotheistic without the Bible. Man is a religious being by intuition, but he is not a believer in one God by intuition. The idea of one God is a revealed doctrine, found only in the Bible. The cultured and educated Athenians of Paul's day believed in a plurality of gods. And many of the self styled intelligentsia of this century have gone to the opposite extreme and contend there is no God at all. So without the Bible and a God wrought experience men range in their beliefs all the way from many gods to no God.

**WHO IS RUNNING THIS WORLD?**

There are four distinct views of the happenings of this world, four theories of how things come to pass. There is the view that things come to pass according to a fixed law, called the law of nature. Those who hold this view are rationalists, and refuse to believe anything that cannot be explained on natural grounds. Their so-called faith is the result of looking through a microscope or examining a test tube. Then there is the view that things happen by a sort of chance. According to this view there is nothing fixed or certain; one thing is as likely to happen as another. There is the third position that everything comes to pass by a cold, impersonal force called fate. And finally there is the Christian view that things come to pass by the Providence of God. According to this view the Creator is also the Administrator.

**DEFINITION**

Providence may be defined as God's government of His creation. The government of God in the affairs of the world is a subject of deep importance to the Christian, for by proper views of Providence the believer will learn to look for and will be able to see God's hand and heart in all his experiences. He will not talk like the uncircumcised Philistine when they said, "it was a chance that happened to us" (*1Sa 6:9*); but with Job "And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (*Job 1:21*).

God is not idle. The Savior said, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work" (*Joh 5:17*). God is the one person always on the job. He is not like the football squad that must take time out to rest and plan the next day. He is not like the tired farmer who must sleep and eat to recuperate strength for another days work. He is not like the prize fighter who must go to hi corner between rounds to be worked over and patched up. Our God knows nothing of weariness and emergencies. "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding" (*Isa 40:28*). He is never at wits end; He always knows what to do, and how to do it, and when to do it. He is the one and only person qualified to govern and control His creation. There are a lot of people who might think that God is doing a bad job in governing this world. Men might propose a lot of changes. Some may think the present situation calls for a new deal. Some might suggest that God kill the devil, and put men like Hitler and other war lords out of the way and replace them with peace loving men. If God is the Almighty and in control, He could easily do any one or all of these things. But He will not be dictated to; "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (*Eph 1:11*).

If God its not running this world, who is? If we judge by sight, by appearances, we might think the devil is running things. From another view it appears that the politicians are in command; or, since there are so many "rackets" in the world, it might seem that the racketeer are in the saddle. There is no doubt but that Hitler meant to rule this world, and make all countries contribute to his personal glory, and to the good of his so called superior race. Obviously there is a lot of competition among men for positions of authority. The lust for power is everywhere evident. Now it is freely admitted that Satanic and human agencies have their place and do their work, but over and above all, God is on the throne, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain" (*Psa 76:10*). Men rule; God overrules. Men turn; God overturns.

If He who created the world is not running it, why isn't He? It must be either because He does not want to, or is unable to. The thinking man will have to admit that God is running the world; otherwise He has either lost interest in it or control over it. Men manufacture articles and lose control over them. A man may be killed in an airplane he builds. He may be poisoned by a medicine he compounds. A mother may be disgraced by a daughter or son born to her. But God is in no danger from His creation. He cannot be disgraced by His creatures, while all who oppose Him will sooner or later find themselves in disgrace and forever ruined.

**THE KIND OF WORLD GOD IS RUNNING**

It will help us to understand and appreciate Divine Providence if we will take a look at the world God is governing. It has a devil in it, and the devil is more popular with the citizens of this world than is God the Creator. Satan is called the god of this age, and the prince of this world. In the very dawn of human history our first parents deliberately and of their own accord rebelled against the will of God and became the devil's ally. "And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?" (*Gen 3:8-11*). They transferred their allegiance from the God of truth to the father of lies. The Lord Jesus told the hypocrites of His day that they were of their father the devil, and were doing his will. "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (*2Co 4:4*).

It must be remembered that the devil operates through Divine sufferance. He is only tolerated not endorsed by God. His activities are circumscribed and ordained for Divine ends. He had to get Divine permission before he could afflict Job, "Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?..And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD" (*Job 1:9*; *Job 1:12*), or sift Peter, "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat" (*Luk 22:31*).

The world God is running is filled with depraved men and women. Every man, apart from inwrought grace, is an enemy of God. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (*Rom 8:7*). None but the born again people are lovers of the true God: "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." (*1Jn 4:7-8*). Now listen to the lips of incarnate truth: "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man" (*Mat 15:19-20*).

The world God is running is overrun by fallen angels or demon spirits. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!" (*Isa 14:12*). "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; "(*2Pe 2:4*). "But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils" (*1Co 10:20*). "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (*Eph 6:11-12*). Now we should be able to understand that God is not running this world as He would run it if there were nobody in it but good people, people in love with Him, and delight to do His will. Our prisons are not run like our children's homes. Earth is not run like heaven, although God is running both places.

**THE NATURE OF PROVIDENCE**   
1. IT IS MYSTERIOUS.

Everything seems to be in disorder and confusion. As we look at the world we see conflict and there seems to be no plan or order. The world appears to be one vast battle field of conflicting wills and opposing forces. There seems to be no order in the movement of bees to and from the hive, but examine the honey and you will see plan and arrangement and order. And just as bees gather their stores of sweets against a time of need, but are colonized by man for his own good; so men plan and work and yet are overruled by the infinite wisdom of God to His praise and glory.

God tells us that we cannot understand His dealings with us. "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God" (*Rom 3:11*). The psalmist says that the judgments of God are a great Deep."thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep: O LORD, thou preservest man and beast" (*Psa 36:6*). Paul declares "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out" (*Rom 11:33*). Providence is mysterious and perplexing because the God of Providence is incomprehensible to finite minds, and therefore His ways are too deep for us to understand. We must take Him at His word and I believe that He is too wise to err, and to good to afflict His children without a reason. This is a time of perplexity and many hearts are crying out, "Why doesn't God do something?" Well, dear heart, God is doing something, but we can't understand His ways. We have to walk by faith that He doeth all things well. Remember, dear reader, that God keeps the key to all life's problems.

"Is there some problem in your life to solve, Some passage seeming full of mystery? God knows, who brings the hidden things to sight. He keeps the key.

"Is there some door closed by the Father's hand Which widely opened you had hoped to see? Trust God and wait for when He shuts the door He keeps the key.

"Is there some earnest prayer unanswered yet, Or answered NOT as you had hoped 'twould be? God will make clear His purpose by and by. He keeps the key."

2. PROVIDENCE IS MINUTE.

It covers all things, little things as well as great things. Providence has been defined as God's attention concentrated everywhere. Man is finite and has such limitations that he can only concentrate his attention on one thing and in one place; God is infinite in space and power and wisdom and can concentrate on everything in every place. His providence is microscopic as well as telescopic. God is interested in the hairs of our head, and in the fall of the little sparrow. A preacher once remarked to his congregation, that the Bible said the hairs of their heads were numbered, but he was afraid some of them did not even think their heads were numbered.   
2a) God is in control of inanimate matter. Scriptures abound in illustrations of this. "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light" (*Gen 1:3*). "And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so" (*Gen 1:9*). At God's word the waters of the Red Sea were divided and stood up in walls; "And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left" (*Exo 14:22*); at His word they came together again. "And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen" (*Exo 14:26*). At God's word the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up Korah and his rebellious partners. "And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation" (*Num 16:32-33*). At His word the fires of Babylon's furnace were rendered harmless to His faithful servants. "Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace" (*Dan 3:19-20*). The very elements are under His control. He sends the rain. "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater" (*Isa 55:10*). He calls for a famine. "And the famine was sore in the land" (*Gen 43:1*). He withholds the harvest, "For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest" (*Gen 45:6*), or gives abundance at His will. "And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance" (*Gen 45:7*).

2b) God has control over irrational creatures. He formed the beasts of the field and brought them to Adam to be named. "And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him" (*Gen 2:20*). He caused two of every unclean animal to come to Noah into the ark, to perpetuate their kind in the earth; and seven pairs of clean beasts, that Noah might have sufficient for sacrifice. "Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female. Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth...There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah" (*Gen 7:2-3*; *Gen 7:9*.) God's control over irrational life was manifested in the plagues visited upon Egypt. "And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt" (*Exo 7:21*). At His biddings swarms of flies invaded the homes of the Egyptians, "And the LORD did so; and there came a grievous swarm of flies into the house of Pharaoh, and into his servants' houses, and into all the land of Egypt: the land was corrupted by reason of the swarm of flies" (*Exo 8:24*), while none came into the homes of the Israelites. "And I will put a division between my people and thy people: to morrow shall this sign be" (*Exo 8:23*). At His will Egypt was plagued with frogs and locusts. Daniel was cast into the den of lions, "Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee" (*Dan 6:16*), but God locked their jaws and Daniel was not devoured. "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt" (*Dan 6:22*). God opened the mouth of the ass to rebuke Baalam."and the LORD opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?" (*Num 22:28*). Jonah did not want to be a foreign missionary, so he took a ship to Tarshish; "But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD" (*Joh 1:3*). God sent a great wind that rocked the boat, "But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken" (*Joh 1:4*), and when the sailors threw Jonah overboard, "So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging" (*Joh 1:15*). God had a big fish ready for Jonah. "Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights" (*Joh 1:17*). He caused the fish to vomit up Jonah just as it reached the shore. "And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land" (*Joh 2:10*). At God's will the cock crowed three times just when the Lord told Peter it Would."jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice" (*Mat 26:34*). "The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all" (*Psa 103:19*).

2c) God's control extends to men, all men, both good and bad. We have no trouble in seeing that God is in control of the good; "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (*Jas 1:17*). The difficult thing for many is to see that He reigns everywhere; "And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them" (*1Sa 8:7*); that He is in control over the wicked as well as the good. God allows sin because He is able to overrule it for His own glory. God is not the author of sin, but He is the Controller and Director of it. Augustine has a very helpful word on this point:

"Men's sin proceeds from themselves; that in sinning they perform this or that action, is from God who divideth the darkness according to His pleasure."

God is not the causative force, but the directing force in the sins of men. Men are rebellious, but are not out from under the control of God. God's decrees are not the necessitating cause of the sins of men, but the foredetermined and prescribed boundings and directings of men's sinful acts. "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (*Act 2:22-23*). An English brother, Percy W. Heward, puts the truth clearly. He says:

"The wishes of sin are the wishes of man; Man is guilty; man is to be blamed. But the all wise God prevents those wishes from producing actions indiscriminately. He compels those wishes to take a certain Divinely narrowed course. The floods of iniquity are from the hearts of men, but they are not allowed to cover the land; they are shut up to the channel of God's sovereign appointment, and men unwittingly are thus held in bounds, so that not one iota of God's purpose shall fail. He brings the floods of the ungodly into the channel of His providence to turn the mill of His purpose."

**A PRACTICAL AND COMFORTING DOCTRINE**

It is a joy to know that God, our Heavenly Father, is ruling this world. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (*Rom 8:28*). This truth would not be possible were He not in control. He can and does assure His children that all things work together for their good;

"The world is wide in time and tide, and God is guide; Then do not hurry.   
"The man is blest who does his best, and leaves the rest; Then do not worry."

Let us take another illustration: Here is a farmer who has an artesian well on his place, a huge stream of water that will ruin his place if left alone to spread itself over the farm. There must be a channel for that water to flow through or it must be capped and the water checked. This well can be made an asset if the water can be controlled. He decides to make a channel for that water; he will control it and make that which would injure him to serve him. So he runs a pipe line from that well to his house and with the turn of a faucet he gets water for cooking and drinking and bath. He runs another line to the barn and with the turn of a spigot waters hundreds of cattle and hogs. He runs another line to his grove and keeps it in excellent condition in time of drought. Wherever he needs water he runs a line to it from that well. Now, the human heart is an artesian well of sin. If God did not control it, it would destroy His purpose and overthrow His government. So He makes it run through channels of His purpose. And that which He does not turn to His glory, He holds back. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain" (*Psa 76:10*).

One pipe line from the well of sin ran to Calvary. Human sin is seen at its worst when wicked men nailed the Lord of glory to the tree of the cross. And yet God's purpose was fulfilled. The death of God's sinless Son required a terrible amount of sin, but the carnal mind that hates God was equal to it. So God turned human hatred in that direction. He fixed all the details about the death of Christ. "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (*Isa 53:1-12*). He was to be crucified between two wicked men. "Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst" (*Joh 19:18*). His garments were to be divided among the soldiers, His vesture was to be the prize in gambling, "And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots" (*Mat 27:35*). "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture" (*Psa 22:18*). He was to be given vinegar with gall to drink, "They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink" (*Mat 27:34*). His bones were not to be broken and it all came to pass just as it had been Divinely planned and predicted. "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done" (*Act 4:27-28*). What a motley and mighty crowd! And yet all they could do was what God had predestinated to be done.

Yes, dear child of God, our Father rules. Our times are in His hand, so that we can say with the poet:

"Yes, leave it with Him; The lilies all do,   
And they grow   
They grow in the rain, And they grow in the dew Yes, they grow:   
They grow in the darkness, all hid in the night They grew in the sunshine, revealed by the light Still, they grow.

"Yes, leave it with Him,   
'Tis more dear to His heart,   
You will know,   
Than the lilies that bloom,   
Or the flowers that start   
'Neath the snow:   
Whatever you need, if you seek it in prayer, You can leave it with Him, for you are His care You, you know."

÷01-25 THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD (Concluded)

In the preceding chapter we sought to define and explain Divine Providence, and to show that God is reigning in every place and over every thing.

God rested from His work of creation, not because He was tired, but because He was satisfied with His work and could pronounce everything good. "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made" (*Gen 2:1-2*). His rest did not mean cessation from work, but satisfaction with His work. Since creation He has been at work in sustaining and administering the affairs of His creation. "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (*Col 1:17*); "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (*Heb 1:3*); "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (*Eph 1:11*).

**THE TWO ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

If God is not running the world, it is either because He does not wish to or because He is not able to. Let us examine these two alternatives separately.

1. If God does not wish to run the world it means that He has lost interest in it, and the world may be considered an abandoned project. To such a premise no believer can subscribe. The voice of Scripture is against such an idea. God would not give His Son to die for a world He had no interest in.

2. The view that God is not able to run the world is also unreasonable in the light of Scripture. We believe, however, this to be the position many people take, and it is because they do not know or do not believe in the God of the Bible. How often we hear people talk about God trying to do this and trying to do that! This view puts God in the position of a boy with a pair of runaway horses. Any boy who has had horses to run away with him knows what a feeling of helplessness came over him. Now the Scriptures do not at all, in any sense, represent God as distracted and helpless. "He is able, "is the happy refrain of Scripture.

The three Hebrew worthies, when facing the wrath of a heathen king, said: "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king" (*Dan 3:17*).

"And when he (Darius) came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" (*Dan 6:20*). And from the den of lions, Daniel answered and said, "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt" (*Dan 6:22*).

To those Jews who thought natural kinship to Abraham was all they needed, the Lord Jesus said, "And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (*Mat 3:9*).

To the Ephesian elders at Miletus, Paul said, "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (*Act 20:32*).

James tells us that: "There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?" (*Jas 4:12*).

In beautiful benediction Jude says; "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen" (*Jud 1:24-25*).

Either of the two alternatives makes prayer useless. There is no use praying to a God who has no interest in His creation, nor to a God who is helpless to deliver us.

**HOW IS GOD GOVERNING THE WORLD?**

In running the world God is not openly and publicly manifesting Himself. He is running the world in Providence and Providence is secret and mysterious.

1. In running the world God is giving the devil an opportunity to reveal himself and to show what he would do if he could. What would the devil do if he were able? He would do exactly what he has tried to do. He has tried to usurp the place and prerogatives of God in government. In the long ago, he said, "For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north" (*Isa 14:13*). Satan was perhaps the most beautiful and most exalted being in the original creation. If anybody should have been satisfied with his place and position it was he. But he was lifted up with pride because of his beauty and craved more authority. He had a lust for power and sought to seize the reins of government in his own hands.

2. In Providence God is allowing man to reveal himself and show what he would do if he had the power. What has man tried to do? He has followed the example of Satan and has tried to be like God in the matter of authority. In the garden of Eden there were two trees which stood as symbols of two very important truths. There was the tree of life, "And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever" (*Gen 3:22*). symbolizing the truth that man is not self sufficient, that he is dependent upon God for everything; and there was the tree of knowledge of good and evil, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (*Gen 2:17*), symbolizing the truth that man is not sovereign, that he is not allowed to do as he pleases, that he cannot determine for himself what is right and what is wrong, but that God's word is to determine that. That tree stood as a solemn reminder that God is Lord of creation. God determined what Adam and Eve could have, not they themselves. God had said, You may have this, but you must not eat that. Your life and happiness will depend upon obedience to my word.   
Now, Satan came into the garden and told Eve that God had lied; "Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (*Gen 3:1*); that the truth was, that to do what God had forbidden would mean their good, that to eat the fruit would mean opened eyes (eyes of the understanding), so that they could know for themselves what was right and what was wrong. They would no longer be tied to God's word about the question of good and evil. He told Eve they would become as gods, knowing (determining) what is good and what is evil.

We are told that Eve was deceived by Satan. She believed his lie and trespassed on God's authority. She believed that great benefit would come from eating the forbidden fruit. Here is the divine record of the first human sin: "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat" (*Gen 3:6*). From this simple but tragic story we get a definition of sin. Sin is entering into competition with God for authority. John says that sin is the transgression of the law of God, and the law of God is His word on any and every subject. Sin is setting God's word aside as the law of my life, and doing what I please. After the fatal step had been taken by Adam and Eve, "And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know (determine) good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:" (*Gen 3:22*). This can only mean that man had become like God in spirit and aim. He had the spirit of independency and aimed to compete with God for sovereignty and do that which was right in his own eyes; moreover, he would determine for himself what was right.   
How often we hear some person ask, "What is the harm of it?" or say, "I do not see any harm in it, "when the thing referred to is expressly forbidden in God's Word. Why was it wrong for Adam and Eve to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil? Only because God had said "thou shalt not eat of it." What harm was there in Moses striking the rock at Kadesh? It was wrong only because God had told him to speak to the rock. "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink.. .And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also" (*Num 20:7-8*; *Num 20:11*). What was wrong with Uzzah putting forth his hand to stay the ark, and keep it from falling off the cart? "And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God" (*2Sa 6:6-7*). It was wrong only because God had said that only the priests were to carry the ark, and no human hands were to touch it. What was the harm of King Saul sparing Agag, and the best of the sheep when he destroyed the Amalekites? "But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly" (*1Sa 15:9*). It was wrong only because God had commanded otherwise. And so when Saul offered the excuse that he had saved the sheep and oxen to sacrifice unto the Lord, "And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (*1Sa 16:22*). Insofar as assigning any reason for them, many of God's commandments are arbitrary, that is, they have their source in the sovereign pleasure of God. To be sure, God has a reason for all He commands, but as an absolute Sovereign He is under no necessity to make them known to His creatures.

**PROVIDENCE IS PREVENTIVE**

In governing the world God prevents much sin which would otherwise be committed. When we think about the awful amount of sin, and the terrible degree to which sin has gone, and the awful effects of sin, we are apt to think that it would be impossible to draw any more or any worse sins from the heart, the fountain of sin. But God does exert a restraining influence on the wicked so that they do not commit all the sins possible to them. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain" (*Psa 76:10*). To Abimelech He said, "And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her" (*Gen 20:6*). If this heathen king had been left to his own heart's lust, he would have harmed Sarah. A young man, holding an important position and handling much money, was tempted to take a large sum with seemingly no danger of detection; it would be the perfect crime. But on the very day he planned to take the money he found a card on his desk, saying "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal" (*Mat 6:19*). He was stopped cold in his plan, and always regarded the incident as an act of Providence to keep him from taking the money. And, no doubt, the reader as well as the writer can think of times when he, too, was restrained from executing the designs of his heart.

**PROVIDENCE IS PERMISSIVE**

God permits sinful men to manifest the evil of their hearts. In *2Ch 32:31*, we are told that God left Hezekiah: "Howbeit in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to enquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart." In *Psa 81:12-13*, we find God speaking concerning Israel: "So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels. Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!." Also: "Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways" (*Act 14:16*); "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:... And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient" (*Rom 1:24*; *Rom 1:28*). A woman, who had been slandered, protested when told that God had permitted it for her good. She maintained that Satan had inspired her accuser. But she needed to learn that God had permitted the work of Satan.

**PROVIDENCE IS DIRECTIVE**

God directs the sinful acts of evil men to the accomplishment of His own purpose. When God permits the evil in the human heart to come out, He directs its flow in one direction rather than another for the fulfillment of His purpose. In this way sinful acts of men become the holy acts of God. Joseph's brethren sinned in selling him into slavery, but because of an overruling Providence, he could and did say to them: "So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt" (*Gen 45:8*). That which made their act a sinful act was their motive. Joseph says to them again: "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive" (*Gen 50:20*).

**PROVIDENCE IS DETERMINATIVE**

God determines the bounds reached by the evil passions of His creatures and the measure of their affects. God set the bounds to which Satan could go in afflicting Job. "And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD." (*Job 1:12*). And to Satan's second challenge concerning Job, God said, "Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life" (*Job 2:6*). This illustrates what we have in *1Co 10:13* : "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

**THE DIVINE OBJECTIVE**

What is the Divine objective or purpose in administration? To what end is God running the world? For whose pleasure and profit is the world being governed? What will be the ultimate and manifest results of God's government?

**NEGATIVELY**

1. The objective in Divine Providence is not the pleasure and profit of the devil. If we take a short sighted view of the happenings of this world we might think that God is catering to the devil; that His policy toward the devil is one of appeasement. The devil does seem to have a lot of power. Peter likens him to a roaring lion in search of prey. He does seem to be enjoying much success. But look at his latter end and it will be seen that God is not governing for his pleasure and profit. Go to a farm and look at a pen of fattening hogs. It might seem that the whole farm is being run for the benefit of those hogs. They have nothing to do but eat and rest, they have all that a hog can want. But follow those same hogs to the abattoir and your view will be corrected.

2. Nor is the world being run for the good of humanity as such. God is making all things work together for the good of His people, but not for the sake of humanity as a whole. Let us face some facts: millions of people are born in poverty, live in poverty, die in poverty, and will spend eternity in the poverty of hell. And again: millions are born in sin, live in sin, die in sin, and will spend eternity in the hell of sin. We make so bold as to say, that if God is running the world for the good of humanity, He is a colossal failure. Think of the millions of young men under arms today, not of their own choosing, but because of circumstances beyond their control. God's objective is not human happiness. If it were there would be no bombed and burning cities; there would be no wailing women, starving and crying children, bleeding and dying men on a thousand battlefields.

**POSITIVELY**

God is governing the world for the highest good; for the greatest and noblest objective. What is the highest good? What is the greatest objective possible? What is the most important thing in the universe? Who is the most important being in the universe? These questions will put us on the right track for the answer to our query, or search for the Divine objective.

1. The highest good is not the pleasure and profit of the devil.

He is the enemy of God and of the good. He is not the most important person, and his welfare is not even a part of the Divine objective.

2. The highest good is not the welfare of the human race. Man is the acme of creation, but as compared with God "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (*Dan 4:35*). Paul, speaking of himself and Apollos as workmen of God, confessed they were nothing: "So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase" (I Cor.r 3:7).

3. The highest good, the greatest possible objective in Divine government is the glory of God. We reach this conclusion by following two lines of approach: first, the duty of man, and second, the testimony of Scripture.

3a) The chief duty of man must be the same as the Divine objective. What God demands of man is equal to what He aims at in government. God would not require one thing from man and pursue another end or objective in His administration. To illustrate: Our government demands from its citizens an all out effort for victory in this war, and what the government demands from its subjects is exactly what the government has for its objective: the winning of the war. Now the chief duty of man is to glorify God. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (*1Co 10:31*). "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men" (*Col 3:23*); "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (*1Co 6:20*). We are to put God first in our prayers. His glory comes before our needs. "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name" (*Mat 6:9*).   
3b) The Scriptures declare the Divine objective in running the world to be the glory of God. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (*Rev 4:11*), tells us that all things exist for the pleasure of God. "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (*Rom 11:36*) gives us this truth in marvelous language. Weymouth translates it like this: "For all proceeds from Him, and exists by Him, and for Him. To Him be the glory for ever! Amen." :Dr. Robertson, in his "Word Pictures, " says, "By these three prepositions Paul ascribes the universe (ta panta) with all the phenomina concerning creation, redemption, providence to God, as the source (ex), the agent (di), the goal (eis)." He also says that Alford terms this doxology in verses 33 to 36 "the sublimest apostrophe existing even in the pages of inspiration itself."

God is the one and only person in all the universe who has the right to act for His own glory. His glory is the rule of all His actions, and His glory is the rule of human conduct. Yes, the chief duty of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

Salvation is not primarily for our good, but for His glory. In *Eph 1:6* we read, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, ".And in *Eph 1:11-12* : "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ." God is saving sinners that He might exhibit the trophies of His grace to an onlooking universe in the ages to come: "That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (*Eph 2:7*).   
If the writer knows his heart at all, there are two things he is eminently satisfied with. First, he is satisfied with what Jesus Christ did at Calvary, when He put away the guilt of our sins by the sacrifice of Himself. We are satisfied with it because we believe God was satisfied with it. We own no theory of the atonement except the "satisfaction theory, "by whatever name it may be called. Second, we are satisfied with the providence of God in our life. The road has not always been plain nor pleasant, but we believe His way has been profitable for us.

"God holds the key If all unknown, And I am glad,   
And I am glad.   
If other hands should hold the key, Or if He trusted it to me,   
I might be sad,   
I might be sad.

"What if tomorrow's cares were here Without its rest,   
Without its rest?   
I'd rather He'd unlock the day, And, as the hours swing open, say, My will be best,   
My will be best.

"The very dimness of my sight Makes me secure,   
Makes me secure.   
For, groping in my misty way, I feel His hand; I hear Him say, My help is sure,   
My help is sure.

"I cannot read His future plan,

But this I know,   
But this I know:   
I have the smiling of His face, And all the refuge of His grace, While here below,   
While here below.

"Enough this covers all my need, And so I rest,   
And so I rest;   
For, where I cannot, He can see, And in His care I safe shall be, Forever blest,   
Forever blest."

÷01-26 THE SILENCE OF GOD

"And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled" (*Rev 6:10-11*).

"Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him" (*Psa 50:3*).

The first of the foregoing passages gives us the cry of martyred souls John saw under the altar in the heavenly temple. Their appeal is for justice against their murderers. Here is proof that the soul does not lie in unconscious sleep during the intermediate state. These souls are conscious. They cry for Judgment to fall upon the earth.

In response to their cry, they are given white robes, indicating that they are justified in their desire for vengeance on the wicked. While on earth the saint is to pray for his enemies, but after death he may pray against them. These martyred souls are told that they must rest until the martyrdom of all the others, who are to be killed, shall have been accomplished. All this indicates that this dispensation of mercy is to end in bitter persecution of the people of God. It would seem that there are days of martyrdom ahead for the saints as well as behind. And nobody knows when he may be called upon to seal his faith with his blood. Who knows but that in the near future some governmental decree might put us to the test as to whether we will obey God or man?

The second text is a sequel to the first. It points to the time when the cry of the martyr is heard and vengeance is executed. "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him" (*Psa 50:3*). It looks to the time when the longsuffering of God is at an end, and Christ comes in judgement, "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (*2Th 1:8*).

**THE PROBLEM OF A SILENT GOD**

By the silence of God we mean that God is not openly and publicly manifesting Himself as in other days. By the silence of God we mean that God is not performing public miracles as of old. Webster defines a miracle as "an event which cannot be accounted for as produced by any of the known forces of nature and which is therefore attributed to a supernatural force." And by a "public miracle" we mean an event that demonstrates, beyond dispute, the existence of a personal God. Sir Robert Anderson has said that "Since apostolic times, the finger of God has never been openly at work upon the earth, never once has a public miracle been witnessed, nor a single public event to compel the belief that there is a God at all."

A silent heaven is the greatest mystery of our existence. A slient heaven is the greatest trial of the faith of the saint. The atheist does not believe in the possibility of miracles because he does not believe in the existence of a personal and powerful God. The believer's problem is the absence of miracles. As a believer in a personal and powerful and loving Heavenly Father he cannot understand why miracles are not common today.

If there is a God why does He allow things to be as they are? Why does He not step in and put down all the wrong and rebellion that covers the face of the earth? Why does He suffer the wicked to oppress the righteous? If there is an almighty God, why doesn't He do something? is the despairing cry of many a mother whose son wades the mud and fights on foreign soil. How is the existence of a good and powerful God consistent with such a long period of silence in the face of the defiance of His enemies and the cries of His people? If there is a personal and all-powerful God, why do the righteous suffer and the wicked prosper? In the face of these questions the infidel plies his trade and the believer is filled with anxiety and perplexity.

In the days of Moses God was so manifestly at work in performing miracles that even the wicked magicians of Egypt had to confess, "Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said" (*Exo 8:19*). And in the days of our Lord's earthly ministry miracles were common and were not even disputed by His enemies. Christ's miracles made Him famous, but they won no genuine converts. "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him:" (*Joh 12:37*). "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did" (*Joh 2:23*). Those who believed because of what they saw could not be trusted. Miracles continued through the days of the apostles, but became less common towards the close of the apostolic age. The gift of miracles, was sovereignly bestowed upon and distributed among the members of the early churches.

**NO PUBLIC MIRACLES TODAY**

It is obvious that we do not have public miracles today at least in such unmistakable manner as in ancient times. I know there are people today who claim to be able to perform miracles of healing and talking (their claims are usually limited to these two things), but there is something so manifestly lacking in their so called miracles that their claims are not above suspicion. And when they are investigated there is room for question, which was not the case in the days of Christ and the apostles.

There is a problem in the silence of God. When Peter was in jail waiting to be executed, God sent an angel to deliver him. "And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed" (*Act 16:26*). And Paul was miraculously delivered at Philippi. But since those days millions of saints have been martyred, and their cries for deliverance have not been answered. The heavens above them have been as brass.

"And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go" (*Exo 5:2*). God accepted the proud monarch's challenge and demonstrated His power over him in terrible judgments; but in these days men challenge and even ridicule the very idea of a personal God; and heaven says not a word. Charles Smith, and other theoretical atheists have just about used up all the bad words in decrying religion, denying God, and heaping abase upon the Bible; and to all their bombast God is silent.

**THE EXPLANATION OF A SILENT GOD**

God's silence in the face of defiant foes, challenging Him to combat, can be explained. God's silence to the cries of His helpless children does have an explantion. What is it?

**NEGATIVELY ANSWERED:**

1. It is not because God is helpless. He is never helpless, in the face of opposition. There are no crises with Him. "But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth" (*Job 23:13*). He is able to deliver His children from every danger. We can sing in all faith:

"Tis the grandest theme thro' the ages rung; Tis the grandest theme for a mortal tongue; Tis the grandest theme that the world e'er sung, 'Our God is able to deliver thee."

2. It is not because He does not care. The Heavenly Father is the wisest and best of all fathers. He never makes any mistakes in the care of His children. "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (*1Pe 5:7*). When we cry to Him in our troubles, and He does not give us what we ask for, we must not think that He does not care. It is because He does care for us that He does not always give us what we ask for. He is wiser than we are in asking. It is our love and interest in our own children that keeps us from giving them all they want. When we are sick and beg God to heal us and He does not do it, we may be sure that it is better for us to be sick. God teaches us some things on the sick bed that we cannot learn while well. Some lessons are better learned on the back than on the feet. The Bible is a sweeter Book in the sick room than in the workshop. If we pray to be delivered from our enemies and He does not deliver us, it is in order that we may hear Him say, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (*Mat 5:10*). The greatest homage which wickedness can pay to righteousness is to persecute it. It is a gift from God to be allowed to suffer for His Name. "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake" (*Mat 5:11*). Spurgeon writes: "Not because of any personal fault, but simply on account of their godly character, the Lord's Daniels are hated: but they are blessed by that which looks like a curse."

3. It is not because God does not know. The omniscience of God is one of the sweetest attributes to the believer. One of the sweetest psalms of David is the one hundred and thirty ninth in which he celebrates the omniscience of God: "O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee. For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee. Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: depart from me therefore, ye bloody men. For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain. Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?

I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies. Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Here is a good way to test my spirituality. Am I glad that God knows all about me? It does make me happy to know that He knows how I hate sin and struggle against it. He knows that His people are hungering and thirsting after righteousness, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (*Mat 5:6*). Yes, He will fill us with goodness, for He Himself created this hunger within us. Some sweet day every saint will be as good as he wants to be.

4. God's silence does not mean that He has vacated His throne. God is still on His throne. He is still reigning, and working all things after the counsel of His own will. But He is not ruling openly and publicly. He is staging the drama of human history from behind the scenes. His reign is secret rather than public. He rules through Providence and Providence is always mysterious. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out" (*Rom 11:33*). The finger of God is at work today, but the world does not see it. He is performing miracles today, but not of a public character.

5. God's silence is not due to the lack of faith on the part of His people. This is not the reason for the absence of public miracles today. We are often told that if God's people had the faith of Peter and Paul and other early saints, that miracles would be as common now as then. We do not believe it. We are not arguing that any of us has the faith he ought to have, but this is not the reason for lack of miracles. Miracles were limited to the time of witnessing to Israel as a nation, and when the nation was turned from and the Gentiles were turned to, miracles ceased. Miracles were for the purpose of accrediting Christ to the Jews as their Messiah. Miracles were Christ's credentials to His people Israel. We give one incident to illustrate this: "And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean...And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them" (*Mar 1:40*; *Mar 1:44*). In this way he would be witnessing to the nation, through its priesthood, that there was one among them who could cure leprosy, and therefore, must be their Messiah. In spite of all the miracles, attesting the presence of their Messiah, the nation rejected Christ in His personal ministry and in the ministry of His apostles and then public miracles ceased.

**THE QUESTION POSITIVELY ANSWERED:**

1. The nature of God's work in this age does not require open and public miracles. If it did we may be sure that He would perform them. He is just as able to perform miracles by the hand of His servants today as when He performed them by the hands of the apostles and other saints long ago. This is the day of salvation, and miracles are not necessary to faith. I mean public miracles, such as the rich man in hades wanted performed when he begged that Lazarus might rise from the dead and preach to his five brothers, still living in unbelief in this world. He contended that if one should go unto them from the dead that they would repent. But he was advised that if they refused to hear Moses and the prophets, if they would not believe the Word of God, they would not be persuaded though one rose from the dead. "Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (*Luk 16:27-31*). "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (*Rom 10:17*). Miracles are not necessary to faith. A woman holding to unscriptural theories, was trying to convince D. F. Sebastian of the truthfulness of her position. Somewhat petulant at his diffidence, she said, "If you could see what I have seen, you would believe as I do." This quickwitted and deeply taught man of God promptly replied: "If you could hear what I have heard, you would believe as I do."

2. Miracles are not necessary to prove God's love for sinners. We have no right to ask God to perform miracles in proof that He loves us. The very request for such proof would be unbelief. We have His word that He loves sinners, and if we take the place of sinners and trust the Savior He has provided, we may be sure that He loves us. God has given ample proof of His love for sinners in giving His Son to die for them, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. and to perform a miracle for that purpose would be to put a premium on unbelief" (*1Jn 4:9*). Miracles did not save anybody in the days when they were common. Judas lived with Christ and saw most of His miracles, but he was not saved. Where most of His mighty works were done, the people were rebuked for their unbelief. Of the people of Jerusalem it is written: "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him" (*Joh 12:37*).

3. Public miracles have usually been associated with judgment. The miracles of Egypt were miracles of judgment. And miracles in the future are to be associated with judgment. When God gets ready to judge this wicked world, then he will begin to work miraculously. The finger of God will again appear on the earth. "Our God shall come and shall not keep silence" (*Psa 50:3*). He now manifests Himself to His people they see His miraculous hand in their affairs, but He hides Himself from unbelievers. His word satisfies His people, and He will not satisfy the idle curiosity of the wicked with miracles.

4. The Bible reveals that there will be miracles of a public nature during the last days of this dispensation, but they will be of the devil and not of God. Our Lord, in speaking of the signs of His coming, said "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (*Mat 24:24*). The word for "sign" in the passage is the same word usually translated miracle. "And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live" (*Rev 13:13-14*). In *2Th 2:9* : "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders" we learn that the coming of the "man of sin" will be after the working of Satan with all power and signs (miracles) and lying wonders. If there is anybody performing miracles today, the gift is not from God, but from Satan, and is a sign of the end time.

There is a clamor today in religion for the miraculous and sensational and spectacular. And this is because people tire of the word of God. People who are looking for miracles as a sign or proof of God's presence and favor are putting themselves in a good position to be deceived. What is supernatural is not necessarily Divine.

**THIS IS NOT THE DAY OF JUDGMENT**

This is the day of salvation, not the day of judgment. This is the day of the longsuffering of God. The only person who has the right to judge is Christ, and He is now on the throne of Grace. When He next breaks the silence it will be to speak in wrath and let loose the judgments that shall engulf the world. "Our God shall come and shall not keep Silence" (*Psa 50:3*). He is silent now, in this day of grace, so far as the public manifestation of Himself is concerned, but the day is coming when He shall speak unto them in His wrath and enemies to be made His footstool. He has spoken the last word to vex them in His sore displeasure. "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion" (*Psa 2:1-12*).

**A SILENT HEAVEN!**

Yes, but it is not the silence of a helpless and defeated God. A silent heaven! Yes, but it is not the silence of a callous and indifferent Father. A silent heaven! Yes, but it is not the silence of a Father who forgets His children. It is the silence which is the pledge and proof that the way is still open for the guiltiest sinner to draw near to God in Christ. It is the assurance that we are still living in the day of salvation. When the believer faints, and the infidel revolts, and men beg God to break His silence and show His hand on the earth, they little realize what that will mean. It will mean the withdrawal of amnesty; it will mean the end of the reign of grace; it will mean the closing of the day of mercy; it will mean the shutting of the door to the Ark of salvation; it will mean the dawning of the day of wrath, the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

"Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences" (*2Co 5:11*). "Because there is wrath, " we would warn men to flee the wrath to come. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (*Act 4:12*).

God has spoken to us in His Son. We have the message about His Son in the Bible. It tells us that eternal life is in Jesus Christ. It tells us that the Son was punished that sinners might not perish. Despise this message and reject the Son, and when God speaks again you will hear Him speak in tones of judgment. "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (*Joh 12:46-48*).

"Day of judgment, day of wonders Hark! the trumpet's awful sound, Louder than a thousand thunders, Shakes the vast creation round: How the summons   
Will the sinner's heart confound!

"See the Judge, our nature wearing, Clothed in majesty Divine;   
You who long for His appearing Then shall say, 'This God is mine:' Gracious Saviour,   
Own me in that day for Thine.

"At His call the dead awaken, Rise to life from earth and sea; All the powers of nature, shaken By His looks, prepare to flee: Careless sinner,   
What will then become of thee?

"But to those who have confessed, Loved and served the Lord below, He will say, 'Come near, ye blessed;' You forever   
Shall my love and glory know."

÷02-00 DEFINITIONS OF DOCTRINE VOLUME II   
Sin - Salvation - Service

by

Claude Duval Cole

**Information about the publication of C.D. Cole's writings**

The Bryan Station Baptist Church has begun the task of printing the writings of Claude Duvall Cole. His first volume of "Definitions of Doctrine" was a great book and was printed about 1944. It has been out of print for many years. This book is a great doctrinal work which exalts our Lord as very few books do. It will be a blessing to all who read it. I have used it in Bible study courses and it has been a great blessing to many others. We are printing this book and also other writings by Bro. Cole. Every one of his writings has a great spiritual depth which is not found in modern writers. We hope that these publications will be a help to all who will read them. It is for this purpose that we have undertaken this work as a part of the missionary work of our church. The Bryan Station Baptist Church was organized in 1786. It has stood for the truths taught in these books all of these years and still stands on these truths today. The cost of these books is based on the bare cost of materials. We will supply these books in any amount to all for the cost of publication.

Alfred M. Gormley   
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AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

The author' s first volume entitled, "Definitions Of Doctrines" was published about twenty three years ago. He had hoped the second volume would follow soon thereafter. However, our plans did not materialize, and the material in hand became somewhat scattered. Much of it was preserved by being printed in such papers as "Florida Baptist Witness", Jacksonville, Fla.; "The Gospel Witness", Toronto, Canada; "The Biblical Echo", Orlando, Fla., and others. The first volume had been out of print for several years: and the author, due to age and infirmities, had abandoned hope of publishing any more books. However, the Bryan Station Baptist Church, Lexington, Ky., became interested in our writings and was given permission to reprint Volume I on mimeograph, and this led to the printing of this second volume in the same fashion. And all this is in view of publishing these and other books in book form later.

The reader is asked to remember that some of the chapters in this volume have been taken from the above periodicals, while other chapters are of recent preparation. And for this reason there may be slight discrepancies; however, this will be minimal as the writer has held the same doctrinal beliefs throughout the fifty-five years of his ministry. We have tried to express our convictions forthrightly, and if read carefully and prayerfully will be easily understood. He also believes that the doctrines herein set forth are God-honoring. And if they prove to be man humbling, much more will be the blessing. "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (*Luk 14:11*).   
The brethren who wrote the Introduction and Preface to Volume I are now in glory. We have placed as an appendix a sermon by the dearest friend in the ministry we have ever known, and one of the greatest preachers the South has ever produced: the long time pastor of The First Baptist Church, Plant City, Fla. This sermon by Bro. Sebastian will warm the very cockles of the heart, and be worth the small cost of the book.

In Christian love, Claude Duval Cole February 24, 1968

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02-1-0 PART I - THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF SIN

÷02-1-1 THE NATURE OF SIN

Sin is a patent fact--its reality does not need to be argued. Sin is a fact of experience, of observation, and of revelation. Sin is something I feel in my own heart; it is something I see in others, even in my best friends and loved ones; and it is something revealed in the Bible. The policeman pursues it, the physician prescribes for it, the law discovers it, conscience condemns it, God controls and punishes it, and yet nobody likes to own it. But as a matter of fact, sin is all that anyone owns; he is a steward of everything else he may possess. Obvious as sin is, there is a proneness to treat it like some folks treat their trashy relatives; it is ignored and even denied.

Sin may be defined but it cannot be explained. To explain sin is to explain it away. How sin got started in the universe is a profound mystery. It had no place in the original creation, which God pronounced good. Sin is a parasite, an interloper, an outlaw cell in the moral system, and a terrible monstrosity. Sin made its appearance on earth in a garden of delights, after it had defiled the heavens, and turned this fair earth into a wilderness of woe. In the original creation we read only of heaven and earth, but later we are told of everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

Sin is a cheat, a deceiver, and a destroyer. It promises pleasure and pays off in pain. It promises life and pays off in death. It promises profit and pays off in poverty--the loss of all good. Every sin is committed for profit. Nobody would sin if he did not think it would profit in some form or other. There is profit in sin, but it is short-lived. Moses took a long look and made the wise choice. He chose to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. He esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. He chose in view of the day of judgment.

Sin is dangerous beyond expression and description. Sin is violation of the moral law of God, and violated law cries out for just retribution. Sin is against God, the Judge of all the earth, and must be accounted for before God. Crime is against human society. Human society may and does punish crime, but only God can punish sin. Human society may fail to punish the criminal, but God will not fail to punish the sinner who is without a Saviour. All crime against men is also sin against God, but all sin against God is not crime against men. Human society punishes men for what they do; God punishes men for what they are and in proportion to what they do. Every sinner will either be punished in his own person or in the person of a Surety and Substitute, even the Lord Jesus Christ, the Surety of the better covenant. The only possible way for any sinner to be brought into the favor of God as the Lawgiver was for Christ the Just to suffer for the unjust. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:" (*1Pe 3:18*).

**FALSE DEFINITION OF SIN**

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1901), says that original sin is neither more nor less than the brute inheritance which every man carries with him, and the process of evolution is an advance towards true salvation. According to this view, the human race is on the way to salvation; there is no hope for the individual; the race will be saved when the process of evolution has made it perfect. It is like the process of improving the razor-back hog by breeding. According to this view there is no individual responsibility and therefore no individual salvation. Poor hope for the individual who cries out, "What must I do to be saved?" Cold war everywhere, and shooting wars in various places, with terrible consequences to human happiness and safety, give the lie to the evolutionary process of salvation.

2. Christian Science: "Sin is a figment of a perverted imagination---an imaginary creation of abnormal minds." In other words sin does not actually exist; it is not a reality. Some people just imagine they sin, and this imagination is a disease of the mind. The man who is convicted of sin is unbalanced, and the man who mourns over sin and seeks forgiveness from God is terribly insane. Such nonsense is refuted by science, and Scripture, and common sense. When the prodigal came to himself, he said, "I have sinned." The insane man is the one who denies the fact of sin. "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us" (*1Jn 1:10*).

3. The Popular View regards sin as only crime against society. Sinners are young men sowing wild oats, prostitute women, murderers, and gangsters. Some seventy or more years ago the Japanese resented the preaching of Paul Kanamoro. They complained that he talked to them as if he were an official talking to convicts. They confounded sin with vice. They could not distinguish between sin and crime. Every person is a sinner, but all are not vicious or criminals. There are many virtuous women, but no sinless women. There are many lawabiding men but no sinless men. There are many beautiful babies, but no baby without a sinful nature. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (*Psa 51:5*); "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies" (*Psa 58:3*); "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (*Eph 2:1-3*).

**SOME TRUE DEFINITIONS OF SIN**

1. Westminster Confession: "Sin is any lack of conformity to, or transgression of the law of God." This is a good definition and includes both sins of commission and of omission. The moral law of God---the eternal standard of right and wrong is summed up in supreme love to God and to our neighbor as ourselves.

2. A.H. Strong: "Sin is any lack of conformity to the law of God, whether in act, disposition, or state." This is a better definition, since it recognizes sin as a condition of human nature. Sin resides in the heart; it is quality of being.

3. The Apostle John: "Sin is the transgression of the law" (*1Jn 3:4* b). Or more literally: "Sin is lawlessness." There can be no sin where there is no law. If there is no Lawgiver to Whom we must give account, then there can be no sin, for sin is lawlessness.

**MISSING THE MARK**

There is a Bible word which means "to miss the mark," and it is translated sin some 200 times in our Bible. Man has missed the mark--he has missed the purpose of his being. Man was created to reflect the glory of his creator, but he has missed this aim and has come short of the glory of God.   
Man is like a clock that fails to tell the time of day; he is like a car that will not run; he is like coal that will not burn. Man is a failure in the greatest and grandest enterprise--he has failed to glorify God.

**MAN IS OFF CENTER**

There is another word used to describe sin which means "to turn aside from the straight path." This conception of sin is expressed in "But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: they were turned aside like a deceitful bow" (*Psa 78:57*), where God complains that Israel has turned aside like a deceitful bow. And again in Isaiah where we are told that all like sheep have gone astray, and turned everyone to his own way. Man is off-center. Instead of revolving around God, and making God's will his chief delight, man has become a wandering star in the moral firmament.

**COMPETITION WITH GOD**

Sin may be defined as competition with God for sovereigntycompetition in the realm of authority. This view of sin is seen in the story of the first sin as recorded in Genesis three. The word sin does not occur in the account, but the fact of sin does, and the nature of sin is also clearly revealed. Satan told Eve that if they would eat of the forbidden fruit, their eyes would be opened, and they would become as God, knowing good and evil. And when the deed was done, God said, "Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil" (*Gen 3:22* a)

Now, in what sense did man become like God by sinning? Obviously, it was not in respect to character, for in sinning he lost the good character with which he was created. Nor can it mean that man acquired the Divine attributes such as power, holiness, and wisdom. In sinning man lost the power to live and die; he lost his original holiness and became filthy or depraved; and he lost the wisdom of his original creation and became a fool, sin brought death, depravity, and delusion. Sin is consummate folly.

The only possible sense in which man became like God was in spirit and aim--not in reality. Adam and Eve asserted their independence of God. They would make their own laws and do as they pleased. They rebelled against His will for their lives. They rejected His expressed will as to what they could have. They would determine (know for themselves) what is good and evil--what is right and wrong. They would no longer be tied to God's Word about what they could do. They would be a law unto themselves and do as they pleased. They would do that which was right in their own eyes. Thus, they entered into competition with God for sovereignty. In spirit and aim they made themselves God. They would make their own will supreme.

Every sin is competition with God in the realm of authority. If I have the right to determine what is right and wrong, then I am God - I am supreme in the matter of authority. Sin is, therefore, a decoration of independence before God, and this means war, for God has said "I am God, and there is none else" *Isa 46:9*). And again, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (*Exo 20:3*). Great Britain could do little about it when the American Colonies declared their independence-she lost the war. But there is much God can do with His rebellious creatures. The sinner is waging a hopeless war against his Creator. God is a jealous God and will tolerate no rivals or competitors. God is the one and only person in all the universe who has the right and the ability to do as He pleases. He is the only one who has the right to act for his own glory. All that God does, whether in mercy or in justice, is to the praise of His glory. Salvation is primarily to the praise of His glory. "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory" (*Eph 1:1-14*).

**THE REALITY OF SIN**

Is sin real? Ask Adam and hear him bemoan his loss of Eden. Is sin real? Ask Abel. He cannot speak, but his blood cries to God for vengeance against his murderer. Is sin real? Ask David and hear him say, "I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me." Is sin real? Ask the rich man in hell and listen as he says, "I am tormented in this flame." Is sin real? Ask Pharoah and hear him say, "I have sinned," when he discovered a dead boy in every home and a dead animal in every stable throughout all the land of Egypt, Goshen excepted because of blood of the passover lamb. Is sin real? Ask Peter and hear his confession: "Depart from me for I am a sinful man." Is sin real? Ask Christian parents and hear them as they pray for their godless children. Is sin real? Ask the Son of God and hear Him as He cries out under its terrible load, "My God, my God, why has Thou forsaken me." Is sin real? Ask the martyrs and let them tell you the price they paid for resisting sin unto blood.

The holier a man is the more he realizes what sin is. The fewer acts of sin are on the part of those who grieve over the state of sin. A J. Gordon, the great Baptist preacher of Boston, was a godly man, and yet just before he died, he asked to be left alone. He was overheard confessing his sins so extravagantly that it was thought he was in delirium. Luther was wont to cry out, "Oh, my sins, my sins" Jonathan Edwards was said to be the holiest man of his day, and yet his diary contains such abhorrence of himself as would make one think he was the most wicked of all.

**THE POTENTIALITY OF SIN**

Sin as an act of transgression is only a small part of sin. Nine tenths of the mass of an iceberg is below the surface, so that only a small part of the total is seen. And there is far more sin in every man than ever appears on the surface in actual transgression. The potential evil is about the same in every man. The Bible says there is no difference for all have sinned. If we have not sinned outwardly as much as others it is due to the restraining grace of God and not to anything good in our nature. When our Lord said that out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adultries, fornications, thefts, false witness, and blasphemies. He was not describing any particular heart but the heart of every man. When Paul said that the carnal mind is enmity against God, he was speaking of the mind of humanity.

**SALVATION THROUGH A CO-OPERANT**

The sinner is God's competitor; the Saviour is God's cooperant. The first Adam competed with God for sovereignty and ruined all of us; the last Adam, Jesus Christ, cooperated with God for our salvation. The first Adam said, "I will;" the last Adam said, "Not my will, but Thy will be done." The first Adam despised the will of God; the last Adam said, "I delight to do Thy will, O God." And God's will led Him along the rough road of suffering through gloomy Gethsemane to bloody Calvary, where He cried, "It is finished." All men are victims of the terrible tragedy of Eden; all believers are victors through the tragedy of Calvary. And may writer and reader bow in adoring wonder.

÷02-1-2 THE ORIGIN OF SIN

This is one of the most difficult questions in theology. Since God made everything good in the original creation, how did sin get started? How was a good creation thrown into rebellion against its Creator? By whom and how was sin originated? There is much we cannot know about the question. But there are some necessary inferences.

1. Sin is not eternal; it had a beginning. The Gnostics believed in two eternal principles: good and evil.

2. Sin was not created by God. God created everything good; He is not the Author of sin. Moral beings were without sin when created. Satan was created a sinless and perfect being "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee" (*Eze 28:15*). God made man upright. "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions" (*Ecc 7:29*).

3. Sin was not the necessary result of finiteness. Some claim that because God made man a finite being sin was inevitable. But if this be true, men will always be sinners for none of us will ever become infinite. Infinity belongs only to God.

4. Sin had its origin in a principle of negation, which means that it is not the result of any positive force. Moral beings were created good, but not immutably and independently good. This would have made them equal with God; it would have involved the absurdity of God creating another God. God alone is immutable and independent. There cannot be more than one God, self-existent and self-sufficient, sovereign and supreme.

Moral beings, angels and man, were dependent upon God in remaining good. A sustaining power must continually go out from God if moral creatures continue as created. "Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved" (*Psa 66:9*); "For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring" (*Act 17:28*); "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (*Col 1:16-17*); "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high:" (*Heb 1:3*). Now this sustaining power is of grace and not of debt. It is not a matter of justice. God could exercise this grace or not as it pleased Him. He could have upheld and confirmed in holiness all moral beings. He could have prevented sin from ever getting started among the angels, just as He graciously prevented it from spreading, confirming in holiness those referred to as the elect angels: "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality" ( *1Ti 5:21*). He could have kept the sinless Adam from sinning. It will not do to say that because God made Adam a free moral agent, He could not prevent his sinning without violating the freedom of his will. God withheld Abimilech, king of Gerar, from sinning by not allowing him to harm Sarah. "And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her" (*Gen 20:6*).

So sin had its origin in the withholding of that grace necessary to sustain moral beings in a state of holiness. If God had not permitted sin there could have been no display of some of His most glorious attributes. There would have been no display of mercy, for mercy must have an object of misery, and there could have been no misery apart from sin. There would have been no exhibition of wrath and anger and hatred, for these are the exercise of justice and holiness against sin. There would have been no display of such gracious love as is seen in God's gift of His Son, who was punished for sinners that they might not perish in their sins. Surely it is not too much to say that God permitted sin that He might overrule it "to the praise of the glory of His grace" (*Eph 1:6*). "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain" (*Psa 76:10*).

**THE FIRST SINNER**

Sin originated among the angels. That slimy, slippery, shining, subtle thing we call sin was hatched the day Lucifer, son of the morning, said, "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God... I will be like the most High" (*Isa 14:13-14*). Lucifer sought equality with God in government, and sovereignty was the bait he held out to man to turn him against his Maker. And in sinning, man has become the tool and ally of Satan.

Most people have a woefully inadequate conception of sin. Sin is the abominable thing God hates. Sin is something more than a slight misdemeanor for which God merely gives man a scolding; sin is a species of high treason against the Almighty and thrice-holy God, and is to be punished by consignment to the lake of fire.

**THE ORIGIN OF SIN IN THE HUMAN RACE**

In the human race sin was derived from the first man: "Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned" (*Rom 5:12* R.V.)

Now there are but two conceivable ways sin can pass from one to another. The one is by way of example, as Jereboam caused Israel to sin, and as Eve caused Adam to sin. The other is by partaking of the sin of another. It is obvious that our being sinners is not due to the force of Adam's example. Moreover, in the comparison between Adam and Christ "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (*Rom 5:19*), it is intended to show that sin came by Adam as righteousness comes by Christ. Now we do not become righteous by following Christ as an example, but by partaking of His righteousness. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (*1Co 1:30*). This raises the question of Adam's relation to his descendants.

**THE HEADSHIP OF ADAM**

Adam was the head of the human race. This headship was both natural and federal---natural by the principle of generation (like begets like); federal by Divine appointment.

1. Adam was the natural father or head of the race. "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation" (*Act 17:26*); "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit" (*1Co 15:45*). Every person was seminally in Adam. He begat children in his own moral and physical likeness, not before but after his fall. His children became heir to all his ills of body and soul. They inherited his moral depravity and physical weakness. His nature was imparted to his posterity. 2. Adam was the federal head of the race. This means that Adam was appointed a public and representative person. He represented the race in the covenant of works. "But they like Adam have transgressed the covenant" (*Hos 6:7* R.V.). The federal headship explains why Adam's sin was imputed (charged) to his posterity. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners" (*Rom 5:19*). Adam was acting for the whole race and what he did was charged to all his descendants. This is the only way to explain the death of infants. Infants die because of Adams' sin, or they die for no reason at all, since they have not sinned personally "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come" (*Rom 5:14*). If Adam did not represent infants in respect to sin, then Christ did not represent them in respect to salvation. If they were not guilty with Adams guilt, they could not be righteous with Christ's righteousness. Babies go to heaven, not on the grounds of innocency, but on the ground of the blood of Christ. If Christ had not died the whole human race, infants and all, would have been forever doomed. There will be nobody in heaven except those redeemed by the blood of Christ. Infants have the guilt of Adam imputed to them without their knowledge and consent. And on the ground of the death of Christ for them the Holy Spirit prepares their nature (which is sinful) for the enjoyment of heaven.

**THE FIRST AND LAST ADAM**

In And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven" (*1Co 15:45*; *1Co 15:47*), Jesus is called the second man and the last Adam. This is not in respect of existence, but representation. He is not considered personally but representatively. Considered as an individual. He was not the second man or the last Adam. Individually, there were many men between the Adam of Eden and the Adam of Calvary, and there have been many men since Jesus. He is called the last Adam because there are but two public or representative men. God deals with all men through two men, and our destiny depends upon which of these two men we have our standing in before God. Believers are accepted in the beloved "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved" (*Eph 1:6*), and are complete in Him "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:" (*Col 2:10*).

**GUlLT AND DEPRAVITY**

There are two aspects or branches of sin: (1) That which consists of the guilt of some deed committed: (2) Inherent corruption or depravity of nature contracted by that guilt. The sinner's standing is that of guilt before the law of God; his state is that of depravity or corruption of nature.

Two things resulted from Adams' first sin: (1) He was charged with guilt and condemned by the law of God: (2) He lost the likeness of God in holiness and became corrupt. Now which of these, or did both of these branches of sin, come from Adam? Some say the guilt of sin is imputed, hence their baptism of infants lest they should go to hell. Others say the corruption of nature was imparted. But we believe that sin in its two branches was derived from Adam. Guilt was imputed, and the corruption of nature was imparted or inherited. In other words, depravity or corruption of nature is one of the consequences of Adam's transgression. Does God punish the innocent? The answer is a loud, No! Then we must all have been represented by Adam in the transgression or we would not be punished with a sinful nature.

**THE FIRST ADAM DISCHARGED**

How many of Adam's sins were charged to his posterity? Only one for it is written, "For the judgment was by one (sin) to the condemnation, but the free gift is of many offenses unto justification" (*Rom 5:16*).

Adam could convey sin to his posterity only as long as he was a public or representative person. Immediately after his first sin, he was put out of office and another covenant was published "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (*Gen 3:15*). And when Adam exercised faith in the promised Redeemer, he was acting in a private capacity; otherwise, his faith would have been imputed as well as his sin. Let both writer and reader thank God for the last Adam who is a life-giving Spirit.

÷02-1-3 DEPRAVITY--TOTAL, UNIVERSAL, INHERENT

Depravity is a word that describes the state or disposition of man considered as a moral being. A moral being is one who is accountable to God for his thoughts, speech, and conduct. Depravity means the moral corruption of human nature; it refers to the state of sinfulness natural to the unregenerate.

Depravity is the opposite to what is required by the law of God. The sum of the divine law is love to God and our neighbor. "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (*Mat 22:37-39*). Paul says that love is the fulfilling of the law. "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (*Rom 13:8-10*). Depravity must consist then of the lack of love required by God, and the setting up of some other object or objects in the human affections. And all the objects set up in competition with God may be reduced to one, and that is self. Private self-love, to the exclusion of supreme love to God and equal love to men, is the very root of depravity. Self-will, self-admiration and self-righteousness are but different manifestations of depravity.

Depravity is that state of nature that causes man to put self in the place of God, and to seek his own gratification, honor, and interest as the ultimate end of all his actions. Every moral being ought to live and act for the highest good, and the highest good is the glory of God. Depravity is the corruption of nature that leads men to act for self glory. The very essence of sin is selfishness. Take the first and last letters off the word SIN and you have the letter "I". Take the word self and spell it backwards, adding the letter "H" and you have the word "flesh". And the Bible often employs the word flesh to denote the corrupt nature of man. "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not" (*Rom 7:18*); There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (*Rom 8:1-13*); "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (*Php 3:3*); "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (*Joh 1:13*); "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (*Joh 6:63*).

When Paul describes men under a variety of wicked characters, the first link in the chain is: "lovers of their own selves" (*2Ti 3:2*). This exclusive love of self is the fountain of depravity from which all-evil thoughts and actions flow; it is the womb from which all sinful expedients are born; it is the incubator in which all evil inventions are hatched.

Depravity is total, reaching to all the facilities of the soul; it is universal; taking in all men by nature; and it is inherent, by which we mean that it is the result of original sin, transmitted by natural generation or physical birth.

**TOTAL DEPRAVITY**

Total depravity means that man is depraved or corrupted in all the faculties of his being. It is not a question of degree but of extent. It does not mean that any man is as bad as he may become, or that he is as wicked as the devil. However, the potential evil is about the same in every man. The Bible says "there is no difference for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." If we have not sinned as much as others, it is due to restraining grace and not to anything good in our nature. When Jesus Christ said, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. He was not describing any particular heart but the heart of every man. John Bradford, a martyr, once watched the officers leading a criminal to the place of execution, and remarked, "there goes John Bradford but for the grace of God." The act of transgression is only a small part of sin. Eight ninths of an iceberg is below the surface of the sea. And potentially there is far more sin in everyone of us than every appears on the surface in actual transgression.

There are degrees in depravity. All men are not the same in the degree or amount of sin. Drop a grain of arsenic into a glass of water, and the water is totally affected. Every drop of the water is poisoned. Put in another grain of arsenic and the poison is not extended, but it is intensified. It is not poisoned in more of its parts, but each part to a greater degree. So man, a child of wrath by nature "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (*Eph 2:3*), may become more depraved.

The natural man is not depraved in spots, but the whole of his being is depraved. The "carnal mind is enmity against God" (*Rom 8:7*); "and the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked" (*Jer 17:9*); "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (*Mat 15:19*); the will is in bondage to sin "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day" (*Joh 6:44*), "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" (*Joh 5:40*); "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (*Php 2:13*). The human will is no better than the mind and the heart that controls it. Men choose what they do because of the state of their minds and hearts.

Total depravity means that man, as the result of original sin, is morally or spiritually dead. And dead as an adjective does not admit of comparison. There are no degrees of death, but there are degrees in death. Here is a physical corpse. The man has been dead one day. He is totally dead--dead in all the physical parts. Here is another corpse. The man has been dead one week. He is no more dead than the other man, but the corpse is in worse condition. Now the Bible presents the natural man under the figure of a moral or spiritual corpse. Here is a young girl of sixteen summers, beautiful, vivacious, and outwardly charming. She knows nothing of the life of the brothel. But that girl, if an unbeliever in Christ, is morally or spiritually dead. She is lacking in love to God and to her neighbor. Her depraved nature is manifested in pride of apparel, pride of beauty, disobedient to parents, lack of interest in the word of God, and rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here is another moral corpse. She is a woman of the brothel; her virtue is gone, and she is abandoned to a life of sin and shame. She drinks, and swears, and smokes, and lies, and steals, and breaks up homes. She is no more dead than the girl of sweet sixteen, but she is in a worse condition in moral death.

Moral death does not mean that man does not exist as a moral being. Death never means extinction of being, but a state or condition of being. The unregenerate man performs actions, but they are wicked. Theft, and murder, and lying are all acts of moral being, but they are wicked acts.

**UNIVERSAL DEPRAVITY**

Universal depravity means that all men are depraved. Every man, apart from inwrought grace, is lacking in that which the law of God requires. He does not love God, neither does he love his neighbor as he loves himself. It is only the born again ones who love God: "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" (*1Jn 4:7*); who understand the things of God "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (*1Co 2:14*); "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (*Joh 3:3*); "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (*2Co 4:4*); who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him" (*1Jn 5:1*); or who practice righteousness "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him" (*1Jn 2:29*).

In Noah's day it is said that "the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (*Gen 6:5*). Of David's day it was written: "There is none that doeth good, no, not one" (*Psa 14:3*). And Paul quotes this verse from David and applies it to the people of his day "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one" (*Rom 3:10*). The only men free from corruption of nature since the first Adam sinned and fell was the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, and his birth was not according to the law of natural generation. To deny the virgin birth of Jesus of Nazareth is to make him a sinner. And who wants to trust a sinner as Saviour?

**INHERENT DEPRAVITY**

Depravity of nature is transmitted to all men by natural generation. Like begets like; that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and the carnal or fleshly mind hates God.

The early appearance of sin in the child is proof that depravity of nature is inherited. The very first act that discovers reason in the child has sin in it. Watch the child when reason begins to dawn, and it will express itself by doing harm to others, or by lying, or by pride of apparel, or by natural inclination to revenge. Have not all parents quieted the baby by beating that which had hurt or offended it? The small child at the very dawn of reason manifests a spirit of revenge towards others and a dislike for God.

In Andrew Fuller's diary, under date of January 8, 1785, are these lines: "Much affected today in hearing my little girl say, 'How soon sabbath day comes again!' Felt grieved to see the native aversion of the carnal heart to God so early discovering itself."

Inherent depravity is seen in the fact that the child will sin without being taught to sin. "A child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame" (*Pro 29:15*). Only leave the child to act naturally and freely, and it will shame its mother. But we must be taught to do the things that are not natural. Take a person who has never been taught to swim and throw him into deep water he will drown. But take a horse or some other beast and plunge it into the stream and it will swim because nature hath taught him. Man sins naturally, but he has to be taught to do good.

Inherent depravity is directly taught in many Scriptures. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me" (*Psa 51:5*). David is not casting reflection upon his mother's virtue; he is confessing to a sinful nature received in birth. "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies" (*Psa 58:3*). In *Eph 2:3*, we read that we "were by nature the children of wrath." In "That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed" (*Rom 9:8*), we are told that the children of the flesh are not the children of God-and if not the children of God, they are the children of wrath, children of disobedience; yea, children of the devil.

The Scriptures which teach the necessity of the new birth prove that depravity is total, universal, and inherent. Regeneration is not of parts but of Persons, the whole psychic being is born again. And every man needs the new birth, for except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. If depravity were not hereditary, the new birth would not be necessary; training and education would bring one into the kingdom of God. If there were a spark of goodness it could be fanned into a flame, and a birth from above would not be essential to salvation.

**ILLUSTRATION**

The following supposed incident will illustrate the truth of depravity. A ship's crew mutiny put their officers in chains, and take command of the ship. They sail to a distant port, dispose of the cargo, and divide the money. But while they are on the voyage, they find it necessary, for self-preservation, to establish some kind of laws to govern them in their relation to one another. To these laws they adhere punctually, act with a degree of fairness with one another, and agree to an impartial distribution of their plunder. But before they reach port, one of the crew relents and becomes very unhappy. He insists that they are engaged in a wicked scheme. He urges that they release their officers, implore their forgiveness, and resume their duties under their command. But they plead their justice, honor, and respect for one another. They remind him that they are keeping the laws they had agreed upon, and that there is peace and harmony among them. But he tells them there is no virtue in it; that all their equity while exercised in pursuit of a scheme which violates the great law of justice, is itself, a species of iniquity. He shows them that they are running the ship for their own selfish interests and glory, and not in the interest of the owner. He urges them to repent of their wicked design. He pleads with them to release their officers, and plead for mercy.

The application of this parable is easy. As sailors on the ship of life the human race mutinied in the very beginning, and every one born upon the ship has joined in the rebellion. While there has been a semblance of law and order, and some respect for one another, every man, apart from the grace of God working in him, has lived for self rather than for God, the Creator and Owner of all. The need of every one is to repent of his sin towards God, surrendering to Him and hoping for mercy through the blood of His Son. May both writer and reader abhor themselves for what they were by nature and rejoice in what they are by God's amazing grace.

÷02-1-4 THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

"Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come" (*Mat 12:31-32*).

"Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit" (*Mar 3:28-30*).

"And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blashphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven" (*Luk 12:10*).

The writer believes that the above Scriptures are all that can certainly be applied to the question of the unpardonable sin. He does not believe that *Heb 6:4-8*; *Heb 10:26-31* have anything to say on the subject. They do indeed sound a solemn warning against apostasy, but they give no help in defining the unpardonable sin. As to *1Jn 5:16*, we are not so sure. Dr. Broadus thought it alludes to the unpardonable sin. Be that as it may, it throws no light on what the unpardonable sin is.

The unpardonable sin is a much abused and sadly misunderstood subject. It has, we fear, been used to frighten the unregenerate into the church, thereby making them twofold more the children of wrath. Wrong views of the matter have driven men to despair and, in some instances, into insanity.

**A NECESSARY DISTINCTION**

We must distinguish between an unpardoned sin and the unpardonable sin. There are many unpardoned sins, but only one unpardonable sin. All the sins of the finally impenitent and unbelieving will be unpardoned, but there is one sin for which there is no pardon. Murder may be an unpardoned sin, but it is not unpardonable. Any and every sin is a damning sin if not repented of. Our Lord clearly distinguished between the one sin that "hath never forgiveness," and all other sins that shall be forgiven on the terms of repentance and faith.

*I. WHAT THE UNPARDONABLE SIN IS NOT*

1. It is not any sin against men. Many are the sins men commit against one another, such as murder, theft, false witness, malice and envy. But none of these is the sin that will not be forgiven. Many have been guilty of these sins and through repentance and faith have been forgiven.

2. It is not any sin against Jesus Christ. Many are the sins against the Son of Man, such as denial of His deity and virgin birth, denial of His blood atonement, ignoring His claims of Lordship; in short, rejecting Him as the Lord Jesus Christ. These are sins of the deepest dye, but many who have been guilty of them have repented and found forgiveness. If rejecting Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord is the unpardonable sin, then well nigh everybody would have committed it. To be sure the man who rejects Christ until his time runs out will be unforgiven--all sins are unpardoned--but this does not mean that he committed the unpardonable sin. Our Saviour made it clear that it is not any sin against Himself, but a particular sin against the Holy Spirit.

3. It is not any sin against the decalogue or ten commandments. There is no sin covered by the ten commandments for which there is no provision of pardon. Christ died to redeem sinners from the curse of the law, therefore, there must be forgiveness from every part of the curse.

4. It is not any sin against God the Father. "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men."

5. It is not every sin against the Holy Spirit. There are sins committed directly and specifically against the Holy Spirit. He is grieved, resisted, quenched, and ignored. Believers may and do grieve, quench and ignore the Spirit. Unbelievers resist the Spirit in the objective ministry of His word. They resist Him by rejecting the call of the gospel and by opposing and persecuting the preachers of His word. The Holy Spirit is the Author of the Bible. "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:" (*Act 7:51-52*), the only passage in the New Testament where there is any mention of resisting the Spirit. To the Jews who stoned him to death, Stephen said, "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?" In rejecting the preaching of Stephen, the Jews were behaving as their fathers had towards the prophets, and Stephen called this resisting the Holy Spirit. Unbelievers resist the outward ministry of the Spirit in the preaching of the word until their resistance is overcome by the subjective work of the Spirit in the effectual call. Dr. Broadus says that resisting the Spirit and blasphemy against the Spirit "are quite different things."

*II WHAT THE UNPARDONABLE SIN IS*

1. It is expressly said to be blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. To blaspheme is to speak injuriously against somebody. Blasphemy is an insulting or slanderous remark about some one. Every blasphemy is not unpardonable; it is only the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. The Jews at Antioch spake against Paul and his doctrine, "contradicting and blaspheming" (*Act 13:45*). Paul, before his conversion, compelled the saints to blaspheme: "And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities" (*Act 26:11*). Paul tells the Jews that they caused the name of God to be blasphemed among the Gentiles: "For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written" (*Rom 2:24*). And Paul himself was formerly a blasphemer: "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief" (*1Ti 1:13*). But none of these cases was blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

2. The Scriptures with which we began this article give us a clear and unmistakable instance of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, and therefore, an example of the unpardonable sin. The Pharisees blasphemed against the Spirit when they said, "He hath an unclean spirit." (*Mar 3:30*). Matthew tells us that they attributed the miraculous work of the Spirit in Christ to Beelzebub, the prince of demons. Of course, they blasphemed our Lord too, in saying that He had an unclean spirit, but that was not what made their sin unpardonable. They recognized the Holy Spirit in the miracle, and slandered Him by calling Him an unclean spirit. And in doing this, they were guilty of an eternal sin.

CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THE SPIRIT IS BLASPHEMED

1. There must be an unmistakable work of the Spirit. Dr. Broadus thought the sin was committed in connection with public miracles, and therefore, not committed in our day. He says, in commenting on *Mat 12:31-32* : "There is here no allusion to the peculiar gracious office and work of the Spirit in calling, renewing, and sanctifying the soul; it is the Spirit of God as giving power to work miracles."

2. There must be knowledge that it is the work of the Spirit. Paul had blasphemed Jesus of Nazareth, and yet obtained forgiveness, "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief" (*1Ti 1:13*). Paul did not believe that Jesus spoke and wrought miracles by the Spirit of God. He was ignorant of the Spirit working in Jesus, sincerely believeing Jesus to be an impostor and possessed of an evil spirit. But the Pharisees knew better; they knew the miracles had been performed by the power of the Holy Spirit, and blasphemed against Him by calling Him Beelzebub, an unclean spirit. It was not a case of mistaken identity with them as it was with Saul of Tarsus. Thomas Goodwyn, one of the Puritans, says that two things are necessary in committing the unpardonable sin: "Light in the mind and malice in the heart." Anxiety or fear of having been guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is in itself evidence that one is not guilty of it. Those who are afraid they have committed the sin may be assured they have not.

*III WHY BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT IS UNPARDONABLE?*

1. It is not because the sin is too great for the blood of Christ to atone for. This would limit the intrinsic value of His blood. We believe the death of Christ is sufficient for the salvation of every accountable being, including the devil and his angels, had it been designed for them.

2. It is not because the sin is too great for the grace of God to cope with. Where sin abounds grace much more abounds. This is obvious when we consider some of the cases God has pardoned. Take, for example, the case of Manasseh, the wicked son of the godly Hezekiah, whose wicked career is recorded in *2Ch 33:2-10* : "But did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. For he built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down, and he reared up altars for Baalim, and made groves, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. Also he built altars in the house of the LORD, whereof the LORD had said, In Jerusalem shall my name be for ever. And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. And he set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God, of which God had said to David and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen before all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever: Neither will I any more remove the foot of Israel from out of the land which I have appointed for your fathers; so that they will take heed to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses. So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen, whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel. And the LORD spake to Manasseh, and to his people: but they would not hearken." Surely, if any man could sin away the day of grace, Manasseh had done so. Surely, if the enormity of offenses makes them unpardonable, those committed by this man must have been such. Surely, if there are crimes too much for the mercy of God to save from, it must have been those of which this Satan-controlled King was guilty. Surely, if there is a sinner too much for the Holy Spirit to cope with, it was this wretch who provoked God so grievously. And yet the happy sequel is the story of his conversion. Consider also the case of Saul of Tarsus, denominated the chief of sinners, who, by the grace of God, became the greatest exponent of the faith he once opposed. Truly, "Where sin abounded grace did much more abound."

3. The unpardonableness of sin must be attributed to the sovereign will of God. And He has sovereignly (I do not say arbitrarily) determined that there is one sin He will not forgive. He could if it pleased Him to do so. We believe with Job that "What His soul desireth, even that He doeth." There is one kind of sin for which there is no provision of pardon. Therefore, there is one kind of sin for which Christ made no atonement. There is one sin of which the Holy Spirit will not convict, and from which He will not convert. There is one sin God will not pardon. The Bible calls it blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, and we dare not call it by any other name.

The Holy Spirit is thus highly honored in the divine economy. His personality and deity may be denied by men and He may be contemptuously referred to in the neuter gender as "it," but He is in truth a person of high esteem in the Godhead.

"To God the Spirit's Name Immortal worship give,  
Whose new-creating power   
Makes the dead sinner live:   
His work completes the great design, And fills the soul with joy divine."

÷02-1-5 "UNABLE TO SIN"   
or   
THE IMPECCABILITY OF THE BORN AGAIN

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin: for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (*1Jn 3:9*).

This verse of Scripture plainly states that the person who is born of God cannot sin. It does not say, as some teach, that such a person is able not to sin. It is one thing to be "able not to sin," and quite another thing to be "not able to sin," for that would deny the doctrine of apostasy, a doctrine they believe and teach. It is obvious that if a person is unable to sin, he could not lose his salvation. There are those who teach that a person may get sanctified--get the so-called second blessing-get to where he is able to live above and without sin. But they also teach that the person who is able not to sin, may also be able to sin and be lost. But our text says emphatically that the born again person--the one born of God--cannot sin, that is, he is not able to sin.

**I REFUTATIONS OF THE TEXT**   
Our text refutes several well-known and prevalent errors in present day preaching:

1. It refutes the doctrine of apostasy, the teaching that one born again may sin and be lost. To quote the text in any translation is sufficient to disprove that a saved person may ever be lost again.

2. It refutes the teaching about a second blessing--a blessing subsequent to regeneration. This text is not speaking of any second blessing by whatever name it may be called; it is speaking of the new birth and of the one born of God. The inability to sin is not because of any second work of grace, but because of the initial work of the Spirit in regeneration.

3. It is against the idea that faith precedes and is the cause of the new birth. The new birth is the work of God; it is the birth of the Holy Spirit, Who is the sole Agent. There is no such thing as selfbirth, either in the physical or spiritual realm. In the physical realm, the mother gives birth to the child; no child is self-born. And in the spiritual kingdom--in the kingdom of God-the child is born of God. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is (Gk. has been) born of God" (*1Jn 5:1*). "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth" (*Jas 1:18*). Speaking of believers, John says, "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (*Joh 1:13* a). Faith is not the cause of the new birth, but rather the effect. Faith is a fruit of the Spirit: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith" (*Gal 5:22*).

**II THE MEANING OF THE TEXT**

Let us try to get at the meaning of this text. Does it mean that a born again person cannot sin in any sense whatsoever? To give it such a meaning is to turn Scripture against Scripture. Moreover, it makes the apostle John contradict himself.

In *1Jn 1:9*, it is written, that "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." But if we are not able to sin in some sense, there would be no sins to confess, and there would be sin in confessing that of which we are not guilty. In *1Jn 2:1*, we are told of provision made for sinning saints: "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." This must apply to the believer for no unbeliever has Christ for an advocate. In "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (*Heb 7:25*), we are told that Christ makes intercession for those who come to God by Him, which means that they plead Christ as the ground of their acceptance with God. "God accepteth no man's person." Our salvation is "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved," (*Eph 1:6*). And again, in "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it" (*1Jn 5:16*), we are specifically exhorted to pray for a sinning brother. It would contradict every book in the Bible and the experience of every believer who has ever lived to affirm that no regenerate person ever sins in any sense whatsoever. On the other hand, our text does teach unmistakably that in some sense every regenerate person is impeccable, that is, he is unable to sin; or rather, there is some kind of sin he cannot commit. So our task is to discover what the sin is, or in what sense he cannot sin.

**III VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS OF THE TEXT**

There are various interpretations of the text before us, and something can be said in favor of most of them. There is truth in these interpretations, but whether it is the particular truth of the text is another question. We will examine some of the interpretations and give our humble judgment of them.

1. There are those who teach that the born again person--the believer in Christ--is not under law, but under grace; and where there is no law, there can be no sin. The thought is that the born again person cannot sin because he is not under law. Now it is true that the believer is not under law "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (*Rom 6:14*), and it is also true that "sin is not imputed when there is no law" (*Rom 5:13*). "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (*Rom 4:8*). It is gloriously true that the sins of the believer are not charged to him; if they were nobody but a sinless person could be saved, which would preclude the salvation of anybody. The writer rejects this interpretation of the text before us, and this for two reasons. First, it is not a question of whether sin is charged; it is a question of whether sin is committed. There is some sense in which the regenerate person does not even commit sin. And in the text it is not because of position in Christ, but of condition by virtue of being born again. Second, the above interpretation smacks of antinomianism, which means being against the law. The believer is not under law as a way of life or means of salvation, but he loves the law as being holy, and just, and good; and is under law to Christ: "To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law" (*1Co 9:21*). Sin is by whomsoever committed. As an illustration of antinomianism, a Baptist preacher once proposed a shameful piece of conduct to another preacher, and when he was rebuked for such a proposal, said, "That would be all right; you know we are not under law but under grace."

2. There are others who interpret "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (*1Jn 3:9*) after this fashion. They remind us that the believer stands sinless in Christ, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. This is a glorious truth, but we do not believe it is the truth of our text. Surely this explanation is foreign to the apostles whole line of thought. John is not dealing with imputed righteousness, but with human conduct.

3. Then there is the idea that the new nature does not and cannot sin. This view of the text makes John have in mind what Paul did when he wrote of the conflict between the two natures of the born again person. "Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, 21); "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (*Gal 5:17*). But we are quite certain the apostle John did not have this truth in mind. He uses the personal pronoun: "Whosoever is born of God." He is not talking about what the new nature cannot do, but about what the person, who has been born again, cannot do.

4. A more likely interpretation is that the born again person cannot sin habitually--cannot practice sin as the rule or habit of his life. This was the view held by Dr. A. T. Robertson, who insisted that the tense of the verb demanded this interpretation. It is also the view of Dr. C. B. Williams, who says that the verb is the present of continuous action. Now it is true that one born of God cannot roll sin as a sweet morsel under his tongue--that he cannot cherish any sin, hug it to his bosom, and take it with him to heaven. The seed of God remains in him and he cannot live as an unregenerate. There is much that can be said in favor of this meaning of the text. It is favored by the context as well as by the tense of the verb. He that committeth (practices) sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth (practices sin) from the beginning. The devil takes no vacation in his career of sinning.

5. Dr. B. H. Carroll gives the verse this meaning: "Whoever is born of God sinneth not unto death." He thinks the context demands this explanation. The thought, as he sees it, is that one born of God may sin, but not unto death; his sins are pardonable. "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin; and there is a sin not unto death" (*1Jn 5:16-17*). The writer cannot go along with this interpretation for this reason: the verse is applicable only to one born of God while an unregenerate person may commit sins that are not unpardonable.

6. The writer has come to regard the interpretation given by Andrew Fuller as the most probable of any. Speaking of "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (*1Jn 1:8*) and "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (*1Jn 3:9*), Fuller says; "It appears that the word "sin" in these passages is of different significations. In the former it is to be taken properly, for any transgression of the law of God. If any man say, in this sense, he has no sin, he only proves himself to be deceived....But in the latter it seems from the context, that the term is intended to denote the sin of apostasy. If we were to substitute the term apostasy for sin, from the sixth to the ninth verse, the meaning would be clear. Whoso abideth in him apostatizeth not; whosoever apostatizeth hath not seen him, neither known him....He that is guilty of apostasy is of the devil; for the devil hath been an apostate from the beginning.....Whosoever is born of God doth not apostatize; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot apostatize, because he is born of God."

Fuller goes on to say that this sense of the latter verse perfectly agrees with what is said of "sin unto death" in "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin; and there is a sin not unto death" (*1Jn 5:16-18*). And he says it also agrees with chapter two, verse nineteen: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us" (*1Jn 2:19*). "Altogether," says Fuller, "it affords what we might presume to call an incontestable proof of the certain perseverance of true believers." The apostle is saying, that those who abandoned their former profession of faith and departed from them, had not really belonged to them as born again people. An if to say, that born again people do not apostatize from the true principles of faith. The born again person never renounces his faith in Christ, for he is "kept by the power of God through faith" (*1Pe 1:5*).

"We know that any one born of God does not sin, but he who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him" (*1Jn 5:18* R.S.V.) This is a better rendering than the authorized version, which makes the man born of God keep himself. Satan would have the believer turn away from Christ and renounce faith in Him, but he is kept by the power of God and cannot lose his faith. The devil cannot make apostates from the ones who are born of God. "Christ in you," says Paul, is "the hope of glory" (*Col 1:27*). Christ does not save the sinner and then abandon him to the devil. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (*Joh 10:27-28*). The man born of God perseveres in faith; if he should lose his faith, it goes without saying, he would lose his salvation. Stony ground hearers have only temporary faith and endure for a while only, because they do not have the root of the matter in themselves. But the one born of God is not like that, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (*1Jn 5:4*). Glorious victory is assured for all who make their calling and election sure!

÷02-1-6 THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN - 1

We are about to write upon a very solemn theme. The flesh will not be entertained, but the spirit may be profited. Much grace is always needed for a profitable hearing of God's word; the flesh which profiteth nothing will hinder. Our treatment of this theme will be admittedly heavy reading and it will require interest and effort on the part of the reader to get the truth. Many people have ruined their taste for good reading by feeding their minds upon trashy literature. What many people read is a revelation of their mental laziness and moral depravity. They demand that which will gratify their fleshly lusts. We are sometimes accused of speaking over people's heads, dealing with subjects they cannot understand. Well, the only way we could keep from speaking over the heads of some people would be for us to quote nursery rhymes and talk about rag dolls and stick horses.

No criminal will enjoy a lecture on the time, place and nature of the punishment to be meted out to him, and no lost man will enjoy a sermon on the punishment he will receive for his violation of the law of God. When "Pastor" Russell was speaking to a large crowd, in denial of the truth on this theme, a thoroughly worldly man promised him a liberal donation because he said it made him so comfortable to feel that there is no hell. And when Robert Ingersoll was once inveighing against the doctrine of eternal punishment, a drunkard stood up and said, "Make it mighty strong, Bob, for a lot of us fellows are depending on you." And every lost man vainly hopes that there is no such a thing and place as hell.

There is widespread denial of the truth about eternal punishment. I expect there is more literature being circulated today against this truth than against any other truth of the Bible. My good friend and brother, Dr. T.O. Reese, says: "The subject of eternal punishment is confessedly the most horrible and offensive doctrine held by evangelical Christians. It has been stigmatized as unreasonable, cruel, and God dishonouring, and those who teach and preach it have been called narrow bigots, Pharasaic dogmatists, and heartless theologians."

You can hardly name a modern sect that does not either deny or eviscerate this Bible doctrine. Besides such groups as Christian Science, Russellites, Seventh Dayists, and Christadelphians, there are many individuals in the evangelical denominations who boldly and brazenly deny this truth. We allow that no truth should be rejected merely because heretics may hold it, but when such an imposing array of them is on one side of a question, there is certainly need for serious reflection, and a challenge to "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

We are to preach upon this subject, first of all, because it is a part of the once delivered faith. Whatever God has revealed is to be our study and proclamation. Then, a discussion of this truth will increase the gratitude of the saints for their glorious salvation. They will see that they have been saved from something as well as to something. Moreover, a sermon on this solemn subject may, under God, put fear into the hearts of sinners, and cause them to flee the wrath to come. "Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee" (*Job 36:18*). "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (*Heb 9:27*). "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." (*Luk 13:3*).

**THE NATURE OF MAN**

Man is a compound being of three elements: body, soul, and spirit: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (*1Th 5:23*). We can also think of man as a dual being when we wish to differentiate between that which is material and that which is immaterial. Our Lord divided man into two constituent parts when he admonished us not to fear Him that can only kill the body, but to "fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell (gehenna)." (*Mat 10:28*).

The soul being the principal part of man is often employed for the man himself. In "And 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" (*Gen 2:7*), we read that God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life (Heb. lives) and he became a living soul, that is, a living person, or a living man. In "And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls: for Joseph was in Egypt already" (*Exo 1:5*), we are told that seventy souls came out of the loins of Jacob, meaning seventy persons. In "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water" (*1Pe 3:20*), we learn that eight souls, that is, eight persons were saved by water. The word soul is even applied to a dead person. *Num 6:6* : "....he shall come at no dead body." The word here for body is nephesh (soul), and the clause, if literally rendered, would be, "And he shall not approach a dead soul," that is, a dead person. The word nephesh (soul) is translated body eight times in our English Bible. But this must not be taken to mean that soul and body are the same, for our Lord clearly distinguished between soul and body.

In the New Testament the immaterial part of man is spoken of as the real person in distinction from the body as the house in which he lives. *2Co 5:1* : "....we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, ....for in this we groan,...." The pronoun "We" so often occurring in this passage stands for the immaterial and invisible part of man, which dwells for a while in the mortal body, and then moves out to go to be with Christ. This certainly teaches conscious existence with the Lord after death.

The Scriptures also teach the conscious existence of the lost after death. The rich man was in conscious suffering after the death of the body, and Lazarus was in conscious comfort. The rich man's body was buried and the soul or spirit of Lazarus was taken into Abraham's bosom by angels. Their experiences after death could not have been bodily experiences, therefore, they were possessed of another element which had conscious existence after death.

**NOT A PARABLE**

I do not call the story of Lazarus and the rich man a parable. Our Lord did not say, "Hear another parable" neither does the Holy Spirit say that He was speaking in parables. The following extract from a well-known writer is worthy of consideration:

"The rich man and Lazarus I am not free to regard as a parable, while having no controversy with those who so regard it. Not only is it not called a parable, but names are introduced, a thing without precedent in our Lord's parables. I prefer to look at the rich man and Lazarus as actual characters, whose history in this world and beyond is solemnly traced by the Lord for the moral profit of men everywhere."

What is said of the two men in this life is quite in keeping with actual occurrence, therefore, what is said of them in death and afterwards must also be true to facts. We grant that the physical torment is symbolical, but it is a symbolism of soul torment. Is the symbolism terrible? Then the truth intended to be taught is also terrible.

**THE MARTYRED STEPHEN**

When Stephen was martyred his body fell in death under a hail of stones, but he said to Christ, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Physical death is the separation of the spirit from the body. James says that "the body without the spirit is dead" (*Jas 2:26*).

**PAUL'S EXPERIENCE**

Paul had some wonderful experiences on account of which he was given a thorn in the flesh to keep him humble. Once he was caught up into paradise, where he heard "unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter" (*2Co 12:4*). He says that he did not know whether he was in the body or out of the body; only God knew. This certainly teaches that a disembodied spirit can consciously exist and be intelligently active. Paul, as some today do, did not think a disembodied spirit is a self contradiction.

÷02-1-7 THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN - 2

"The wages of sin is death," God said to Adam, concerning the forbidden fruit, "in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (*Gen 2:17*). This threatened penalty of death was not pronounced upon Adam as a private individual merely, but as a public and representative person. It was a race penalty. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (*Rom 5:12*). The first sin was a race sin and the penalty thereof must have been a race penalty. The whole human race was in Adam, the first man, both seminally and legally, and his act was considered as their act; not personally but representatively. Every man by nature is guilty with Adam's guilt, just as every believer is righteous with Christ's righteousness. Believers are not righteous personally, that is, by their own obedience; they are righteous representatively by the obedience of Christ, their Surety.

The death threatened against, and passed unto, all men was not a corporeal death merely. Physical death is a mere incident and is not universal. There have been two notable exceptions (Enoch and Elijah), and there will be many alive, who will not die physically, when the Lord returns. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed ... for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (*1Co 15:51-52*). Furthermore, physical death did not occur until some 930 years after the sin was committed; whereas God said, "in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (*Gen 2:17*).

The death which passed unto all men was the loss of divine favor and exposedness to divine wrath. It was not the death of man considered as a physical being but as a moral and accountable being. Moral death was the result of a break with God. Man broke with God when he tried to seize the reins of government and do as he pleased. Sin separates from God and brings His condemnation. Physical death is the result of the separation of the body and spirit "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (*Jas 2:26*). Moral death is the result of separation of man as a moral being from God. The sinner, although alive physically, is alienated from the life of God "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (*Eph 4:18*); "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled" (*Col 1:21*).

**LIFE AND DEATH**

The words life and death are antonyms, and it is axiomatic that a man cannot be both dead and alive in the same sense at the same time. But one may be dead in one sense and alive in another sense at the same time. This is obvious from the saying of our Lord: "But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead" (*Mat 8:22*). He meant for those dead morally to bury the physical dead.

Life and death are not synonyms of existence and nonexistence, but rather of condition of existence. Death never means non-existence or the cessation of being. In the moral sense life is a condition of existence, and death is the opposite condition of existence. To have life as a moral being is to exist under the favor of God and to be free from the wrath to come. To be dead as a moral being is to exist without His favor and to be exposed to His wrath. This will become more apparent as we continue these discussions.

**THE SECOND DEATH**

The second death is punishment in the lake of fire. And this will be for both soul and body of the lost. Physical death is not everlasting, for "there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" (*Act 24:15*). Death (dead bodies) and hades (lost souls) are to be cast into the lake of fire. "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death" (*Rev 20:14*). And this is the second death. We will not here and now give proof that the second death is eternal. This will come out in a later article (D.V.). However, it does not seem reasonable that the fire will burn them up in the sense of putting them out of conscious existence. If this were true the only difference between the martyred saints and the wicked would be in time and place of suffering. The martyrs (many of them) were burned to death, and if their tormentors are only to be burned up and put out of existence, then their salvation was not the previous thing they supposed it to be. A brother who believes in conditional immortality wrote me that he knew of no Scripture that taught that the wicked would suffer in hell longer than five minutes. Cheap salvation! Sweet morsel to the wicked! If that were true.

Man is both a physical and a psychic being, that is, he has both body and soul. As a physical being his body was made of the same substance as that of the beasts of the field. "And 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....And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof" (*Gen 2:7*; *Gen 2:19*). As a psychic being he became a living soul when God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (Heb. lives). This is not said concerning the origin of the soul of the beast. The beast has a soul (this will be proven later), but it did not get its soul like man got his. Man as the acme of creation was made in the image of God, which must mean that he has something which does not belong to the beast of the field. This image of God in man is spirit. God is a Spirit and man must have a spirit to be in His image. In making man a living soul, God communicated to him that which made him in His image. Man, by virtue of his creation, has a body and a soul which gives him kinship with the beasts, but he also has a spirit which relates him to God. F.W. Grant makes a very helpful distinction between the soul and spirit:

"The "soul," is in Scripture the seat of the passions, emotions, sensibility, as the spirit of the mental and moral judgment. These latter, in any real sense, the beast has not. The spirit it is which is in man, which knows the things of a man "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (*1Co 2:11*). But he learns them, gathering the materials of judgment through the soul-the senses; and as the body begins to develop before even the soul, so does the soul before the spirit. Spirit in man depends, thus, really upon the soul; and it is striking that just when absent from the body his real distinction begins to manifest it self. The soul survives, indeed, the stroke of death; but is now called what he never was before, a 'spirit' "But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit....Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have"   
(*Luk 24:37*; *Luk 24:39*); "For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both. And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God" (*Act 23:8-9*); "To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect" (*Heb 12:23*): "By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;" (*1Pe 3:19*).

Grant tells us that man is called Adam, from Adamah (Heb.), the ground, to remind him of his origin "dust thou art"; and he is called a soul to remind him of his likeness to the beasts; but he is never called a spirit until after he takes his departure from the body. We read of the spirits of just men made perfect, and of spirits in prison.

**THE FIRST DEATH**

Man as a physical and also a moral being is subject to two kinds of death: namely, physical and moral. There is only one physical death for any man. "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment" (*Heb 9:27*). Notice the accuracy of Scripture. It is not "man" the generic, but "men" as individuals. Physical death is not appointed for "man" the whole race, but for men. We have already pointed out exceptions.

Man considered as a moral being may experience two deaths: the first and the second. All who are saved will experience but one death; all who are not saved will experience two deaths. "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death" (*Rev 2:11*). Nobody has escaped the first death, for that death passed upon all men.   
The first death is also clearly defined in the Scriptures. It is to be "dead in law," or judicial death. It is to be dead in trespasses and sins. It is death in the sense of guilt and depravity. It is the death of condemnation. The antithesis of judicial death is "justification of life." "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life" (*Rom 5:18*). "He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (*Joh 5:24*). Everlasting life is equivalent to justification and is opposed to condemnation. As a moral being the believer is justified by God, and will never be condemned. He has passed out from under the curse of God's law and exists under the favor of God. Life and death in the judicial sense are generally overlooked by commentators.

The believer is told to "reckon himself as dead to sin and alive to God through Jesus Christ" (*Rom 6:11*). This means that the believer is dead to the guilt of sin--no longer exposed to the wrath of God; and that he is alive or justified before God by virtue of the imputed righteousness of Christ. We also have this aspect of life and death in *1Jn 5:12* : "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." And again in *Joh 3:36* : "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." The sword of divine justice hangs over the head of the unbeliever; the benedictions of the heavenly Father are pronounced upon the believer in Christ.

**÷02-1-8 THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN - 3**

We are hearing much about the complacency of the American public concerning the outcome of this war. But there is a complacency far more prevalent and in the face of infinitely greater danger. There is a complacent attitude towards HELL that is so alarming as to be shocking and heart-breaking. And it is our firm conviction that this complacency is the result of failure to preach the truth on the solemn and momentous subject of eternal punishment. Those denominations that deny eternal punishment have literally sown the country down with their pernicious proaganda. They have put their "no hell" doctrine in nearly every home in the land, while we Baptists and other evangelicals have hardly raised our voice in giving the truth on the subject.

We have our theme songs for certain occasions; why not have our theme texts for the present distress? And let them be after the order of *Mat 10:28* : "And fear not them which kill the body, but fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Gehenna). Too much of our preaching is for entertainment rather than for information. We are trying to have conversions without conviction. We are calling the selfrighteous into the church when we ought to be calling sinners to repentance. We are breaking alabaster boxes and filling our sermons with the odor of spikenard when we ought to be telling the truth about human depravity. We are tying pink ribbons of perfection about the necks of our people when we ought to be waving the red flag of warning. We have let our prejudice for heaven hide the terrible realities of hell.

**A STUDY OF WORDS**

Those who oppose the truth of eternal punishment make a show of wisdom and confuse the average person by their use of Hebrew and Greek words. We make no claim to scholarship, and anybody who can even use Young's Analytical Concordance can follow us in this study of words.

**QEBER AND SHEOL**

QEBER is the Old Testament word for grave and is always used in connection with the body. It is translated grave or its equivalent in every place. It is never used in connection with the soul.

SHEOL is the Old Testament word for the unseen state, and is the place of departed spirits. It never means the grave; although in the King James Version it is wrongly translated grave 31 times. In the Revised Version it is brought into the English text without being translated.

Man has both body and soul and in death QEBER is the word used of the disposition of his body and SHEOL speaks of the disposition of his soul . There is conclusive evidence that the two words are not interchangeable. QEBER, the grave, refers to locality; SHEOL, the state of disembodied souls, is a condition.

QEBER occurs in the plural 27 times; SHEOL never occurs in the plural. The burial of one hundred bodies in a cemetery would mean one hundred graves, but the entrance of one hundred souls into SHEOL would not mean one hundred SHEOLS, but the one state of disembodiment.   
QEBER is referred to as the exclusive QEBER, or grave, of an individual. For example, "my grave (qeber)" in *Gen 50:5*; "grave" (qeber) of Abner *2Sa 3:32*; "their graves" (*Jer 8:1*). etc.

SHEOL is never spoken of as the exclusive SHEOL of any person. The one condition of disembodiment is common to all who have died.

SHEOL is associated with pain and sorrow. "The sorrows of hell (sheol) compassed me about," (*1Sa 22:6*). "The pains of hell (sheol) got hold upon me," (*Psa 116:3*).

QEBER is never associated with suffering, for the body in the grave is unconscious, and cannot feel pain or experience sorrow. SHEOL is always connected with the soul, never with the body. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (sheol)." (*Psa 16:10*). QEBER is never connected with the soul, but always with the body.

**HADES AND MNEMEION**

These are New Testament Greek words and are identical with the Old Testament Hebrew words SHEOL and QEBER. Hades, like SHEOL, means the unseen state of the disembodied soul; MNEMEION, like QEBER, means the grave. All that has been said about QEBER may also be said about MNEMEION, for both are connected with the body and mean the grave. And to prove that SHEOL and hades are identical it is sufficient to compare an Old Testament Scripture with the New Testament quotation:

"Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (sheol); neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption," (*Psa 16:10*).

"Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (hades); neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (*Act 2:27*). The reference in the above verses is to our Lord. His soul was in SHEOL or HADES between His death and resurrection. His body was in the grave, but it did not see corruption. This condition of body in death was peculiar to Christ. Of David it is said that he "fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: But he whom God raised again, saw no corruption" (*Act 13:36-37*). "Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption" (*Act 2:27-31*).

**THE SEPTUAGINT**

This is the name of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament made by the Jews of Alexandria, about 280 B.C., under order of Ptolemy Philadelphus, King of Egypt. In this Greek translation, out of the 65 times in which the word SHEOL occurs, the seventy render it Hades 61 times. Not once do they translate it grave (MNEMEION).

**GEHENNA**

This is a new word introduced by our Lord. Gehenna is translated hell nine times and hell-fire three times. It belongs almost exclusively to the vocabulary of our Saviour, being found only one time: "And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell" (*Jas 3:6*), when not employed by Him. Gehenna is the place of eternal punishment, and the only word rightly translated hell. It is not the grave, the place for dead bodies; nor is it hades, the place of departed souls. It is the place for both soul and body of the wicked after their ressurrection and judgment. Hades is temporary, as also is physical death. "And death (thanatos) and hell (hades) were cast into the lake of fire" (*Rev 20:14*). Gehenna (hell is eternal). "...two hands to go into hell (gehenna), into the fire that never shall be quenched" (*Mar 9:43*).

Gehenna is the Grecianized from of Ge-hinnom (valley of Hinnom), which became a place of the heathen worship, not far from Jerusalem. Ahaz and Manasseh were promoters of foreign religions and set up the horrible worship of Moloch, the god of the Ammonites, in this Valley of Hinnom. Moloch was represented by a hideous ox-headed human figure made of iron and hollow. A fire was built in this image and when it was red hot a living child would be cast into its arms and thus sacrificed to this heathen god. The good king Josiah put a stop to this idol worship "And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech" (*2Ki 23:10*). This valley later on became the city dump for Jerusalem and the garbage of the city was kept continually burning. And because the fires never went out, our Lord employed it as the symbol of the lake of fire, the place of eternal punishment. While a fit emblem of hell, it must be carefully noted that our Lord in speaking of Gehenna never referred to the city dump of Jerusalem except as an emblem to designate that place of eternal torment for the wicked. He was not saying that all the lost will be thrown into the valley of Hinnom. The city dump of Jerusalem is not the place of eternal punishment, but only an emblem or figure of it.

**÷02-1-9 THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN - 4**

In this article we wish to deal more specifically with the duration of the punishment to be meted out to the finally impenitent and unbelieving. The Bible is quite clear and explicit that the punishment is to be eternal or endless.

The Annihilationists try to make a distinction between eternal punishment and eternal punishing. A man remarked to us only a few days ago that he believed in eternal punishment but not in eternal punishing. We reminded him that the words were the same: that punishment is the noun form and punishing the verb. Moreover, in the expression, "eternal punishing," the participle is used as a noun, and therefore, means the same as "eternal punishment". In a certain conference of Annihilationists, they put forth this statement: "We believe in eternal punishment, not eternal punishing---the latter a great delusion, the former a great truth." But this is a distinction without a difference. When A.J. Pollock was once told by two Adventists that eternal punishment does not mean eternal punishing, he asked: "Does three months' punishment mean three months punishing?" They admitted that it does. "Then, he replied, eternal punishment means eternal punishing."

DESTROY -PERISH-LOSE-CONSUME -BURN -UP

There are some who contend that the above words mean to annihilate or to put out of existence. We affirm that they speak of the destruction of well-being, and not the destruction of being. They speak of ruin but not of loss of existence.

*Hos 13:9* "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thine help." Here God is addressing people who have destroyed themselves, but they are still conscious, and are told their help is in Him.

*Job 19:10*; "He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone." But Job was still in existence, and lamenting the ruin or destruction that had been visited upon him by God.

*Jer 5:3* : "Thou hast consumed them but they have refused to receive correction." How could they have refused to receive instruction if they had been annihilated? A good way to test the definition of any word is to substitute the definition for the word. Let the reader go back and substitute the word annihilation for the words destroy and consume in the above passages, and he will readily see that they do not mean annihilation.

The Greek word "apollumi" is variously translated into the English by such words as destroy, perish, and lose. That this word does not mean annihilation is obvious when we study verses where it is used. Paul says that if his Gospel is hid to the lost (apollumi). And he says that the preaching of the cross is to them that are perishing (apollumi) foolishness. In *Joh 3:16* "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" , "apollumi" is translated perish and is contrasted with everlasting life in Christ, which is judicial life, or everlasting existence under the favor and blessing of God. In *Joh 3:36* "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" , we read that he who does not trust Christ shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth (remaineth) on him. The prodigal was said to be lost (apollumi). The woman's coin was lost (apollumi). The sheep were lost (apollumi). How obvious that the word "apollumi" does not mean extinction of being! Another word in the Greek is "katakaia" translated burn in our English Bible. It is not the word which means to burn as a lamp, for profit; it means to burn so as to hurt or injure. The wicked are likened to worthless chaff and tares: "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable" (*Luk 3:17*), but the burning of these things is not the same as burning men with bodies and souls. Of the burning of the wicked it is written, "their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched" (*Mar 9:46*). "Their worm," refers to something that does not die, and "the fire" speaks of fire that is not quenched. Dr. Gill thinks the worm is the conscience which will continually remind the wicked of their sins, accuse them, upbraid them, and torment them. "For every one shall be salted with fire and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt," (*Mar 9:49*). This is the most terrible picture ever given of the punishment of the wicked, and it is clearly a picture of endless suffering.

**EVERLASTING AND ETERNAL**

Opponents of eternal punishment claim that the primary meaning of "aion" and "aionios" is not endless. But if they had to translate from the English back into the Greek they would have to use "aion," and "aionios" as the meaning of everlasting or eternal. If these words do not mean everlasting then we do not have any words in the Greek to denote endlessness.

We are fortunate to have a Scriptural definition of "aionios." In "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (*2Co 4:18*), it is contrasted with the word temporal (proskairos); "but the things which are not seen are eternal (aionios)." The word proskairos (temporal) is found in three other places in the New Testament. In "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;" (*Heb 11:25*), it is translated "for a season" referring to the "for a while," and in "And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended" (*Mar 4:17*), it is translated "but for a time." Now in contrast "aionios" speaks of that which is not for a season, or for a while, but for ever.

Mosheim, a man of unquestioned learning, says that "aion" properly signifies indefinite or eternal duration, as opposite to that which is finite or temporal.

"Aionios" is used in the Greek New Testament 68 times, and in every instance the word in itself has the meaning of endless duration. Here are a few texts to be pondered. "The eternal God" (*Rom 16:26*); "The eternal Spirit" (*Heb 9:19*); "Eternal redemption" (*Heb 9:12*); "Eternal salvation" (*Heb 5:9*); "Eternal life" (*Joh 3:15-16*; *Joh 3:36*; *Joh 5:24*); "Eternal glory" (*2Ti 2:10*); "To be cast into everlasting fire" (*Mat 18:8*). Now take a text where life and punishment are in contrast: "And these shall go away into everlasting (aionios) punishment but the righteous into life eternal" (aionios). *Mat 25:46*. If the life of the believer is eternal then the punishment of the wicked is eternal; else words have no meaning.

This is a good place to say that everlasting and eternal are adjectives of duration and not of quality or kind. They do not describe the kind of life the believer has, nor the kind of punishment for the lost, but the duration of life and the duration of punishment.   
The only way to oppose the doctrine of eternal punishment is to oppose the Bible. Opposition to this truth is born of prejudice and sentimentality, and sets aside the Word of God. One writer bluntly says:

"If the Bible teaches "everlasting punishment," so much the worse for the Bible, because we cannot believe it: you may quote texts and have behind the texts the very finest scholarship to justify certain interpretations, but it is no good. We are no longer slaves of a Book, nor the blind devotees of a creed; we believe in love and evolution."

And another writer writes thus: "Of course God cannot be just if He arbitrarily and rigidly predestines millions to endless torment. Hence if holding to the dogma of endless torment, logically rejects predestination to save divine justice."

This last question "lets the cat out of the bag," and reveals the real ground of opposition. God's right to punish sin is denied. Men dare to sit upon the bench and tell God what He can justly do with His enemies. Who fixes the penalty for sin, anyway, the criminal or the court? We are reminded that "No thief e'er felt the halter draw with good opinion of the law."

**DEGREES IN PUNISHMENT**

The Bible is plain that all sinners will not suffer the same. It will be more tolerable for some than for others. It shall be easier on the heathen countries than on those which have spurned Gospel privileges. "But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you...But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee" (*Mat 11:22*; *Mat 11:24*); "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city" (*Mar 6:11*). "....unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required" (*Luk 12:48*). Judgment is to be according to works: "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works" (*Rev 20:13*). Degrees in punishment does not mean that some will be more severe than others. "Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation" (*Mar 12:40*), speaks of some who shall receive greater damnation. "Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee," (*Job 36:18*).

÷02-2-0 PART II - THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

÷02-2-01 THE NATURE OF SALVATION

Salvation--the most important word ever uttered, and yet how meaningless to the masses whose minds are set on things on the earth!

Salvation-the greatest blessing that can possibly come to a human soul, and without which it would be better never to have been born, and yet the most neglected thing in the world!

Salvation-the blessed gift of God--without money and without price--paid for by His blessed Son, and yet that which conceited men think they can earn with their own puny hands!

Salvation presupposes the fact of sin. And sin involves a Supreme Being Whom we call God. If there is no God, there can be no sin, and if there is no sin, there can be no sinners, and if there are no sinners to be saved, there can be no salvation. Salvation means deliverance, and Bible salvation is deliverance from sin.

Sin consists of a guilty standing and a depraved state before God. Salvation is deliverance from both guilt and defilement. Salvation is to be made safe and sound in relation to the thrice-holy God. Man, as a sinner, is in danger from the wrath of a holy and just God, and is also outside the pale of Divine fellowship. Salvation is deliverance from the eternal consequences of rebellion against the government of Almighty God. Without salvation the sinner is forever excluded from the glorious presence of God and forever exposed to the terrible wrath of God.

**THE NEED OF SALVATION**

In the light of eternity salvation is the only need. In comparison all other needs fade into insignificance. All other needs are temporal; salvation is for eternity. All other blessings are for a season; salvation is an everlasting blessing. It is called everlasting life. The opposite of everlasting life is everlasting punishment in the lake of fire, called the second death.

Salvation covers every eternal need. It covers the housing problem, for in the Father's house are many mansions. It covers the food problem, for Christ is the bread of life of which one may eat and never hunger. It covers the employment problem, for the saved will serve God day and night in His temple. It covers the social problem, for the saved of all the earth will sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God--all language and cultural barriers will vanish. It covers the health problem, for in the new heavens and the new earth there will be no more pain, for the former things are passed away. Moreover, God Himself shall dwell with His people, and will wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Salvation is a universal need, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Every normal person has a guilt complex. A New York preacher once announced as his subject, "How to Get Rid of Guilty Feelings." He told the audience he would pause while all who were free of guilty feelings might leave the building. To his surprise nobody left. He said he would not have been surprised if it had been a small town congregation where everybody would be known to each other, but in New York where all were more or less strangers to one another, he had not expected all of them to acknowledge they were sinners. But that New York congregation were true to their feelings in this matter-every one of them had a guilt complex. This, in itself, is proof of the existence of God. Conscience testifies loudly to the fact that there is a God with whom we have to do.

The story of religion is made up of the efforts men make to get rid of guilty feeling. This is the explanation of what is called "conscience money;" the thief is trying to get rid of his guilty feelings by returning what he had stolen. This is why the Romanist goes to confessional; he is wanting to get something off his conscience. This is the explanation of Communism; the Communist rids himself of a guilty feeling, if and when he can persuade himself to believe there is no God to Whom he must give an account. The very fact that the atheist raves against the idea of God indicates that his own conscience gives him trouble on the question. This accounts for all heathen religions; people are striving to get rid of guilty feelings. It explains the faith of God's elect; they are trusting Christ for acceptance with God and freedom from condemnation.

Human nature is bad. The Bible does not have one good thing to say about man apart from the inwrought grace of God. The Bible says "the carnal mind is enmity against God;... and that they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (*Rom 8:7-8*). Man, as a sinner, is beyond repairs; he must be born again--there must be a new creation. Donald F. Ackland puts this truth in another way, when he says that sin has created a God-shaped vacuum in the human heart, and that the story of religion is the way men try to fill that vacuum.

We do not find human nature fully developed in countries where gospel privileges have been enjoyed over a long period of time. Christ said that His people would be the salt of the earth. Salt is a preservative, and saved people will preserve human society from utter moral corruption. Many are blessed temporarily by the gospel who are not eternally saved by it. Humanity as such is safer in a community where there are Christian people.

When Carey went to India about 165 years ago, he found human nature in the rough, human nature fully developed. Andrew Fuller tells us what Carey found in India. He found religions by which the natives were trying to get rid of guilty feelings. These religions consisted in a large part in self torment. One would hold his hand above his head until it would be so stiff he could not take it down. Another would lie on iron spikes just blunt enough not to pierce him to death. They had what was called the worship of the Juggernaut. A massive wooden god was carried on a huge carriage drawn by many men howling and shrieking, and anyone who would throw himself under its wheels to be crushed to death was counted happy. Another part of their religion was the burning of widows on the funeral pyre of their dead husbands. It was common to throw new--born infants into the river as offerings to the gods. And the baby that would not take its mother's milk would be placed in a basket and hung in the branches of a tree to be devoured by ants and birds of prey. And that was human nature---the same nature possessed by both writer and reader. God be praised for the grace that made us new creatures in Christ.

**PREREQUISITES TO SALVATION**

There must be a just basis for salvation, else God would cease to be just in forgiving sin. There can be no salvation at the expense of justice. And justice cannot be dispensed apart from the punishment of sin. There is no miscarriage of justice in heaven's court, for every sin shall receive a just recompense of reward. Divine justice must be vindicated and the law of God must be upheld in the case of every sinner. In the death of Jesus Christ, God's eternal Son, there is a just basis for salvation. Christ died the Just for the unjust. He redeemed us from the curse of the law by being made a curse for us. He was made to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God through faith in Him. Christ put away the guilt of sin by the sacrifice of Himself. God forgives the sinner for the sake of Christ. As our Surety He paid the sindebt to the last farthing. As our Substitute He took our place under the law and died the very kind of death which denoted that He was accursed of God (Cf. *Gen 33:13* and *Deu 21:23*). Terrible price to pay for our salvation, but it was what the law of God demanded and the only way in which God could be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus: "To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (*Rom 3:26*). "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (*Heb 2:10*). Christ could not be a perfect Saviour apart from suffering the just demands of the law for His people.

**VARIOUS ASPECTS OF SALVATION**

We have seen in previous articles that sin has wrought awful havoc with the human race. It has ruined every man and every part of man. The consequences of sin are manifold, and there is an aspect of salvation for every aspect of sin. And there is a Bible word by which each of the several parts or aspects of salvation is described. If the sinner be viewed as in a state of death, then regeneration or the new birth is the Bible word to denote the impartation of life. If the sinner is considered as a child of the devil, then adoption is the term which expresses the judicial act of God by which he is made a son of God. If we think of the sinner from the standpoint of his body, being mortal and having in it the germs of death by which it will be turned into a dust-heap, then glorification is that aspect of salvation in which the body will be fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ. If the lost person be regarded as in a state of depravity or moral defilement, sanctification is the work making him holy and pure before God. If we think of the sinner as in a state of spiritual darkness unable to understand the gospel, then calling is the Bible term to express the act of God giving light by which the sinner can see or understand that Christ crucified is the wisdom and power of God in the plan of salvation. If the sinner be thought of as in a position of condemnation-- cursed by God's law he has violated---then justification speaks of his perfect standing before the throne of God. If salvation be approached from the standpoint of the eternal purpose of God, according to which He graciously saves sinners, then election and predestination are the Bible terms which denote the choice and destiny of God's people.

**THE THREE TENSES OF SALVATION**

Some aspects of salvation are instantaneous, while others are progressive. The deliverance from the guilt of sin is at the very instant of faith; the deliverance from the defilement of sin is a long process, in which the believer experiences pain as well as pleasure. While mourning over indwelling sin, he rejoices in-hope--the well founded expectation---of the glory of God. The believer rejoices in Christ, has no confidence in the flesh, and painfully longs to be perfectly whole. Being poor in spirit, conscious of his lack of personal worthiness he expects God to perfect that which concerneth him. He believes that God who began the good work of grace in him will perform it until the day of Christ. The believer is perfectly justified---no charge can be laid to his account---but he is not yet glorified, and will not be until Christ comes and he awakes in His likeness. It is positively beyond comprehension what God has prepared for them that love Him. And may we not forget that we love Him because He first loved us, and loosed us from our sins in His own blood.

**SALVATION BY GRACE**

Salvation is by grace, which means that it is undeserved, and also that there is no divine obligation to save any sinner. Salvation by grace means that it is not of debt or reward, but is the free gift of God. God might have left every one of us to his fate, to perish in his sins. It was love in God and not loveableness in the sinner that accounts for salvation. "God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (*Rom 5:8*). Salvation is, therefore, the gracious and sovereign work of God. All our graces are children of His grace and the fruit of His Spirit "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (*Gal 5:22-23*). From foreknowledge in eternity past to glorification in eternity future, salvation is all of grace, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (*Rom 8:29*). God thinks so much of His only begotten Son that He has determined to make all His sons just like Him. And there is no human merit or human strength at any stage or in any aspect of salvation. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (*Eph 2:8-9*).

"Lord, I was blind: I could not see In Thy marred visage any grace; But now the beauty of Thy face In radiant vision dawns on me.

"Lord, I was dead: I could not stir

My lifeless soul to come to Thee; But now, since thou has quickened me, I rise from sin's dark sepulche.

"Lord, Thou hast made the blind to see, The deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, The dead to live; and lo, I break The chains of my captivity."

--Matson, 1833-99.

÷02-2-02 THE GOSPEL-WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT DOES

Paul was called by the Lord to be a foreign missionary, and is known as the Apostle to the Gentiles. As he lay on the ground on the Damascus road, Christ said to him, Get up, for I am sending thee to the Gentiles: "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (*Act 26:18*). After his conversion, commission, and baptism, Paul preached Christ in the synagogues of Damascus, proving Jesus to be the very Christ to the discomfiting of the Jews. Because of a plot to kill him, the Apostle goes to Arabia for a season, returning to Damascus, and three years later going to Jerusalem. For the second time, Paul is told that he is to go far hence to the Gentiles; that the people of Jerusalem will not receive his testimony. In obedience to this call, Paul blazes a trail deeper and deeper into heathen territory. He wants to preach the gospel where Christ was not named, so that he might not build upon another man's foundation. In this spirit of a pioneer he wants to go to Rome and then to Spain. He wants converts at Rome as well as among the Gentiles. He is not ashamed to preach the Gospel anywhere, although he knew it would be met with scorn and contempt. However, he did not expect to preach in vain, and so he says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth ;...." (*Rom 1:16*).

To understand the audacity of these words we must listen to them with the ears of a Roman. Here was a little insignificant Jew with his head full of notions about another Jew whom the Roman governor had delivered to be crucified in order to satisfy other Jews and keep order in the province. This was what the natural Roman would think about Paul and his message. But Paul knew that he had good news which would bring salvation to every one who would believe it.

**WHAT IS THE GOSPEL**

We are fortunate to have a direct Scriptural statement of what the gospel is, but for the sake of clarity, and by way of amplification, we shall treat the question both negatively and positively.

**NEGATIVELY:**

1. The Bible is not the gospel. This is entirely too vague and general as a definition of the gospel. The Bible does indeed contain the gospel, but it contains other truths also. All Bible truth is not gospel truth. In the Bible there is truth about law and sin and death and judgment and numerous other things that are not the gospel. One may preach the gospel. Many think the Old Testament is the law and the New Testament is the gospel. But the truth is that both law and gospel are found in both Testaments. Some of the finest gospel texts are in the Old Testament, while some of the strongest law texts are in the New Testament. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is full of the gospel; from this chapter Philip preached Jesus to the eunuch and he was saved. Paul and others had only the Old Testament from which to preach the gospel.  
The law should be preached, just as all the Bible should be preached. The law, properly preached, will reveal to men that they are sinners and slay their self-righteousness. For this purpose Christ preached the law to the rich young man: "And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" (*Mat 19:16*), and to a certain lawyer "And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (*Luk 10:25*). By the law is the knowledge of sin. Paul did not know that he was a lost sinner until he saw what the law required: "For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died" (*Rom 7:9*). The law tells man what he ought to do; the gospel tells the sinner what Christ has done. The law condemns the best man; the gospel justifies the worst man. The law makes demands; the gospel bestows blessings. The law deals in justice: the gospel deals in mercy. The law belongs to the covenant of works; the gospel belongs to the covenant of grace.

2. Baptism is not the gospel. Paul clearly differentiated between baptism and the gospel when he said, "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel" (*1Co 11:17*). He reminded the Corinthians of the few he had baptized, and then to the church as a whole he said, "I have begotten you through the gospel" (*1Co 4:15*).

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are not saving sacraments, but preaching symbols. They do not procure salvation, but proclaim salvation through Christ. They are not saving acts, but contain a saving message in symbol or picture. Baptism does indeed wash away sin symbolically or figuratively, but the blood of Christ washes it away actually. Baptism has its place in the Christian life, but it must not become a substitute for the blood of Christ as an object of faith or trust.   
3. The Church is not the gospel. Joining the church is not the same as believing the gospel. One should believe the gospel before joining the church.

4. The new birth is not the gospel. The new birth is an experience---a work wrought in us; the gospel is the good news of something done for us. The gospel is objective light (*2Co 4:4*); the new birth gives subjective light so that the gospel can be savingly understood: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (*2Co 4:6*); "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (*Joh 3:3*). The gospel is the story of what Christ did on the cross; the new birth is what the Holy Spirit does in us when He imparts life to us. Justification is the result of Christ's death for us "But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;" (*Rom 4:24*); regeneration is the effect of the Holy Spirits work in us. Justification is life imputed; regeneration is life imparted.

5. Repentance is not the gospel. Repentance is what the sinner must do to be saved; the gospel is what Christ has already done for our salvation. "Repent ye and believe the gospel." Here repentance and the gospel are differentiated. No man is saved by faith in his repentance; he is saved by faith in the gospel.

6. Faith is not the gospel. The gospel is the object of faith. Saving faith is in the gospel. Faith does not save; it is faith in the gospel that saves. We do not have a perfect faith to be saved, but there must be a perfect gospel.

**POSITIVELY:**

1. The gospel is good news. The acid test of a gospel message: is it good news to bad men? The gospel is for sinners; it is the revelation of the righteousness God has provided through Christ for the unrighteous: "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (*Rom 1:17*).

2. The gospel is good news about a person, the Lord Jesus Christ. "For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (*Act 4:12*). Men are not saved by doing this and that, or going here and there; they are saved by coming to the Lord Jesus Christ, who has so graciously said, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (*Joh 6:37* b). Salvation is not a matter of geography. There is not a safe spot from the wrath of God anywhere. Salvation is not in bodily flight; it is in heart trust in Him Who is our passover, sacrificed for us.

3. The gospel consists of certain historical facts with a certain and particular theory or explanation of those facts. The facts are given us in *1Co 15:3-4* : " . . . Christ died for our sins ....; was buried, and .... rose again .." Or as Paul puts it in *Rom 4:25* : "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

The least part of a fact is the visible part of it, and has no meaning without an explanation, and so Paul not only gives the facts but also explains them. The mere fact that Jesus of Nazareth was crucified is no more the gospel than that the two criminals were crucified beside Him. It is the explanation of the facts that makes His death the gospel rather than their deaths. His death was the death of Christ, the Son of God, and it was for our sins.   
Christ, the Son of God, died for our sins. What does that mean? Some claim that it merely means that Christ died on our behalf, but not our Substitute. They insist that we should have no theory of the atonement, but with a little investigation we find that such people have a theory of the atonement. Let them tell us how Christ could die on our behalf---how His death could save us-unless He died as our Substitute to render satisfaction to Divine justice for our sins. For His death to save us, it must cancel our guilt before the law of God, and how could it cancel our guilt unless He suffered for the guilt that was ours? He suffered, the Just for the Unjust, and how could this be unless He suffered in our room and stead? Christ dying as a martyr for a good cause, or as a mere example of faithfulness unto death, or as a gesture of love to conquer the human heart, would in no sense redeem sinners from the curse of the law. Divine justice calls for Divine punishment, and the only way the sinner can escape judgment is for Christ to bear the punishment due the sinner. Those who deny blood atonement worship a god different to that of the Bible, and practice a religion different to that of the Bible.

**WHAT THE GOSPEL DOES**

In a word, it saves all who trust it. And the gospel to be trusted is what Christ, the Son of God, did in laying down His life for our sins and taking it up again for our justification. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (*Rom 1:16*) is usually made to mean that the preaching of the gospel has power to convert sinners, that is, to make believers. But this is not what the verse says. It is the power of God to or for believers. It presupposes a believer. The gospel saves believers, but it has no power to make believers. The preaching of the gospel is the means of making believers, for faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. We repeat, that the preaching of the gospel is the necessary means to faith, for "how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" If sinners are saved, the gospel must be preached to them as the means to faith and resultant salvation. However, there is a difference between means to faith and the power for faith. The power to make believers is in the effectual call of the Holy Spirit. Paul preached Christ crucified indiscriminately to the Jew and Greek. To the natural Jew such a gospel was a stumbling block, and to the natural Greek it was foolishness; but the called, both Jews and Greeks, saw the wisdom and power of God in the plan of salvation through a crucified Christ.

The apostle is not writing about the power of his preaching, but of the power of what he preached. What he preached, Christ crucified, had power to cancel the sin-debt. We sing "There is power in the blood," by which we mean that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin. That which is shameful and foolish to the masses is the very thing God uses to save sinners. What Christ did in death and resurrection has power to cancel the sin-debt. The gospel was provided by God; it was not a human expedient. God put His Son to death; He laid on Christ our iniquity. We are not saved because men killed Jesus: that was murder. We are saved because He was striken, smitten of God, and afflicted. God sacrificed His own Son for our safety. Amazing and sensational?-- yes! But we must remember that sin is terrible in its nature and effects, and nothing but a sensational remedy will avail.

**ILLUSTRATION**

Here is a man who has committed murder for which the penalty is death by hanging. The murderer was acting as the tool of another man who, himself, was under sentence of death, with no provision for pardon. But the law allows a substitute for the murderer. The substitute is found and is hanged in the murderer's place out of love for the doomed man. Now the death of the substitute cancels the guilt of the murderer and sets him free. It is the power of the court and also power with the court. The court is satisfied with the death of the substitute and the guilty man goes free. It is the power of the court and also power with the court that is satisfied with the death of the substitute and the guilty man goes free. To interpret this parable: man became a sinner against God as a dupe of the devil, who was already a sinner under sentence with no provision for pardon. The Divine law allowed a substitute for the human sinner. The Son of God gladly gave Himself as the sinner's substitute, suffering, the Just for the unjust, that the sinner might not perish in his sins.

**BENEFICIARIES OF THE GOSPEL**

Paul says, "To every one that believeth." The death of Christ does nobody any good who scorns it and refuses to trust it. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (*Joh 3:36*).

A fuller discussion of saving faith must be reserved for a later article the Lord enabling. However, there is space for a few words here and now. There is so much that passes for faith, that we must be on our guard lest we mistake what saving faith is. Saving faith is something more than the mere assent of the mind to a proposition, however true; it is heart trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Saving faith is not being satisfied with self; it is being satisfied with what Christ did on the cross for our salvation. One who is once satisfied with Christ will never be satisfied with anything else.

The value of faith depends upon the worth of its object. If I trust an object or a person that cannot or is not willing to save me, then my faith has no value---it is vain faith, however strong. Faith itself may be dangerous, as well as saving. It is safe to trust the Lord Jesus Christ, because He is both willing and able to save. He is able to save because He is alive. No dead person can be a real Saviour, and must not be an object of faith. It is the office of a priest to make sinners right with God. Old Testament Priests could not make sinners right with God because of two things; they could not continue as priests, and they did not have saving sacrifices to offer---the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin. But Christ continues forever, and hath an unchangeable priesthood: "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (*Heb 7:25*). Here is ground for saving faith, and a challenge to strong faith. Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

"HALLELUJAH! Jesus saves me; Oh, the sweet and precious story! I will give Him all the Glory, And adore His love to me.

"HALLELUJAH! Jesus hears me; When in prayer His throne addressing, While in faith I seek His blessing, Then His smile revealed I see.

"HALLELUJAH! Jesus leads me; I will doubt His promise never, But believing, followed ever Him who gave His life for me.

"HALLELUJAH! Jesus keeps me; In the Rock He safely hides me, Every comfort He provides me, Never friend so dear as He." Return to Contents

÷02-2-03 ELECTION

Every person who has any respect for the Bible will admit that there is a doctrine or teaching about ELECTION. Concerning this doctrine Christendom has split into two camps. Those denominations which believe salvation to be wholly of divine grace apart from any human merit at any and every point, have made deliberate statements in their confessions of faith, while those who have a place for human merit have left the matter out of their confessions. For example, when Mr. Wesley broke with the Church of England, he made certain changes in The Thirty Nine Articles, eliminating entirely the Seventeenth which relates to Predestination and Election. However, Mr. Wesley did express himself on the question. In one place he speaks thus: "The Scriptures tell us plainly what predestination is: it is God's foreappointing obedient believers to salvation, not without, but according to His foreknowledge, of all their works from the foundation of the world." God, from the foundation of the world foreknew all men's believing or not believing. And according to this, His foreknowledge, He chose or elected all obedient believers, as such to salvation.

**CONDITIONAL OR UNCONDITIONAL**

Mr. Wesley has made the issue clear: those who believe election is conditioned upon something good foreseen in the sinner as the ground of the Divine choice are rightly called Arminians, while those who deny anything good in the sinner as the ground of the choice are rightly called Calvinists. In another place Wesley says that Arminians believe election is conditional. What does the Bible say? Paul speaks thus in *Rom 11:5-6* : "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more of grace: otherwise work is no more work." Paul is alluding to conditions in Israel in the days of Elijah, who felt that he was the only true worshipper of God left in the land. God corrected the prophet by saying, "I have reserved to myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal." The obvious meaning is that God had graciously intervened to prevent the seven thousand from following the multitude into idolatry. "Even so," says Paul, referring to the believing remnant of his day, who were naturally no better than the unbelieving mass, but who had been graciously chosen to salvation. To the same effect, the Apostle says to the Corinthians: "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what has thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (*1Co 4:7*).

Spurgeon strikes oil when he says that those who do not believe in election as a matter of doctrine, do believe it in their hearts as a matter of experience. He was once preaching to a congregation composed largely of Methodists. They shouted their approval of his message until he said, "This brings me to the doctrine of election." Expressions of disapproval became evident, whereupon, Mr. Spurgeon told the audience that they did believe the doctrine of election, and that he would make them shout "Hallelujah" over it. And this was the way he did it. He wanted to know if there were any difference between them and the wicked, such as drunkards, harlots, and blasphemers. They all united in saying there was a difference. He then put the question of who made the difference, saying that whoever made the difference, should have the glory of it. "Did you make the difference?" To this question they all said "NO". He then told them that the Lord made the difference, and asked them if they thought it was wrong for Him to make a difference between them and other men? They agreed it was not wrong. Spurgeon then concluded by saying, "Very well then; if it was not wrong for God to make the difference, it was not wrong for Him to purpose to make it, and that is the doctrine of election." Then they cried, "Hallelujah," just as the preacher said they would. The martyr, John Bradford, once watched officers of the law as they led a criminal to prison, and exclaimed, "There I go but for the grace of God."

Every real believer, when on his knees, subscribes to the doctrine of unconditional election. No person can really pray while boasting of anything good in and of himself. "Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (*Luk 18:10-14*). Sovereign grace will come out in prayer, though it may be left off the platform. No saved man will get on his knees and claim before God that he made himself to differ from other who are not saved. And in praying for the lost we supplicate God to convict them of sin and convert them to faith in Christ. We do not depend upon the freedom of their wills, but beseech God to make them willing to come to Christ, knowing--that when they do come to Christ, He will not cast them out "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (*Joh 6:37*). It is told that a Methodist minister once heard a Presbyterian, "That was a pretty good Armenian sermon." "Yes," replied the Presbyterian, "We Presbyterians are pretty good Arminians when we preach, and you Methodist are pretty good Calvinists when you pray."

In praying for the lost just what are we asking God to do? What did Paul ask God to do for Israel? Did he not ask Him to spiritually enlighten them so that they would cease trying to save themselves and trust Christ for the righteousness they were trying to establish for themselves? "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (*Rom 10:1-4*). It appears shocking to believe that any aspect of salvation is conditioned upon anything the sinner can do apart from the inwrought grace of God.

**THE HISTORIC BAPTIST POSITION**

Nearly all declarations of faith published by Baptists have dealt with the subject of election. The writer might state that he is in agreement with all these confessions since they are in virtual agreement with one another. The historic Baptist position on election has been succinctly and clearly stated in the "Abstract of Principles" of the Louisville Seminary. Article V of this confession reads as follows:

"Election is God's eternal choice of some persons unto everlasting life--not because of foreseen merit in them but of his mere mercy in Christ---in consequence of which choice they are called justified and glorified."   
In harmony with the above statement several things may be said by way of amplification:

1. Election is God's choice. It is God's choice in eternity of those He will save in time. There must be selection or universalism. The word election is associated with God, not with man. "And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days" (*Mar 13:20*), speaks of the elect, whom He elected, rendered in the King James version: "The elect whom he hath chosen." The theology that God votes for us, the devil votes against us, and that we cast the deciding ballot is entirely outside the pale of Scripture teaching, and is almost too ridiculous to notice. Our Lord said to His disciples, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:" (*Eph 1:4*); "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (*2Th 2:13*). Self election is a bad form of selfrighteousness.

2. Election is God's choice of some persons. Universal election is a contradiction of terms. This is too obvious to need argument. In "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded" (*Rom 11:7*) Paul says that the election (elect) hath obtained salvation, and the rest were blinded.

3. Election is God's eternal choice. In *Eph 1:3-4* "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:" we read of the spiritual blessings we have in the heavenlies, "According as he hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world." In *2Ti 1:9* Paul says that God "hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

4. Election is God's gracious choice. This means that there was nothing in the creature as the cause or ground of the choice, "but of His mere mercy in Christ." Unconditional election finds illustration in the case of Jacob and Esau, "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to

election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth" (*Rom 9:11*). This naturally gives rise to the human objection: "Is there unrighteousness with God?" Paul replies in the negative and then asserts God's sovereignty: "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth" (*Rom 9:18*). God's own sovereign pleasure alone determines or selects the object of His mercy.

5. Election is unto salvation. It is not denied that there has been a Divine Choice of nations to external privileges and blessings, nor that individuals have been chosen to particular service; but we affirm that the Scriptures also teach an election of individuals to everlasting life. "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:" (*2Th 2:13*). Election is not salvation, but unto salvation, which means it was before and not after salvation. Men are saved when they trust Christ not when they were elected. Eisenhower was not president when he was elected, but when he was inaugurated. There was not only an election to but also an induction into the office. And so God's elect are inducted into the position of saintship by the effectual call the quickening work of the (Holy Spirit) through which they become believers in the gospel. "That no flesh should glory in his presence" (*1Co 1:29*).

6. Election is a challenging doctrine. Article IX of the New Hampshire Confession says in part: "That it (election) may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the Gospel; that it is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence." Peter exhorts to diligence in making our calling and election sure by which he means to make it sure to ourselves. There is ever the danger of one taking his salvation for granted without due evidence of it. No unbeliever or nominal Christian has any right to take comfort from the doctrine of election. This is the children's bread. Sometime ago the writer attempted to witness to a man concerning his need of a Saviour. He used the doctrine to justify his indifference, nonchalantly saying that when God got ready to save him He would do it. I said, "There is truth in what you say, but it is not the truth you need, for unless you repent and believe you will go to hell."

**OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED AND ANSWERED**

Many are the objections brought against the doctrine of unconditional election. Sometimes the objectors are loud and furious. The tirades of Mr. Wesley against the doctrine make one sick at heart. And many Baptists have been almost as harsh.

1. It is objected that election limits God's mercy. Right here we criticize the critic, for he who makes this objection limits both God's mercy and His power. He admits that God's mercy is limited to the believer and that all others will experience the wrath of Divine justice. But our critic denies God's power in causing the sinner to believe without doing violence to the human will. In conversion God does not slay the human will, but only the enmity of it. At this point we must face two selfevident propositions. First, if God is trying to save every member of Adam's fallen race, and does not succeed, then His power is limited and He is not the Lord God Almighty. Second, if He is not trying to save every member of the fallen race, then His mercy is limited. We must of necessity limit His mercy or His power, or go over "boots and baggage," to the Universalists' position. But before doing that, let us "to the law and to the testimony," which says, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion .... Therefore hath he mercy on whom he have compassion .... Therefore hath he mercy on whom he *Rom 9:15-16*). There is not space here for exegesis except to say that in hardening the sinner, God does not infuse a sinful nature, but allows the sinful nature to develop its natural enmity. The writer has always preferred the word preterition to reprobation in describing God's dealing with the non-elect. In hardening God leaves the sinner to himself, so far as efficacious grace is concerned; in mercy He makes new creatures in Christ Jesus.

When Robert Morrison was about to go to China, he was asked by an incredulous neighbour if he thought he could makes any impression on those Chinese. His curt reply was: "No, but I think God can." The writer often wonders why more sinners have not been saved in the past centuries, but he never attributes it to lack of power in God. If God could make children unto Abraham out of stones, then He is able to make children unto Himself out of all kinds of sinners.

2. It is objected that election damns a part of the human race. But the objector is wrong. It is divine justice that condemns the whole race, and election keeps many from being damned. Election is for "the already condemned." Election neither puts sinners under condemnation nor keeps them there. Election is not unto damnation, but unto salvation. Election harms nobody, but saves a multitude no man can number. If we are to object to a doctrine that saves only a part of the human race, then we object to the gospel, for that is all the gospel does.

3. It is objected that election makes God unjust. This objection betrays a bad heart. It obligates the Lawgiver to save the Lawbreaker. It makes salvation a Divine obligation. It reverses the position of God and the sinner. It puts the sinner on the throne and God at his feet. Salvation is not a matter of justice, but of mercy. It was not the attribute of justice that led God to provide salvation, but the attribute of mercy. Justice is simply getting what one deserves. Those who go to hell will have nobody to blame but themselves, while those who go to heaven will have nobody to praise but God.

4. It is also objected that election is opposed to the doctrine of "Whosoever Will." But the objector is wrong again. Our view of election explains and supports the doctrine of "Whosoever Will." Without election the invitation would go unheeded and nobody would believe. It is not natural for the sinner to trust Christ, and this is because the carnal mind is enmity against God. Salvation through trust in a crucified Christ is a stumbling block to the Jew and foolishness to the Greek; it is only the called, both Jews and Greeks, who see in it the wisdom and power of God in salvation. Christ said, "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him (the one drawn, C.D.C.) up at the last day" (*Joh 6:44*). The human will is free, but its freedom is within the limits of fallen human nature. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (*1Co 2:14*). There must be the miracle of the new birth, for except a man be born from above he cannot see or enter into the kingdom of God.   
The writer allows nobody to believe stronger in the doctrine of "Whosoever Will," nor to preach it with more sincerity than he does. But he also believes that there would be no believers if the Holy Spirit did not convict the sinner of his helplessness and convert him to faith in Christ. The saved man is God's workmanship, the product of His grace.

5. It is still further objected that unconditional election destroys the spirit of missions. This objection deserves serious consideration. It is admitted that some have allowed belief in the doctrine to paralyze missionary endeavour. But this was because they held a limited view of the doctrine; they failed to see that the gospel is the means by which the elect are saved. On the other hand, the greatest names in the missionary enterprise were ardent believers in unconditional election. William Carey, often called the father of modern missions, was a staunch Calvinist. Andrew Fuller, first secretary of the society that sent Carey to India, held tenaciously to the doctrine of unconditional election. "The proof of the pudding is in the eating." Belief in election did not destroy the spirit of missions in Judson, Spurgeon, Boyce, Eaton, Carroll, Graves, Shields, and a host of other Baptist leaders. The First Baptist Church of Murray, Kentucky, once called by Dr. J.F. Love the greatest missionary church on earth, heard Boyce Taylor preach election for nearly forty years.

He who allows his belief of election to dampen his missionary ardour has a perverted view of the doctrine. Election does not determine the extent of missions, but the results of it. The gospel commission does not read, "to the elect" but "to every creature." If it should read "to the elect," then we could not preach to anybody for the simple reason that the elect cannot be identified until they exercise faith which works by love. And such would already be saved, and hence the gospel would not be the power of God unto salvation. The gospel is for men as lost sinners, and not as elect sinners. God has His elect, but they are not our elect, and His elect cannot be known until they are saved. Witnessing is our business, taking care of the elect is His business. Let us be faithful to our task and leave the results with Him, remembering that Paul may plant and Apollos may water, but that God must give the increase.

**÷02-2-04 THE EFFECTUAL CALL**

We are about to write upon one of the most neglected truths of the Bible. There was much said about it during the Puritan period, and later by Spurgeon and others, but today there is only a voice here and there dealing with this Bible doctrine. We dare say that nine out of ten church members would not even hazard a guess or opinion concerning this blessed truth.

The word "call" is sometimes used to express the act of naming, as, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus" (*Mat 1:21*). At other times the word is employed to denote the act of inviting or summoning, as in *Luk 14:13* : "When thou makest a feast, call the poor ...."

When the word "call" is used for inviting, we must distinguish between a call that is not heeded and one that is successful or effectual--one that is responded to. The chief aim of the gospel is to call men to salvation through faith in Christ. Now it is obvious that many such calls go unheeded, and men remain lost, notwithstanding plain preaching and urgent appeals. On the other hand, we see the preaching of the gospel effective in many cases---we see lives transformed by it. Anathema maranatha. We may see a lost man ignore and reject the gospel at one time, and then the next time or at some later time, he is saved by it. What makes the difference? The preacher? No, for it may be the same preacher in both instances. Is the difference in the gospel? No, for it is the very same gospel in each case. The difference is made by the Holy Spirit in His light-giving and life-giving power. When the gospel is preached "in word only", that is, without the quickening power of the Holy Spirit, the sinner remains spiritually dead, and will be either indifferent or antagonistic to the gospel call.

The effectual call is just about equivalent to regeneration. In *Rom 8:30* we are given the chain of Divine acts in salvation: "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." It is to be noted that "called" is used rather than "regenerated," Christians are often denominated "the called," as well as "the born again."

**SCRIPTURES THAT DISTINGUISH THE TWO CALLS**

There are two calls from God to men. One is the general call and goes to all who hear the gospel with the physical organ of hearing; the other is special and effects the salvation of those whom it is given. Men come into a saved state by this divine call. Men are saints by calling. Paul addresses the saints at Rome and Corinth as those "called to be saints." Paul preached the gospel indiscriminately to Jews and Greeks at Corinth. To the natural Jew it was a scandal, and to the natural Greek it was foolishness, "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (*1Co 1:24*). It was only the called among both groups who saw the power and wisdom of God in the plan of salvation through the crucified Christ.

Let us look at some Scriptures that speak of a general call. In *Pro 1:24* God says: "I have called and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded." This call was externally made by God through the prophets, and was universally ignored---no man regarded. In *Mat 22:14* we read, "For many are called, but few are chosen." Here is a call that came to a greater number than was chosen and saved. In the parable of the great supper, recorded in *Luk 14:1-35*, none of those who had been invited came-they all with one consent began to make excuse.

Now let us consider some Scriptures that speak of a special and effectual call. In *Rom 8:28* we are told that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Here "the called" means more than "the invited," for many are invited to come to Christ who never come and hence are not saved, and to whom all things do not work together for good. In *Rom 8:30* we read that the called are also justified. But many are called by the preaching of the gospel who are not justified. Paul is writing about a call that is effectual in salvation when he says in *1Co 1:26* "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called." In *2Pe 1:10* we are exhorted "to make our calling and election sure." In all these passages, calling is more than a mere outward invitation to believe the gospel.

**THE NATURE OF THE EFFECTUAL CALL**

1. It is subjective or internal. There is an outward or objective call in which the gospel is presented or offered to the sinner. The subjective or internal call is made within the sinner. In this call grace operates on the mind and heart. In this call the Spirit compels them to come in; not by forcing the will, but by changing the mind and heart---by changing the governing disposition of the soul---so that they become willing. Bancroft defines the effectual call in these words: "By the effectual invitation or call is meant that exercise of Divine power upon the soul, immediate, spiritual, and supernatural, which communicates a new spiritual life, and thus makes a new mode of spiritual activity possible. Repentance, faith, trust, hope, and love, are purely and simply the sinner's own acts; but as such are possible to him only in virtue of the change wrought in the moral condition of his faculties by the recreative power of God."

2. It is a special call. There is a general call whenever and wherever the gospel is preached. God is sincere in this call, and the sinner is responsible to heed it, but the fact is he never does. The special call is something over and beyond the preaching of the gospel. The special call is made to those who are denominated sheep, elect, predestinated, and is always effective

Christ said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish" (*Joh 10:27-28*). And speaking of the lost sheep among the Gentiles, He said, "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice" (*Joh 10:16*). Paul recognized the elect when the "gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost" (*1Th 1:5*).

Bunyan illustrates the difference between the general and the special call by the barnyard hen. She has a general cluck to which little attention is given, and she has a special cluck for her babies when the hawk is about to swoop down upon them the cluck that brings them flying to find protection under her wings. So God has a special call that brings His lost sheep to find shelter and safety beneath the spreading wings of Calvary.

Spurgeon finds an illustration of this special call in the physical resurrection of Lazarus. He says that if our Lord had not addressed Lazarus personally, saying, "Lazarus come forth," all the dead would have lived at His command.

Our Lord makes a distinction between the spiritual and physical resurrections in *Joh 5:25*; *Joh 5:28-29*. He is speaking of the spiritual resurrection when He says: : "The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." He is speaking of the bodily resurrection when He says: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves, shall hear his voice. And shall come forth...."

3. It is a miraculous and invincible call. Peter says it is a call "out of darkness into his marvelous light" (*1Pe 2:9*). Christ says that it is a call that makes the dead to live. This call has the power of God behind it. It is the mighty Spirit of God working in grace to make the sinner see his helpless state and the value of the blood of Christ. To successfully resist this call would mean that the sinner is mightier than God. There was death and corruption in Lazarus to keep him from responding to Christ's command to come forth. But there was power from God that overcame all natural obstacles. There is likewise much in the sinner to resist the Gospel call, but in the effecutal call of the Spirit this resistance is overcome. The effectual call is a Divine call that startles the careless sinner into concern; a call that enlightens the sin-darkened understanding; a call that opens the sin-closed heart to receive Christ as Lord and Saviour. Apart from the work of the Spirit the word of the Spirit will be rejected. Unless the Holy Spirit creates light within the soul, the light within the Book will not be seen. The power of conversion is not in the inspiration of perspiration of the preacher, but in the illumination and regeneration of the Spirit.

The outward call of the gospel by the preacher may be likened to the law indicting the criminal and calling him to trial; the special call is the sheriff coming in contact with the criminal, arresting him and bringing him into court. The criminal's refusal to submit to arrest is no proof that he is superior to the law; but if the law is unable to bring him into court, that would be proof that he is stronger than the law. Now when the preacher calls upon sinners to repent and believe the gospel and they refuse, this does not indicate that the sinner is stronger than God. But if the Holy Spirit calls him---comes to grip with his darkened mind to give light---come to work repentance and faith in him-come to give him a new birth--and does not succeed, then that would be proof that the sinner was stronger than God, the Holy Spirit. Human depravity is too much for the preacher, but not too much for the Holy Spirit. This is why we pray for God to convert the sinner when we have preached to him.

The general call is like the father calling Johnny to get up early in the morning. He says "okay doke", turns over and goes back to sleep. The call did not bring him out; it had no effect on him. The special call is the father coming in thirty minutes later. He pulls the cover off and puts on the cowhide. This is effectual and brings Johnny out.

B.H. Carroll likens the general call to sheet lightning which is beautiful and grand, but strikes nothing; the special call is like forked lightning, it strikes somewhere.

**THE NECESSITY OF THE EFFECTUAL CALL**

1. Human depravtiy---the condition of fallen human nature makes a special and supernatural call necessary for the conversion of the sinner. Man by nature has his understanding darkened by sin, his heart is hard, and his mind is enmity against God. If the sinner loved God and understood the gospel, he would at once, on hearing the gospel, lovingly and gladly respond to the good news about Christ as the Saviour. But he must undergo a change of mind and heart before he will receive Christ as Lord and Saviour. And this change is not self-wrought, but God-wrought. Paul told Timothy to preach in the hope that "God peradventure will give them repentance (change of mind) to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will," (*2Ti 2:25-26*).

2. This special call of the Holy Spirit is necessary because the gospel call--the word only--is not sufficient for the conversion of the lost man. "Knowing, brethren, beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost. . . ." (*1Th 1:4-5*). Bunyan says "I believe that, to effectual calling, the Holy Ghost must accompany the word of the gospel, and that with mighty power." The gospel is suitable and sufficient as the means of conversion, but there must also be an agent with power to effect it. There must be the Divine workman as well as Divine equipment. The word is said to be the sword of the Spirit. In the call that goes unheeded we have the gospel and the preacher; in the effectual call we have the gospel, the preacher, and the Holy Spirit. And it is the Holy Spirit who makes the gospel effective in the conversion of the sinner.

**THE REASON FOR THE EFFECTUAL CALL**

The effecutal call---the call of the Holy Spirit---the call that secures salvation--in every case is made in pursuance of God's eternal purpose. In *Rom 8:28* this call is said to be "according to his purpose". And *2Ti 1:9* is to the same effect: "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." Salvation is not an accident---it is not a chance happening---but the coming to pass of God's eternal purpose in Christ. The effectual call is the divine act by which the foreknown are brought into a saved state. It is the inaugural of the elect; the induction into saintship. Salvation is of the Lord, and every Christian should ascribe his conversion to the work of the Holy Spirit. Every Christian is a God made man, and therefore, a grace made man, since he has not merited salvation. It is God who has made us to differ from the lost, therefore, we can humbly and gratefully say with Isaac Watts:

"Why was I made to hear Thy voice,   
And enter while there's room;   
When others make a wretched choice,   
And rather starve than come? T'was the same love that spread the feast   
That sweetly forced us in;   
Else we had still refused to taste And perished in our sins."

÷02-2-05 REGENERATION OR THE NEW BIRTH

John Ruskin (1819-1900), English art critic, author and political economist said that "the first and last and closest trial question to any living creature is, 'What do you like?' Go out into the street and ask the first man you meet, what his taste is, and if he answers you candidly, you know him body and soul. What we like determines what we are, and is a sign of what we are. ." If the taste Ruskin speaks of applies to moral and spiritual things, then he has something, and his words are sober truth. Man has moral as well as physical taste. What one likes as a moral being---what he likes in relation to the true God and His word-determines what he is as a moral being and is a sign to others of what he is. One can know himself, and others can know him by this taste-test. Moral taste is moral desire and moral desire determines moral deed.

David's moral taste is revealed when he says, "one thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple" (*Psa 27:4*). Also, when he says, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" (*Psa 42:1-2*). This desire for God shows the Psalmist to be a man after God's own heart. Dr. Broadus gives a three fold test of personal character: What one reads when he is tired, what he thinks about when he is alone, and where he goes when he is away from home.   
This taste-test reveals the necessity of regeneration for every man. Man, in his natural condition, does not like God---the God of the Bible; he does not long for God's presence as David did; he rather shuns God, as Adam and Eve did when they sinned and hid themselves from Him. The natural man has no taste for the things of God. The carnal mind is enmity against God. Man in his natural and fallen state would not enjoy heaven if he should go there. Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. Regeneration is the only remedy; every man must be born again ---born from above---made a new creature---if he is to see or enter into the kingdom of God.

**THE NATURE OF REGENERATION**

Regeneration is that aspect of salvation in which the dead sinner --the sinner with all the faculties of the soul in moral ruins, and paralyzed towards God and holiness, being unable to please God---is made a child of God with a taste for the things of God.

Regeneration, therefore, may be defined as the gracious work of God in the human soul by which the heart is enabled to love God, the mind is enabled to understand the gospel of Christ and the will is brought to choose Christ as both Lord and Saviour. This definition is in harmony with our New Hampshire Confession which says that "Regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind; that it is affected in a manner above our comprehension, by the power of the Holy Spirit of God in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life."

John Favel (1650-1691) says that the heart of man is his worst part before regeneration, and the best part afterward; that it is the seat of principles and the fountain of actions; and that the eye of God is, and the eye of the Christian ought to be principally fixed upon it. Regeneration is not the bringing of a person into existence; it is the birth of one already in existence; therefore, a second birth. Nor is it the bringing of any new faculties or parts into existence. The unregenerate man has as many parts or faculties to his being as the regenerate man. No part of man was annihilated in the fall, but all parts were ruined or depraved. Regeneration is not based upon non-existence, but upon a depraved existence. The soul of man is endowed with heart, and mind and will, and the unregenerate man has all these faculties, although in a ruined or depraved state. He has a mind and can think and understand, but he does not like to think about God, and cannot understand the things of God; he has a heart so that he can and does love, but he does not love God; he has a will so that he can and does choose, but he does not choose Christ as Lord and Saviour. Regeneration is essentially a changing of the fundamental taste of the soul. By taste we mean the direction of his mind and bent of his affections, the trend of his will. And to alter that taste is not to impart a new faculty, or create a new substance, but simply to set upon God the affections which hitherto have been set upon self and sin. To borrow an illustration from Dr. Strong: The engineer who climbs over the cab into a runaway locomotive and who changes its course, does so not by adding any new rod or cog, but by simply reversing the lever. So in regeneration God is reversing the lever of the soul. He is changing the taste so that a man loves what he once hated and hates what he once loved.

Regeneration is not the eradication of the sinful nature, but the impartation of a new nature---a sinless nature. The saved man has been born two times, and has twofold disposition or nature. This creates a conflict between the fleshly and spiritual natures: "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (*Gal 5:17*). Paul had this conflict in his own experience. He delighted in the law of God after the inward man, but was conscious of another law or force, so that he could not do the good he desired to do "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" (*Rom 7:14-25*).

**TWO ASPECTS OF THE NEW BIRTH**

In the first aspect the soul is passive; it is simply acted upon. God changes the governing disposition by a creative act, that is, without the use of means, and without any co-operation on the part of the sinner. How could it be otherwise unless death contributes to life, unless filth purifies itself, and a corpse adorns itself? In a word, regeneration must be altogether of God unless nature acts contrary to nature. If the carnal mind hates God; if the things of God are foolishness to the natural man; if they that are in the flesh cannot please God, what hope is there that such a nature will act as though it were otherwise? There is no such thing as selfbirth, either in the physical or spiritual realms. The mother gives birth to the child, and in the moral realm we are born of God.

In the second aspect of regeneration, God secures the initial exercise of the new nature, and in this the soul is active. Repentance and faith are heart exercises of the sinner in response to the quickening work of the Spirit. The two aspects of regeneration are simultaneous. At the very instant God gives a holy disposition to the soul, He pours in the light of Gospel truth and induces the exercise of the holy disposition He has imparted.

This distinction seems necessary from the twofold representation of the change in the Scripture. In some passages the change is ascribed wholly to God "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (*Joh 1:13*). In changing the fundamental taste of the soul there is no use of means or co'operation from the sinner. In fact the truth is rejected until the disposition is changed. Now in other passages we find the truth is employed as means and the mind acts in view of the truth. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" (*Jas 1:18*); "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (*1Pe 1:23*). To deny these two aspects you would have an unregenerated believer on the one hand, or a regenerated unbeliever on the other hand, neither of which is possible. The first aspect is the narrower and is what theologians mean when they speak of pre-regeneration.

**THE NECESSITY OF REGENERATION**

What we have already written reveals why the new birth is necessary, but we will amplify and illustrate.   
The depravity of human nature makes the new birth necessary. The physical birth produces no qualities that are pleasing to God. "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (*Rom 8:8*). Paul reminds the Jews that being the fleshly descendants of Abraham did not make them the children of God: "That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed" (*Rom 9:8*). Man has the inherited corruption of a fallen nature. David was not casting reflection upon his mother's viture, but was confessing to inborn depravity, when he exclaimed, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psm 51:5). A man may say, "I know I do things that are wrong, but I have a good heart after all." But God gives a different verdict. Christ taught that the human heart was the very fountain of all that is sinful: "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, and evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these things come from within, and defile the man" (*Mar 7:21-23*). The human affections are misplaced. Man naturally loves the things that are contrary to God. He must be born from above in order to love God. "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and every one that loveth is (Gk. has been) born of God, and knoweth God" (*1Jn 4:7*).

The human will is antagonistic to God. God's will should be supreme in every life, but man by nature is dominated by selfwill. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way" (*Isa 53:6*). In the life of Christ, the one perfect life, the will of God was supreme: He came not to do His own will, but the will of the Father. Moreover, man by nature, is in a state of moral darkness, ignorant of the things of God. He cannot understand the things of the Spirit: "For they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (*1Co 2:14*). There must be a spiritual birth before there can be spiritual understanding.

The writer once heard of a little girl with a defect of vision from birth. Her parents were slow to realize that she could not see many objects which were familiar to others. She was almost grown before an oculist was consulted. He advised and performed an operation, and the child was kept in a dark room for many weeks. One bright and balmy night she stepped out alone upon the lawn. Instantly, she rushed back into the house in a glow of excitement. "Oh come," she cried, "And see what has happened to the sky." Her parents hurried out with her, but saw nothing but the familiar glory of the stars--something she had never seen before. Nothing had happened to the sky, but something had happened to her eyes. So the unregenerate man has the eyes of his understanding darkened in respect to spiritual and saving truth. The stars of the gospel truth shine brightly in the firmament of God's word, but the lost man does not see them. "But if our gospel be hid it is hid to them that are lost" (*2Co 4:3*).

**THE EFFICIENT CAUSE OF REGENERATION**

By the efficient cause we mean the power by which the effect is secured. What power brings about the new birth? The various answers to this question may be summed up in three general views.

1. Some put the efficient cause or power of regeneration in the human will. This view emphasizes the plan of salvation and makes response to the plan, that is, faith in the gospel, depend upon the human will. The sinner is told that if he will believe the gospel he will be born again. This confounds justification and regeneration. We read again and again that we are justified by faith, but never that we are regenerated by faith. Man's volition's---the exercise of his will---are practically the shadow of his affections. You cannot separate man from his shadow and have him going in one direction and his shadow in another direction. Neither can you have a man's will going in the opposite direction from the way his heart goes. Men choose what they do because of the condition of the heart. *Joh 1:13* is fatal to this view: "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

2. Another view makes the truth the efficient cause of regeneration. This view puts the power of the new birth in the gospel. A. Campbell is one of the best exponents to this view. He says, "We plead that all the converting power of the Holy Spirit is exhibited in the Divine Record." This denies any subjective or internal work of the Holy Spirit on the heart of the sinner. The preacher is to make the gospel so attractive that the sinner, apart from any change in his heart, will accept it. But to the heart that hates God the plainer you make the gospel, the more he will hate it. If this were true then it would be absurd to pray to God to regenerate, for that is more than He can do---regeneration is simply the effect of the word preached. This is called "the word only," theory, which is refuted by Paul in *1Th 1:5* : "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost..." This view has led to a lot of silly and unscriptural expressions, such as, "energizing the truth," or "illuminating the truth." There is nothing wrong with the truth, the trouble is with the sinner's darkened understanding. God does not make the truth more true but He opens sin-blinded minds to understand it "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?" (*1Co 3:5*); "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (*2Co 4:6*). The word gives knowledge of spiritual things. The gospel is objective light; the Holy Spirit gives subjective light.

Dr. T. T. Shields once preached on *1Ti 1:15*, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." A few days later he received a letter from a man that read like this: "I enjoyed your sermon last Sunday very much, and could not see why anyone in your audience could not be saved. But your prayer following the sermon spoiled it for me. You asked God by His Spirit to lead sinners to an acceptance of the gospel. I write to ask what the Spirit has to do with it. The way of salvation was presented, and all they had to do was to accept it." This man was right, if the truth and the human will are all that is necessary, and prayer for God to do something in the sinner would be foolish. This view utterly ignores the truth of human depravity.

3. The position of the writer is, that the immediate agency of the Holy Spirit is the efficient cause of regeneration. The power of the Holy Spirit is immediate, that is, it does not depend upon or flow through anything, not even the gospel itself. The gospel is hated and rejected as foolishness until direct power of the Spirit changes the governing disposition of the heart. As some one has said, "Our natural hearts are hearts of stone. The word of God is good seed sown on the hard, trodden, macadamized highway, which the horses of passion, the asses of self-will, the wagons of imaginary treasure, have made impenetrable. ONLY THE HOLY SPIRIT can soften and pulverize the soil." The gospel is good seed, but good seed cannot make good soil. Paul may plant and Apollos may water, but God must give the increase.

"Come, Spirit, source of light, Thy grace is unconfirmed;   
Dispel the gloomy shades of night, The darkness of the mind.

"Now to our eye display   
The truth Thy words reveal;   
Cause us to run the heavenly way, Delighting in Thy will.

"Thy teachings make us know The mysteries of Thy love; The vanity of things below, The joys of things above."

÷02-2-06 JUSTIFICATION, OR THE DIVINE ACQUITTAL

Demosthenes well says that knowledge begins with definition. Every teacher needs to remember this, and be careful to define his terms. The Bible abounds in big words---words of tremendous importance---and we should exercise much care in defining these words.

The book of Job is full of questions. "Canst thou by searching find out God?" (11:7). "If a man die, shall he live again?" (14:14). "How can he be clean that is born of woman?" (25:4b). "How should man be just with God?" (9:2). And this last question is repeated in *Job 25:4* "How then can man be justified with God?" This last question is to have our attention in this article. Let us fix the question in our mind: How can rebellious man, who has tried to dethrone the God of all the earth, find acquittal with God?

A man was once asked if he would not like to be saved. He replied: "Yes, but I do not see how God can save me without doing wrong." This man was a thinker. He went on to say that he had sinned: that God's word declares the wages of sin to be death, and that as a sinner, he must receive what he had earned. He confessed that he deserved to be punished, and could not see how God could remain just without punishing him for his sins. Job's question was this man's question. There were no questions until sin entered the world. Eve was deceived into thinking that the forbidden fruit would make one wise and thus resolve all future questions. But this attempt to become wise resulted in separation from God with resultant darkness in the face of innumerable questions. Adam and Eve had been walking by faith---by faith in what God had said---but in disobedience they embarked upon a career of walking by sight, which means to believe what one sees. Eve saw that the fruit of the forbidden tree was good for food, and pleasant to the eyes. Now in salvation, the sinner is restored to the principle of walking by faith, which means to believe what God says. "The just shall live by faith" (*Heb 10:38*). "So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (*Rom 10:17*). If sin reigned by bringing questions into the world, then grace reigns by giving answers to these questions. How can man the sinner be acquitted before the Holy and righteous God? This is a big question, but there is a blessed and infallible answer found in the Bible. We will consider:

**THE NATURE OF JUSTIFICATION, OR WHAT JUSTIFICATION IS**

Justification is that particular aspect of salvation which consists of deliverance from the guilt and penalty of sin. It is the legal aspect of salvation in which one has right standing before God as Lawgiver. So far as guilt and condemnation are concerned, the believer is as perfect as if he had never sinned. Paul challenges the whole universe to lay anything to the charge of God's elect "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth" (*Rom 8:33*). At Antioch in Pisidia, the apostle preached the crucified and risen Christ, saying, "And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (*Act 13:39*).   
Justification is a forensic or law term. It does not refer to any inward work of grace as regeneration does. It has nothing to do with moral improvement, but with judicial standing. It means acquittal, vindication, acceptance before a judgment seat. The Council of Trent (1547) gives the Roman Catholic view of justification, in which the term is defined as "not the mere remission of sins but also sanctification and renovation of the inner man." But such a definition confounds justification with regeneration and sanctification, other aspects of salvation.

Take the word in its every day use, and it will be obvious that it has nothing to do with improvement of character or moral change. To justify one's views does not mean to change them or to correct them but rather to vindicate them. To justify a course of conduct does not mean a change of conduct, but the vindication of what one has done. To justify a friend does not imply any change in your friend, but the vindication of him before some judgment seat, it may be, the bar of public opinion.

Take a clear illustration from Scripture: "If there be a controversy between men, and they come into judgment, that the judges may judge them, then they shall justify the righteous and condemn the wicked" (*Deu 25:1*). Here it is plain that no moral improvement is implied. The judges were not to make anybody better, but to declare who was right in the eyes of the law. A human court or judge can only maintain justice by justifying the innocent, but God maintains justice and magnifies grace by justifying the ungodly: "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (*Rom 4:5*). There are no innocent people for God to justify, for all have sinned. The next question is that concerning the author of salvation.

**THE AUTHOR OF JUSTIFICATION, OR WHO IS THE JUSTIFIER?**

This question finds explicit answer in *Rom 8:33* : "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." There is no salvation through self-justification. In *Luk 10:29* "But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?" , we are told of a certain lawyer who was willing to justify himself, but he was not saved thereby. Paul said, that even though he might not have anything against himself, he would not thereby be justified, for it is the Lord who judges "For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord" (*1Co 4:4*). There were Pharisees who justified themselves before men, but that did not mean salvation. To be justified before God one must be justified by God. One might have a clean bill of moral health from his friends and neighbours, but to be saved he must be pronounced righteous by God. God Himself must pronounce the acquittal, else we stand condemned before His righteous law. One's conscience may not condemn, but the question of guilt and penalty is not left to the conscience. Nobody's conscience would consign him to hell. It is not the human conscience but a holy God who must first be satisfied before there can be justification. This leads on to another question:

**THE SOURCE OF JUSTIFICATION, OR WHAT CAUSES GOD TO JUSTIFY THE UNGODLY?**

The grand answer to this question is found in *Rom 3:24* : "Being justified freely by his grace." The adverb "freely" means "Without any cause or reason in the sinner." It is the same word used in *Joh 15:25*, where Christ says, "They hated me without a cause." There was nothing in Christ to merit the hatred of men, and there is nothing in any sinner to cause God to justify him; the cause is in God Himself. It is not good in the sinner but grace in God that moves Him to justify. In *Rom 11:6*, the apostle says, "And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace." To mix anything of human merit with divine grace is to destroy grace. It is either all of grace or none of grace. There is no conjunction joining anything with grace as the source or cause of justification. And yet, men dare to mix something of man with the grace of God as the moving cause of justification. This is to divide the honour and praise of salvation between the sinner and the Saviour, between men and God. Men may do that here on earth, but in heaven all honour and praise are ascribed to God. And this calls for still another question:

**THE JUST BASIS, OR MERITORIOUS GROUND OF JUSTIFICATION**

On what ground can God justify the ungodly and yet remain just? It is on the ground of blood atonement, "Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (*Rom 3:24*). "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (*Eph 1:7*). "Much more then, being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (*Rom 5:9*). "Christ and Him crucified" is the only righteous ground for the justification of any sinner. And there is no "AND" anywhere in the Bible connecting anything with His blood as the just basis of justification.

The only way God can justify a sinner without doing wrong is to charge the sinners' sins to Christ and credit Christ's obedience to the sinner's account. This is called imputed righteousness, or the righteousness of God. It is the righteousness Christ wrought out on the cross when He was obedient unto death. God justifies the penitent believer on the ground of the obedience of his Surety and Substitute, Jesus Christ. Obedience is always necessary to righteousness. And as the sinner has no record of obedience, he is therefore unrighteous on his own record. If the sinner is to become righteous before God, it must be by the obedience of Christ. Whose obedience is reckoned to the sinners' account. The sinner is saved by obedience, but it is by the obedience of "Christ, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (*1Co 1:30*).

Let us remember that the Lord Jesus came to this world as a public or representative person. He was God before He became man, and as God He had no personal obligations to the law except to enforce it as Lawgiver. He Who gave the law was made under the law for the purpose of redeeming them that were under law, that we might be adopted as sons of God "To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (*Gal 4:5*). Having no personal obligations, Christ could assume the obligations of a Surety. A surety is one who assumes all the legal responsibilities of the principal---of the one who contracted the debt. As the Surety for His people, it was Christ's duty to die. He himself said that He ought to have died. After His death and resurrection, He joined Himself to the two as they walked to Emmaus, and said to them: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?" (*Luk 24:26*). It was in grace that He took upon Himself suretyship engagements, but when He did, He was duty bound to die for sinners. Even yet, we are not through with questions relating to justification. Let us consider:

**THE WAY OF JUSTIFICATION, OR WHAT THE SINNER MUST DO TO BE JUSTIFIED**

The sinner is justified by faith and by faith alone. "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (*Rom 3:28*). "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God," (*Rom 5:1*). "It is of faith that it might be by grace" (*Rom 4:16*). To add anything to faith on the sinner's part is to add something to grace on God's part. And since faith looks to Christ for salvation, to add anything to faith would be the same as adding something to Christ. Perish the thought! He must have all the glory.

Saving faith is much more than the mere assent of the mind to gospel truth, or to the acknowledgment of gospel facts. Trust in, or dependence upon Christ for salvation is a necessary element in saving faith. I believe in George Washington, that is, my mind acknowledges certain facts about him but it has never occurred to me to trust him for salvation. This might be termed historical faith---the kind of faith nearly every one has in God and Jesus Christ. But a necessary element in saving faith is reliance or trust.

"Not saved are we by trying From self can come no aid; 'Tis on the blood relying, Once for our ransom paid;

'Tis looking unto Jesus,   
The holy One and Just;   
Tis His great work that saves us, It is not try, but trust.

"No deeds of ours are needed To make Christ's merit more, No frames of mind, or feelings, Can add to His great store;

'Tis simply to receive Him, The holy One and Just, 'Tis only to believe Him It is not try, but trust." The virture of faith lies in the worth of its object. Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection, is the only object of saving trust. Faith, however strong, in any other object cannot justify. This makes faith a thing as different as possible from merit. Richard Hooker says: "God doth justify the believing man, yet not for the worthiness of his belief, but for the worthiness of Him which is believed." It does not make a beggar worthy of food to take it from the hand of his benefactor. Nor does it make a sinner worthy of salvation to receive it as a gift from Jesus Christ. It rather implies his unworthiness. The sinner is justly charged, but freely forgiven. It is not our faith, as a thing of merit, that is accounted for righteousness, but Christ the object of faith. The Lord Himself is our righteousness. We are not saved on account of our faith; we are saved on account of Christ. We are forgiven for Christ's sake. We must not trust our faith, but Him. And now in closing, there is a final question.

**THE EVIDENCES OF JUSTIFICATION, OR WHAT ONE DOES TO PROVE HIS FAITH**

We are justified evidentially by works, and by works alone. The only evidences of saving faith are our works. And this includes baptism as a work of righteousness. Any man who claims to be saved and refuses to be baptized, when properly taught the significance of baptism, has a mark against him, in my judgment. We are saved by faith alone, but not by faith that is alone, for faith without works is dead. The man who has saving faith also received a holy disposition in the new birth---a disposition or nature that seeks to please God. Saul's first question after his conversion was, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" (*Act 9:6*). Saving faith works by love. In the new birth there were a triplet of graces brought into being: faith, hope, and love---and these are inseparable.   
There is no real difference between Paul and James on the subject of justification. They complement, but do not contradict each other. They deal with different classes in their treatment of justification. Paul writes about the justification of a sinner; James writes about the justification of a saint. Both of them illustrate their teaching by the same person: Abraham. Paul takes Abraham as a sinner and writes about justification in the sense of salvation; James takes Abraham, after he had been saved many years, and shows that he was justified by works when he offered up Isaac. Paul writes about God receiving a sinner; James writes about God approving a saint. Paul speaks of justification of persons; James speaks of justification of profession. One's profession of faith is justified by his works. James challenges the faith of the man who says he has faith, but has no works---can faith, the faith he talks about, save him? Every saved person is justified, both by faith and also by works. As an alien sinner, he is justified by faith in the blood of Christ; as a professing believer, he is justified again and again by his works. There is no way to show our faith except by our works. The saved man is one who is depending upon Christ alone for salvation and who, out of love, is daily seeking to please Him. The saved man is poor in spirit, mourning over his sins, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and longing to be perfectly whole. The saved man anticipates perfection, but does not claim it. And may both writer and reader be able to join Paul in saying, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (*2Ti 1:12*).

÷02-2-07 ADOPTION

There are no superfluous words in the Word of God. Every Bible term has its own distinct meaning and must not be confounded with any other term. The words regeneration, justification, and adoption, while closely related, express distinct ideas and aspects of salvation.

There are only five uses of the word adoption in the New Testament. The term is used only by Paul in Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians. In these five references there appears to be three different applications of the term. In *Rom 9:4* the application is to Israel as a nation. In this case adoption did not mean salvation, for in the context Paul prays for the salvation of Israel. The nation had been adopted, but most of the individuals within the nation had neither been regenerated nor justified. By adoption Israel had been separated from other nations and brought into the peculiar relation to God as a son. "And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn" (*Exo 4:22*). "Ye are the children of the LORD your God: ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead" (*Deu 14:1*); "Do ye thus requite the LORD, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?" (*Deu 32:6*); "They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn" (*Jer 31:9*); "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt" (*Hos 11:1*).

There were elect individuals within the elect nation. When Elijah made intercession against Israel, complaining that he was left alone and in danger, God corrected him, saying, "I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal" (*Rom 11:4*). And Paul adds, "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (*Rom 11:5*).

In "That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed" (*Rom 9:8*) Paul says that the children of the flesh are not the children of God, by which he means, that one is not a child of God because of his fleshly descent from Abraham. *Mat 8:12* says that "the children of the kingdom shall be cast into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." *Mat 21:43* tells us that "the kingdom of God shall be taken from you (Nation Israel) and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." This nation is identified in *1Pe 2:9* as a holy nation, which means that it is a spiritual nation in distinction from the fleshly descendants of Abraham.

In *Rom 8:23* "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" the word adoption is used with reference to the body and is called the redemption of the body. The body as such is not yet adopted. When the body of the believer is redeemed or adopted the people of God will then be publicly manifested as sons of God: "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God" (*Rom 8:19*).   
In the other three references the application seems to be to the believer as such without any distinction between soul and body. They refer to the adoption of persons. In "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will" (*Eph 1:5*), we are told that we were predestinated unto the adoption of sons, which means that adoption was according to God's eternal purpose of love. In eternity past God determined to adopt us as sons. Adoption rests upon redemption, that is, upon blood atonement. In *Rom 8:15* "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" , we find that the believer is given the Spirit of adoption by which he instinctively cries, "Abba, Father." The apostle uses the double form for Father: "Abba", his mother-tongue, and Pater (Greek), the tongue of the learned. "Abba" is used to denote the filial spirit of the adopted son. In using this word, Paul alludes to a law among the Jews which forbad a servant to call the head of the house, Abba, which meant father.

The custom of adoption prevailed among the Romans, Greeks, and other ancient people, but not among the Jews. There are three cases of adoption mentioned in the Old Testament: of Moses: "And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water" (*Exo 2:10*); Genubath "And the sister of Tahpenes bare him Genubath his son, whom Tahpenes weaned in Pharaoh's house: and Genubath was in Pharaoh's household among the sons of Pharaoh" (*1Ki 11:20*); and Esther "And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter: for she had neither father nor mother, and the maid was fair and beautiful; whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter...Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go in unto the king, she required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her" (*Est 2:7*; *Est 2:15*), but they all occurred outside of Palestine-in Egypt and Persia, where the practice of adoption prevailed. And in the New Testament the idea occurs only in the epistles of Paul to churches beyond the border of Palestine. As a Roman citizen, and a man of travel, the apostle would be familiar with the customs of the Romans and others. And so he borrows the idea and applies it to the act of God and Christian experience.

Adoption may be defined as that aspect of salvation in which God, by a legal process, makes one His son who by nature is not His son. Adoption, in itself, is nothing more than the legal act of a court, but when God adopts a son He gives to that son a subjective experience, a filial spirit, the feeling of a child-the feeling which cries Father. Here is where adoption and the new birth come together. The new birth expresses the origin and quality of spiritual life, while adoption expresses a legal relation between the believer and God. We shall consider adoption in its relation to the doctrines of justification, regeneration, and resurrection. These are separate and distinct blessings possessed by all who have believed to the saving of the soul. May we consider:

**JUSTIFICATION AND ADOPTION**

Both terms are forensic or judicial. They are court terms. Justification expresses the legal act by which the guilt of sin is removed, and the believer is reckoned righteous before God. Adoption expresses the legal act by which one outside the family of God is brought into the family as a son. Adoption expresses a relationship not even implied in justification. When a court justifies a person, that person does not by that act become a son of the judge. Another process of law is necessary if he is to become a son of the judge. To make the accused his son, the judge would have to do more than merely acquit him and set him free. Justification frees from condemnation; adoption makes one a son in the eyes of the law. Justification is the act of a merciful judge setting the prisoner free; adoption is the act of a generous father, taking a son to his bosom and endowing him with liberty, and a heritage. Let us next consider:

**REGENERATION AND ADOPTION**

Both regeneration and adoption express relationship, but they are not identical. Regeneration is the biological term and involves a change of nature; adoption is a legal term and denotes a change of position. Regeneration speaks of relationship by birth; adoption speaks of relationship by law. Regeneration confers the nature of sons; adoption confers the name of sons. Regeneration gives a meetness for the inheritance; adoption gives a title to the inheritance. The believer is in the family of God by a twofold process: birth and adoption. In regeneration the Holy Spirit made us alive; as the Spirit of adoption, the Holy Spirit enables us to pray and to cry, Abba, Father. In regeneration the Holy Spirit makes us a child of God; as the Spirit of adoption, He gives us the cry of a child, which is the evidence of life. All real prayer, acceptable worship, and godly living is in the energy of the Holy Spirit; the flesh profiteth nothing. And now let us think of:

**RESURRECTION AND ADOPTION**

The body is redeemed in the resurrection, but resurrection and adoption are not the same. Adoption, when applied to the body, involves a resurrection, but a certain kind of resurrection; the resurrection of the redeemed body. Resurrection simply expresses the thought that the body will be raised from the dead, while adoption speaks of the nature of the resurrected body. It will be a redeemed or glorified body---a body fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ. The body of the lost will be raised: "And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" (*Act 24:15*), but it will not be adopted---it will not be a glorified body.

In civil adoption, the adopting party usually has regard for actual or supposed qualities in the child which appear good or agreeable; Scriptural and spiritual adoption into the family of God is wholly of grace through the merits of Christ. In civil adoption, the adopting father imparts his goods and gives his name to the adopted child, but he cannot impart to it his own nature. In spiritual adoption, God makes those whom He adopts not only partakers of His name and blessings; He also imparts to them His nature, changing them into His own blessed likeness in Christ, to Whose image they are ultimately conformed.

Among the Romans there was a twofold adoption, one private, the other a public affair. The adopting party would make the child his own by due process of law, but in a private way, then later it would be made public. Believers are the adopted sons of God now, but it will not be publicly manifested until the Lord comes for them and they are manifested in glory.

Since this article has not attained the usual length, we shall go on to make some general remarks. The doctrines we are now publishing will appear to the secularist as impractical in view of the present distress throughout the world, when men's hearts are failing them for fear of the things coming on the earth. We may be reminded of the deterioration in human relations, involving both nations and individuals. We are being told that the human race is about to destroy itself in nuclear warfare, and that such doctrines as we are publishing have no practical value in preventing the threatened holocaust. To such reminders and objections, it is sufficient to reply, that our articles are dealing with the individual's relation to God, and involves his eternal welfare. This present order of things, however bad, will ultimately come to an end, and the eternal order will be fixed for all men, either in terrible torment or in ineffable glory and happiness.

The individuals relation to God is of paramount importance, for the reason that the violated law of God is the only source of real and eternal danger. Salvation is deliverance from sin, and sin is unspeakably dangerous because it is against God. To be rightly related to God through Christ means everlasting life. To be delivered from the curse of the law of God means eternal safety. To be a child of God is to be an heir of God, and to have the promise of a home in the Father's house of many mansions. Physical death is to be the lot of all while the Lord is away. Human weapons of destruction are limited to the killing of the body, while God, the Judge of all the earth, is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.

To have right relations with God is to be rightly related to everybody and to everything. To be rightly related to God puts everything else in its proper perspective. To be right with God guarantees glory in the end. None can really hurt whom God blesses.

"Come, Thou fount of every blessing, Tune my heart to sing Thy grace; Streams of mercy, never ceasing, Call for songs of loudest praise.

"Here I'll raise my Ebenezer, Hither by Thy help I'm come; And I hope, by Thy good pleasure, Safely to arrive at home.

"Jesus sought me when a stranger, Wandering from the fold of God; He, to rescue me from danger, Interposed His precious blood.

"Oh, to grace how great a debtor Daily I'm constrained to be! Let Thy grace, Lord, like a fetter, Bind my wandering heart to Thee.

"Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it; Prone to leave the God I love; Here's my heart, Oh, take and seal it, Seal it for Thy courts above."

÷02-2-08 SANCTIFICATION

If any defense is needed for writing on the subjects we are dealing with in this present series of articles, it is sufficient to say that they deal with men's relation to God. The secularist is apt to complain that such articles are not practical and profitable, inasmuch as they do not bear directly on politics, economics, and other social sciences. It might be argued that we are making no contribution towards solving the problems now perplexing the statesmen of the world. Human relations, whether on the individual or collective level, are generally accepted as of much importance, and this we do not deny or ignore. Great industries have their public relations agencies. Governments have their agencies which deal with domestic and foreign relations. And since every man must have dealings with God, the Creator and Lawgiver, to have right relations with Him is of supreme importance. To ignore or deny this is to take a fatal attitude. Every man must undergo a change of attitude towards God or suffer eternal and fatal consequences.

The proper presentation of any Bible doctrine lies largely in correct definition of terms. Much of the false teaching so rampant today began with incorrect definitions of Bible words. This is particularly true with regard to the doctrine of sanctification. If we accept the definition of the word as given by the so-called holiness sects, then we will have to accept their teaching on the subject.   
In getting at the true meaning of Bible words, we must remember that human dictionaries do not determine, but merely register the meaning of words according to their current usage. This explains why Webster and others define baptism as the act of dipping, pouring, or sprinkling. These men did not profess to be theologians, and their definitions merely reflect the opinions of recognized theologians whose opinions differ. It was observed that some denominations dip or immerse and call their act baptism, while others pour or sprinkle and call their act baptism; and so baptism is defined as being any one of these acts. Bible doctrines cannot be settled by the human dictionaries. We must get our definitions of Bible words from the Bible itself. We shall observe:

**SOME INADEQUATE AND ERRONEOUS VIEWS OF SANCTIFICATION**

1. The view that sanctification is merely a progressive work of grace in the soul. This is only a partial explanation of the doctrine. It covers only one aspect of the doctrine. It ignores the objective side of sanctification, and makes it only a subjective experience in which the believer grows in grace. Sanctification is both objective and subjective, positional as well as experiential.

2. The view that sanctification is a blessing for only a few sample saints, the mark of an advanced and mature Christian. This view distinguishes between the ordinary Christian and those who are more pious and godly. But the fact is that every born again person is a saint. All the saved are sanctified. Sanctification like justification is through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ: "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (*Act 26:18*). Paul wrote to the carnal believers at Corinth and addressed them as saints, that is, sanctified persons.

3. The idea that sanctification is a second work of grace in which sin is eradicated from the soul. This makes sanctification subsequent to justification, a blessing which may be lost unless the second blessing of sanctification is received. This would break the Scripture which says that the justified are (in the purpose of God) already glorified: "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified" (*Rom 8:30*).

4. The Romanist view that nobody is sanctified until after death when the church, by a tedious and painful ceremony, canonizes the person on the ground of personal merit. According to this view there are no living saints. In reply, it is sufficient to say that Paul wrote to living people and addressed them as saints.

**THE BIBLE TEACHING**

Let us bear in mind that the words saint, sanctuary, holiness, and sanctification are from the same root word, which means "to set apart", or "to cause to pass over". By comparing *Exo 13:2* with *Exo 13:12* we get the Bible meaning of the word sanctify. In *Exo 13:2* God says, "Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine." In verse 12, the command is repeated but instead of the word sanctify, the words "set apart" (margin: "Cause to pass over") are used. The thought is that of separating from and setting apart to, or causing to pass over to. The first-born Israelite was separated from the other children in the home and considered as the peculiar possession of the Lord on the ground that the death angel passed over the house, sparing him the fate of the firstborn Egyptian.

There is no moral element implied in the word sanctification, and so it is used of things as well as of persons. We find that vessels, and beasts, and a mountain (things without moral value) are said to be sanctified. They were simply separated from one use and set apart to another use. Isaiah speaks of idolators as sanctifying themselves, which means that they separated themselves from the true congregation of Israel to engage in idolatrous worship. "They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD" (*Isa 66:17*).

Nor does the word sanctification imply any internal change in the thing or person sanctified. Mt. Sinai was sanctified "And Moses said unto the LORD, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it" (*Exo 19:23*), but there was no internal change; the soil and minerals remained the same as before. Jeremiah was sanctified before he was born. "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (*Jer 1:5*), which precludes the idea of any internal change. Our Lord was sanctified "Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" (*Joh 10:36*); "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (*Joh 17:19*), and this does away with the idea of eradication of a sinful nature in sanctification, for He was ever the sinless One.

**SANCTIFICATION OF PERSONS**

The sanctification of persons does involve the question of morals because men are moral beings. And there is one aspect of sanctification which, when completed, will be the eradication of sinful nature and will consist of personal holiness. The various aspects of sanctification should not be confounded but clearly distinguished. The Bible speaks of sanctification by the blood of Christ, by the Holy Spirit, by the word of God, and by the Father.

**SANCTIFICATION BY THE BLOOD**

In *Heb 10:10* "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" , we are told that our sanctification is by the will of God through the offering of the body of Christ once for all. The same truth is given us in *Heb 13:12* : "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." We note three things about this aspect of sanctification.

1. It is positional or objective. The above Scriptures express what the believer is before God by virtue of the blood of Christ. This is imputed holiness, for Christ is "made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (*1Co 1:30*). It is as Scriptural to speak of imputed righteousness.

2. It is eternal. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (*Heb 10:14*). In Christ the believer is holy forever; in Christ he is eternally perfect.

3. It is absolute. In Christ we are absolutely holy-we are as holy as He is holy. This aspect of sanctification is not gradual and relative, but absolute and eternal. If Christ is our holiness, then we are as holy as He is. How precious this makes the blood of Christ to the believer!

**SANCTIFICATION BY THE HOLY SPIRIT**

This is internal and experiential in which the believer is separated from the world and set apart as belonging to God. Paul thanks God for the Thessalonians "because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (*2Th 2:13*). Peter writes to those who are the "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (*1Pe 1:2*).

Salvation in the sense of conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is the initial work of grace and not a second blessing. And it is to be followed by blessing after blessing. Paul expresses confidence "that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (*Php 1:6*). The Holy Spirit convicts of sin and leads one to faith in Christ. And he keeps in faith those begotten unto faith. There are no abandoned projects in the economy of grace.

**SANCTIFICATION BY THE WORD**

This is personal and practical sanctification and has to do with our daily walk, or every day life. In praying for His disciples, our Lord said, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (*Joh 17:17*). The word of God has a separating influence on the life of the believer. If the word has a large place in our life, sin will have a proportionately small place. An increased desire for the word will mean a decreased desire for the world. Sin will keep us from the word or the word will keep us from sin. A woman was complimenting her friend on her knowledge of the Bible. She said, "I would give all the world for your knowledge of the Scriptures." "Well," said the friend, "that is exactly what it cost me."

Sanctification by the word is also progressive. We make progress in personal holiness by feeding on the word: "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (*1Pe 2:2*). When we consider how little the average Christian feeds his soul on the word of God, we are not surprised to find them dwarfed spiritually-Christians who never grow up to maturity. Sanctification is a divine work and a human obligation. The believer has not strength of his own for godly living, and to think otherwise is highly presumptuous and reveals a spirit of self-righteousness. On the other hand, to deny the obligation to holy living is to justify sinful living.

There is a close analogy between good health in the physical and good health in the spiritual sense, or between good health in a man considered as a physical being and as a moral being. There are three things essential in each case.

1. There must be wholesome food. Physical health may be impaired by what one eats. We have pure food laws for our protection. But in spite of this many people make of their stomachs a sort of garbage can for harmful foods. And we need to know how to eat as well as what to eat. Many would have better health physically if they would masticate what they eat. They may be said to bolt their food. They do not use their teeth, but try to make their stomachs do what the teeth were given to do. Now there must be wholesome food for the soul if the Christian is to have good health. The Christian's food is what he puts into his mind-it is what he reads and hears and looks at. There is a lot of mental food dished out to Christians that impairs their spiritual health. The believer needs to shun the lustful, trashy, filthy literature, constantly pouring off the presses in shocking abundance, as he would shun poison for the body. The proper food for the Christian is the Bible and such books and magazines as are true to the Bible.

2. Another essential to good health is proper exercise. And the best exercise is that which uses all the members of the body. Every member of the body has its own muscles for it was intended to be used, and if not used the muscles will become weak and flabby. Put your arm in a sling and keep it there month after month-never give it any exercise-never use it---and after a while you can't use it. Put your well leg in a cast and keep it there six months, and you can no more walk than fly.

Now spiritual exercise is just as essential to the health of the soul as physical exercise is to the body. Spiritual muscles can also become weak and flabby. The strength we get from spiritual manna must be used. We must exercise our spiritual gifts by doing good. We are created in Christ Jesus for the purpose of doing good works. There is much for Christians to do, and we are exhorted by Paul to be rich in good works. The lost are to be witnessed to, the sick are to be visited, and the afflicted are to be comforted. To talk of Christ to others will make Him more precious to our own hearts. Witnessing to others about Christ is the best tonic for a run-down feeling spiritually. We may lift ourselves out of the doldrums by giving somebody else a lift. We save our lives by losing our lives for Christ's sake in the service of others.

3. A third essential to good health is the right kind of atmosphere. We must have oxygen if we are to breathe. Mrs. Cole cannot have normal health in Florida. The altitude is too low and the air is too damp and heavy. And on Frisco Peak in Arizona, the altitude is too high and the air is too light---not enough oxygen for her. The climate and atmosphere has to be considered in the matter of physical health.   
Now for the spiritual health we must breathe the right atmosphere-we must have the proper environment. And this has to do with our associations. We are to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" (*Eph 5:11*). Bad company will ruin good character "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (*1Co 15:33*). The blessed man does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, that is, he does not follow the advice of those who hate God. He does not stand in the way of sinners, which means that he is not a joint partaker of their ways. He does not sit in the seat of the scornful, that is, the blessed man has no part with those who mock at holy things.

The believer is in the world, but he is not of the world. He must not shun physical contact with the world, but must have no moral fellowship with its ways.

Complete personal sanctification in the sense of sinless perfection is a goal to be striven for and not a reality to be boasted of. Regeneration has been called the crisis of the disease of sin, and sanctification the progress of convalescence. To live in the truth of the glorious doctrine of sanctification will keep the believer humble, happy, hopeful, and helpful on his journey to glory. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it" (*1Th 5:23-24*).

÷02-2-09 REPENTANCE UNTO LIFE

It is the opinion of the writer that the word repentance was better understood in the days of Christ and the apostles than it is today. The first message of John the Baptist was on repentance, although he did not define the term: "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (*Mat 3:1-2*). And our Lord began His ministry by saying, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel" (*Mar 1:15*). When Christ and the apostles preached repentance, the meaning of the word was fixed in the minds of the people, so that definition of the word was not necessary. But this is not true today. There is so much confusion over the doctrine; there are so many conflicting ideas; the word is used with such a variety of meanings, that the preacher needs to take great pains to know and to teach the true meaning of the word. If a man does not know what repentance is, he cannot know whether or not he has repented. The writer believes that many a saved person is confused over the matter and is anxiously asking himself, Have I repented? We believe the average Christian has a better view of saving faith than he has of "Repentance unto life." However, if one is sure of his faith in Christ, he may also be sure that he has repented.

Repentance and faith are mutually inclusive, like the two sides of a coin; they are inseparable graces, so that you cannot have one without the other. The two doctrines are mutually helpful so that to understand the one will help to understand the other. The New Testament sometimes uses both terms to express a saving experience, while at other times only one or the other term is employed. When we read that repentance is unto life, saving faith is implied; and when we read that the believer has everlasting life, repentance is implied. While inseparable, repentance and faith are also distinct exercises of the human soul. Paul testified, "Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (*Act 20:21*).

**DEFINITION AND AMPLIFICATION**

Etymologically, repentance means a change of mind. The English word comes from a compound Greek word: metanoeo. The Greek noun nous means mind. The Greek verb noeo tells what the mind does: it thinks or considers. Then the Greek preposition meta, when connected with noeo expresses the idea of a change. And so metanoeo (repentance) means to consider the past, to think back and change the mind. It is afterthought as opposed to forethought. In repentance the sinner is occupied with his past record before God.

If one should feel that it is minimizing a great truth to define repentance as a mere change of the mind, it is enough to say that in the Bible the mind includes what we mean by the heart; it includes the affections as well as the intellect. And remember also that gospel repentance is a change of mind toward God about sin. The carnal mind is enmity against God, and to change the mind from enmity to love for God is no small change. It is as difficult as it is to raise the dead or create a world. This may cause one to ask, How can a sinner repent since a stream cannot rise higher than its source? The answer is obvious: we cannot repent except by Divine grace. The New Hampshire Confession says, "Repentance and Faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God." This plain statement finds ample support in Scripture. Paul writes that "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth" (*2Ti 2:24*). "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (*Act 5:31*); "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (*Act 11:18*). We should preach the duty of repentance and at the same time, pray for God to give repentance.

The Divine order, when repentance and faith are used together, is repentance and faith; not faith and repentance. In repentance the sinner takes the place of a sinner; in faith he takes Christ as Saviour. In repentance one sees himself as a sinner before God; in faith he sees Christ as Saviour from the wrath of God. In repentance one is sick of sin; in faith Christ is precious. In repentance the sinner is helpless; in faith Christ is mighty to save. In repentance there is sorrow for sin; in faith there is joy for salvation. In repentance the sinner distrusts himself; in faith he trusts the Lord Jesus Christ. A man who reversed the Divine order, and put faith before repentance, once asked the writer to explain how one could repent toward God who did not first believe there is a God. This question revealed the man's idea of faith. To trim faith was simply the belief in the existence of God, something the devils also believe "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble" (*Jas 2:19*). Of course, one must first believe there is a God before he can repent towards God, but this is not the faith that saves. In saving faith there is an element of trust---trust in Christ Who put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

Our Lord said, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel," thus putting repentance before faith. To urge an impenitent sinner to trust Christ is like urging a well man to take medicine, or like begging a rich man to beg for alms. Repentance is the effect of seeing oneself as he really is: ruined, guilty, undone, and in danger of hell. Repentance is the effect of seeing sin in its true colors. The natural man, morally speaking, is color blind; sin appears attractive and entrancing. The natural man has a ruined taste; he calls sweet bitter and bitter sweet; he confounds good and evil; he is all mixed up on the question of right and wrong. Repentance is caused by the withering work of the Holy Spirit, Who takes-the sword the word of truth-and slays man's natural self-esteem and self-righteousness, causing him to cry, "What must I do to be saved?" (*Act 16:30*).

Repentance involves two facts: the fact of sin and the fact of grace. If a man is not a sinner he would not need to repent, and if God is not gracious it would do no good to repent. The writer once found himself in a Bible Conference with certain brethren who insisted that repentance has nothing to do with sin. One of them challenged anybody to find the expression "repentance for sin," in the Bible, or where we are commanded to "repent OF sin." It is the contention of this school of thought that repentance has only to do with one's attitude toward Christ, and that one repents by trusting Christ as Saviour. It is true that the exact words "repent of sin" are not in the Bible, but we do have the equivalent of the expression in several places. In *Jer 8:6* we read that "no man repented him of his wickedness". In *Act 8:22* it is written: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness." In *Rev 2:21*, Jezebel is said to have been given time "to repent of her fornication." In *Rev 9:20-21* "And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts" , we are told that certain men who had been visited with plagues repented not of the works of their hands. So repentance implies sin, sorrow for it, and a changed attitude towards God about it. Nobody but a sinner can repent, and there is nothing to repent of but sin. It is absurd to talk about repentance for doing what is good.

**THE NATURE OF REPENTANCE**

1. Repentance is not a work to be done in order to be saved. This would conflict with the many Scriptures which teach salvation without works; "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them"

(*Eph 2:8-10*); "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;" (*Tit 3:5*); "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (*2Ti 1:9*), with many others. Repentance is not something one does with his hands, but what he feels in his soul. It is not a benevolent act, although benevolence will be the fruit of it. A man once boasted that he could do more repentance with a barrel of flour and a side of bacon than was ever done at a mourner's bench. This sneer at the mourner and the claim that one repents by doing deeds of charity are alike unscriptural. He who has never mourned over his sins cannot rejoice in Christ as Saviour.

2. Repentance is not bodily exercise. It is internal, rather than external; inward attitude of the soul, rather than outward exercise of the body. Job sat in ashes when he repented, but sitting in ashes is not repentance. The publican beat upon his breast when he repented, but smiting one's breast is not repentance. Sitting in ashes and smiting the breast were outward signs of how these men felt in their souls. Sin was a grievous thing to them.

3. Repentance is not internal grief and sorrow as the price of salvation. There is nothing meritorious but rather the conscious lack of merit. In repentance the sinner says in effect: "Nothing in my hands I bring, Simply to Thy Cross I cling." Repentance is emptying oneself of all self-confidence, and when it is "repentance unto life" includes confidence in Christ as the one and only ground of salvation. There is no specific length of time one has to mourn nor any certain degree of sorrow one must feel. This is because mourning is not the price of salvation. One mourns over his lost conditionmourns because he is not saved, not in order to be saved. The sinner cannot be saved by his mourning. Mourning may reveal his interest in salvation, but will not merit salvation. You go to your physician for a check-up just as a precautionary measure. He gives you a thorough examination and tells you that you have cancer. This will naturally cause grief and anxiety. But all the mourning you might do would not contribute to any cure. Worry and grief would not cause you to get well. Now suppose your doctor---after a brief pause assures you that he can cure you without surgery. If you believe him there will be wonderful peace of mind, but if you keep on in your grief that will be evidence you do not trust him. From the standpoint of the sinner's duty there is no need to mourn any length of time over sin. As soon as he feels concern over his lost condition and hears about Christ as Saviour, he ought to put his trust in Him and cease his mourning. The preacher should never tell the grief-stricken sinner to keep on mourning, but should tell him to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. However, from the standpoint of God's sovereign dealings, He often allows the sinner to grieve and struggle with sin for a long time before He shows him the sufficiency of Christ as Saviour.

4. Repentance is not any self-torture of the body. This confounds repentance with penance as something meritorious. The monk does penance by sleeping on a hard bed or wearing a coarse shirt. Luther was doing penance by climbing a stairway in Rome on his hands and knees. When Anselm of Canterbury died, his garments were found to be full of vermin he had harbored in order to mortify the flesh.

We will let a Roman Catholic tell us what penance is. We quote Dr. Chaloner in "The Catholic Christian Instructed:" Question: "What do you mean by the sacrament of penance?" Answer: "An institution of Christ by which our sins are forgiven which we fall into after baptism." "In what does this consist?" Answer: "On the part of the penitent, it consists in three things: contrition, confession, and satisfaction. By satisfaction we mean a faithful performance of the penance enjoined by the priests."

Penance is called the second plank after shipwreck. It is the way of salvation the second and all subsequent times after the first salvation by the sacrament of baptism.

5. Repentance is not some hard term imposed by God for salvation. This would make it inconsistent with God's way of salvation which is not a hard way but an easy way. If salvation were by a hard way, nobody could be saved because man by nature is without strength to do good. If salvation is by grace through faith; if it is without money and without price; if it is the gift of God, how can it be said to be on hard terms? The way of salvation is indeed made hard, not by God, but by the pride of the natural heart. It is pride and self-sufficiency that leads one to ask, "What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" (*Mat 19:16*). We must indeed strive to enter in at the strait gate, but this striving is not with an unwilling Saviour, but against a nature that wants ground for boasting. Everything in our old self-centered and self-confident nature fights against the way of salvation by grace through faith.

6. Gospel repentance is toward God. One may repent towards his parents. A wild young man away from home, having broken the hearts of his father and mother with his wayward life, may be moved to tears by hearing a description of the old homestead and of the grief of his aged parents. He may experience a change of mind towards father and mother and return home to take care of them in their declining days, but this would not be gospel and evangelical repentance.

7. Repentance unto life includes faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It has respect to Christ as Saviour, as well as to God as Lawgiver. It does not end in despair but in hope. Judas repented and hanged himself, but this was not gospel repentance, and a different word in the Greek is used to describe it. In gospel repentance we have sins perceived, sins abhorred, and sins abandoned in the heart, as one turns to Christ for salvation. The believer will never in this life be able to quit sinning, but in his heart he wants to. Someone has called repentance the repudiation of sin. In true repentance there is not only the desire to escape the consequences of sin, but to be rid of sin itself as a thing displeasing to God. Much so-called repentance is illustrated in the little girl's prayer: "O God, make me good-not too good-not real goodbut just good enough to keep from being whipped." True repentance is a permanent and abiding grace in the soul. It is an attitude that belongs to the whole Christian life in regard to sin and the Saviour. As one grows in grace, sin becomes increasingly hateful and Christ becomes more and more precious.

**THE NECESSITY OF REPENTANCE**

The necessity of repentance was emphasized by Christ, by John the Baptist, and by the apostles. Our Lord preached, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (*Luk 13:3*). Paul preached that God had commanded "all men everywhere to repent" (*Act 17:30*). Let us note some reasons for repentance.

1. Salvation without repentance would fill heaven with people who hate God and love sin. It would perpetuate rebellion by transferring rebels from earth to heaven. Salvation is deliverance of a person from sin, not merely from a sinful environment. Faith toward Christ without repentance toward God would make Christ nothing more than a fire escapenothing more than a Deliverer from hell. But Christ is the Saviour from sin as well as from the punishment of sin. One element in repentance is hatred of sin, and to hate sin is to love God.

2. Refusal to repent is even worse than the sin for which one ought to repent. One may tell a lie, and this is an awful sin, but refusal to repent is worse. And why? Because one may lie from fear or other weakness of the flesh, but failure to repent is to justify the lie. Peter denied the Lord out of weakness and fear, but he did not justify his denial. He wept bitterly; he repented. Nor did he give up in despair, like Judas, but clung to the Lord and profited from his sin. His fall cured him of boasting and taught him the needed lesson of humility.

David manifests the spirit of the true penitent in the 51st Psalm. In the parable of the prodigal son we have a classic example of repentance. We have the father's heart, the father's provision, and the son's repentance. The son left home in a spirit of pride and independence, and this was a sin against the father. He went deeper and deeper into sin until he was reduced to abject poverty: rags and hunger and shameful occupation. He felt the shame of all this, but that was not repentance. Now a change takes place in his attitude toward his father. He returns to the father in a spirit of contrition and confession. He does not return to boast of his success while away from his father, but rather to confess his failure and need. He does not return with an offering for his acceptance with the father. He had nothing to offer but rags and a broken life. The only hope of acceptance was the father's love which forgave him all. Cannot every child of grace read his life's story in the experiences of the prodigal? The story of the prodigal does not illustrate faith toward Christ, but only repentance toward God. It has nothing about God as Lawgiver, but only as Father. It does not give the ground of the sinner's acceptance before God, but only the fact of it. It has nothing to say on the doctrine of atonement, and was not given as a complete picture of the way of salvation. It was spoken by Christ to the Pharisees and scribes in reply to their complaint that He received publicans and sinners. He who uses this parable to deny or discount the truth of blood atonement makes it serve a purpose not intended by Christ. It does not give a complete picture of God, for God is Judge as well as Father. It does not give us, as a certain liberal has said, the very heart of the gospel. The heart of the gospel is the story of Christ crucified. The gospel is concerning Him in Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sin. Repentance is associated with remission of sin, "and without shedding of blood is no remission" (*Heb 9:22*). And the blood of Jesus Christ was shed that God might be just in justifying the believer. "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (*Rom 3:24-26*). On the one hand, there is no remission apart from the death of Christ; on the other hand, there is no remission apart from repentance on the part of the sinner. May writer and reader bow in adoring wonder at the wisdom of God in human salvation!

÷02-2-10 SAVING FAITH

All is not gold that glitters; all is not silver that shines; every cow that moos does not fill the pail; neither will all who profess faith, and say "Lord, Lord" reach heaven. When we speak of saving faith the implication is, that there is a faith that does not save. We preach salvation by faith without any works of human merit, and in this we are right on safe ground. It is the uniform teaching of Scripture that the sinner is saved by faith only: "It is of faith that it might be by grace" (*Rom 4:16*). If the sinner does anything beyond faith for salvation, he frustrates the grace of God. But we have reckon with counterfeits in the matter of faith, as in other things. There are many counterfeits in the realm of religion. Satan is the master counterfeiter. If God has a Son named the Lord Jesus Christ, then Satan also has a son who is called the son of perdition: "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;" (*2Th 2:3*). If God has His ministers, then Satan has his ministers who transform themselves into ministers of righteousness to deceive "Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (*2Co 11:15*). If God has a gospel, then Satan has his gospel, which Paul calls another gospel, which is not the true gospel "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (*Gal 1:8*). If Christ has His church, then Satan has his synagogue "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee" (*Rev 3:9*). If there is a faith called the faith of God's elect, then Satan counterfeits this faith: "But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (*Heb 10:39*). Counterfeit money passes through many hands without being detected, and many counterfeit Christians pass as true believers. It appears that Judas was not detected as a false professor by the other disciples, for no finger was pointed at him when Christ predicted that one of them would betray Him. This is a challenge to every professor, including the writer, to make sure he possesses saving grace and saving faith. Let us now consider:

**SOME SUBSTITUTES FOR SAVING FAITH**

1. There is what might be termed historical or theoretical faith. This is a mere assent of the mind to the revealed truth. This is without any emotional or devotional element. The truth does not reach the inward parts, and the heart is not in it. It is lacking in love and trust. It is to believe about Christ as one might believe about Washington or Lincoln.

2. There may be a natural and temporary faith. This finds illustration in the parable of the sower. The stony ground hearer received the word at once with joy, but not having the root of the matter in him, he endured only for a while, and under testing lost interest in what he had professed. Everything was on the surface, and therefore, was hasty and unreal; nothing more than fleshly emotion. It was not of God and therefore not abiding. In a real experience of grace, the word does not at first make glad. The Holy Spirit drives the truth through the bowels of self-esteem and the sinner feels bad. It is the Spirit's way to expose the sinner to himself before He reveals to him Christ as Saviour. It is the conscious sinner who looks to Christ for salvation.

3. There is what the Scriptures call vain faith. In showing the necessity of the resurrection of Christ, Paul says, "And if Christ be not raised your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (*1Co 15:17*). The apostle is saying that faith in a dead Christ would be in vain. Here he was not thinking of the nature of faith, but of the object of faith. Vain faith is to trust that which does not have power to save. Weak faith may be saving faith, while strong faith may be vain faith. Strong faith in a dead Christ could not save, while weak faith in the living Christ is saving faith. This makes the object of faith of supreme importance. If the sinner trusts the wrong object, his faith will be vain. The only object of saving faith is the crucified and living Christ; the strongest faith in any other object will be worthless. All of us ought to have greater faith in Christ; however, it is not the strength of our faith that saves, but the strength of the saviour. Isaiah describes the idolator who makes his god from the same tree with which he warms himself and cooks his food. His strange conduct is explained thus: "A deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" (*Isa 44:20*). Spiritual insanity of the human race is amply revealed in the things people trust for salvation. Only those taught by God trust in Jesus Christ "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (*Joh 6:45*).

4. Feelings may be substituted for faith. Much preaching is calculated to produce feelings rather than faith. Preachers should beware of telling sob stories and getting sinners to act on their emotions when they have been given no saving object to trust. The true order in an experience of grace is: (1) Fact; (2) Faith; (3) Feeling. (1) The fact of the gospel of Christ and Him crucified; (2) Faith in that fact---faith in what Christ did as Saviour; (3) Feelings as the natural result of our reliance upon Christ as Saviour. We are not saved by our feelings, but if we trust Christ for salvation, we will have a sense of peace in our souls and a feeling of safety as we ponder what the Scriptures say about the power of His blood to save. And now may we consider more directly:

**THE NATURE OF SAVING FAITH**

There are two senses in which the word "faith" is used in the Bible. Sometimes--most of the time-the word means the act of believing, and a few times it means what one believes: his creed. In *Jud 1:3* where we are exhorted to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," the obvious meaning is that we are to contend for the body of truth given in the Scriptures. And Jesus appears to use the word in the same way when he says, "Thou believest that there is one God" (*Jas 2:19*). This was the orthodox creed of the Jew according to "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:" (*Deu 6:4*). But to have an orthodox creed concerning God is not the act of saving faith.

Saving faith as an act is a compound of belief and trust: belief in God's testimony about His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and trust in Christ as the Saviour. To believe God on the question of salvation is to trust His Son as Saviour. John tells us that God has testified that there is eternal life in His Son and that to refuse to trust His Son is to make God a liar. "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (*1Jn 5:9-12*). Saving faith is accompanied by works; otherwise faith is a dead thing and has no value. We are saved by faith alone, but not by a faith which is alone. In the new birth there are three graces implanted in the human soul; faith, hope and love, and these three are inseparable. Hope presupposes faith, for we could not hope for the fulfillment of the promise if we did not believe the thing promised would be received. Faith is joined to love and works by love: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (*Gal 5:6*). Paul preached faith without works as any part of the procuring cause of justification. He also preached works as the fruit or evidence of faith. Paul and James were agreed on the nature of saving faith. James preached justification by works as evidence of real faith. He wrote about justification of profession. He insisted that a real living faith could only be shown by works. "Shew me," was the challenge of James.

**DEFINITION AND ILLUSTRATIONS**

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews tells us what faith is and what it does. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report" (*Heb 11:1-2*). Faith operates with respect to the future, things looked forward to with hope or expectation; and it also operates with respect to things which cannot be observed, things beyond scientific demonstration. Faith is the substance of things hoped for. The word for substance literally means, "That which stands under". So faith is that which stands under hope to support it, to keep it from dying while waiting for what is promised. What is hoped for is not yet possessed, but faith is the assurance that it will be possessed. The word of God is the objective ground on which hope rests; one hopes for something because God has promised it. Faith furnishes a subjective ground for hope, for faith is the inward assurance that what is hoped for will be received. It is like this. God makes a promise in His word, hope begins to look forward to its fulfillment, and faith is the confidence or assurance that the thing promised will be forthcoming. Now saving faith is the assurance that all the blessings God has promised in Christ will be received. Some of these blessings, such as personal perfection, and a home in heaven, lie out in the future as matters of hope. If I did not believe that I would ultimately reach heaven and be conformed to the image of Christ, then I would be without hope as I face the future.

Faith is also the evidence of things not seen. Faith is the inward conviction that what God says is true, even though it is beyond reasons and scientific demonstration. This twofold definition of faith is followed by illustrations in the realm of the future and of the unseen. We have space for only two of these illustrations.

**THE FAITH OF ABEL**

"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts" (*Heb 11:4*). Abel hoped for acceptance with God, and this hope was founded upon God's promise. God had spoken to both Cain and Abel about the way of approach to Him, and acceptance by Him. Faith presupposes a divine revelation, for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (*Rom 10:17*). The way God prescribed indicated that men are sinners, and can only be accepted on the ground of blood, for "without the shedding of blood is no remission" (*Heb 9:22*). Both Cain and Abel were told what to bring as an offering to God. Cain, like the Pharisees of Christ's day, rejected God's counsel or verdict against himself, denied that he was a sinner, refused to bring the bloody offering God demanded and brought a mere thankoffering of the fruit of the ground. He thus acted in unbelief, and he and his offering were rejected. Abel acted by faith and brought the kind of sacrifice prescribed. He took the place of a sinner and brought a slain lamb. Both Cain and Abel offered in hope of being accepted, but Cain's hope did not rest on faith in God's word and ended in disappointment and despair. Abel's hope was realized, and he obtained witness of acceptance with God on the ground of the gifts he brought. We have heard it said that if Cain had brought his fruit of the ground by faith, he too would have been accepted. The reply to this is that if Cain had brought an offering by faith, he would not have brought fruit, but the same kind of sacrifice brought by Abel. We are told that Abel brought a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which we are not to understand that it was a greater intrinsic worth, but it was more excellent as a confession of sin and a type of the promised bruiser of the serpent's head.

**THE FAITH OF NOAH**

"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house" (*Heb 11:7*). "Faith cometh by hearing", so Noah had a revelation from God about a coming flood and how to escape destruction in it. This was something never seen and something beyond scientific proof. All that Noah had to act upon was what God said. Noah believed God. He was not interested in scientific proof of the possibilities of a flood. One never believes God as long as he tries to ascertain whether what God says is reasonable or possible. One never believes God when he puts what God says in the crucible of human reason and judgment.

**SOME METAPHORS OF SAVING FAITH**

Saving faith is represented under a variety of metaphors, some of which we will now consider:   
1. Faith is committing the soul to Christ. Paul speaks thus in *2Ti 1:12* : "For I know whom I have believed (margin, trusted), and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Paul had deposited his soul with Christ for eternal safekeeping with the assurance that it would be safely kept.

2. Faith is coming to Christ. Christ says, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (*Joh 6:37*). And again, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (*Mat 11:28*).

3. Faith is receiving Christ. Of Christ it is written: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on his name" (*Joh 1:11-12*). Faith is the empty hand receiving Christ as the one mighty to save. Faith has nothing to give as the price of salvation. Faith says, "Nothing in my hands I bring, Simply to Thy cross I cling."

4. Faith is feeding on Christ. In the great discourse on the bread of life our Lord uses the words believing, coming, and eating interchangeably. See *Joh 6:32-58*. Believing on Christ is the same as coming to Him, and both are the same as eating His flesh and drinking His blood. How absurd it is to take the words about eating His flesh and drinking His blood in the gross and carnal sense! These are figures of speech to represent the soul as appropriating the benefits of Christ's death. Christ was offered for sin once, and nobody has His material body and blood, nor can it be manufactured by anybody. We feed upon His body and blood spiritually by faith and not with carnal mouths. There is nothing which can be put into our fleshly bodies or applied to them outwardly that will effect our salvation.   
5. Faith is fleeing to Christ. Under the Old Testament economy there were cities of refuge to which the manslayer might flee for safety. "And among the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites there shall be six cities for refuge, which ye shall appoint for the manslayer, that he may flee thither: and to them ye shall add forty and two cities. So all the cities which ye shall give to the Levites shall be forty and eight cities: them shall ye give with their suburbs. And the cities which ye shall give shall be of the possession of the children of Israel: from them that have many ye shall give many; but from them that have few ye shall give few: every one shall give of his cities unto the Levites according to his inheritance which he inheriteth. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come over Jordan into the land of Canaan; Then ye shall appoint you cities to be cities of refuge for you; that the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person at unawares. And they shall be unto you cities for refuge from the avenger; that the manslayer die not, until he stand before the congregation in judgment" (*Num 35:6-12*). And so Christ is the sinner's refuge from the danger of sin. We have two immutable things: God's word and His oath so that "we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us" (*Heb 6:18*).

6. Faith is looking unto Christ. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else" (*Isa 45:22*). "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (*Heb 12:2*). Truly, there is life for a look at the crucified One.

7. Faith is calling upon Christ, "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (*Rom 10:12-13*). Those who will not call upon Christ in this day of salvation will call upon the mountains to fall on them and hide them from His face in the day of His wrath. But none who call now by faith shall call in vain, for Christ is a willing and able Saviour.

**ILLUSTRATION**

All the elements in saving faith may be brought out by the use of an old illustration. The thoughts, feelings, and action of a person who stands by a boat upon a small island which is threatened by rising waters, will represent the whole of saving faith. The person first regards the boat from a purely intellectual point of view. He believes the boat actually exists, just as the sinner believes there is a God and that there is a Saviour. As the stream rises and swells, the man will look at the boat with some sense of emotion and feeling of interest. And so the sinner under conviction of sin has a feeling of concern for his safety. When the man sees the rushing tide is about to sweep him into the raging waters, he gets into the boat as the only way of escape. Getting into the boat is what actually saves him, and he cannot be said to have trusted the boat until he gets into it. And so the sinner may believe that Christ is the Saviour, but he is not saved until he gets into Him by faith --not saved until He relies upon Him for salvation. The very essence of faith is reliance or trust. Every believer gladly confesses: "I broke God's law, Christ came between; I'm depending on Him to save."

"Come, ye sinners, poor and wretched, Weak and wounded, sick and sore; Jesus ready stands to save you, Full of pity joined with power;   
He is able, He is willing doubt no more.

"Come ye weary heavy laden, Bruised and broken by the fall; If you tarry till you're better, You will never come at all;   
No the righteous--sinners, Jesus came to call.

"Let not conscience make you linger,   
Nor of fitness fondly dream;   
All the fitness He requireth   
Is to feel your need of Him;   
This He gives you; 'Tis the Spirit's rising beam."

-- Joseph Hart, 1712-1768

÷02-2-11 THE SECURITY OF THE SAINTS

In this article there are three expressions which we shall use interchangeably: The Security of the Saints, the Preservation of the Saints, and the Perseverance of the Saints. While these are not identical statements, they do affirm the same thing of saved people, namely, their eternal safety. The preserving power of God accounts for the perseverance of the saint in faith and holiness: "For the Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever" (*Psa 37:28*).

There are two doctrines which are mutually exclusive, antagonistic, and destructive. There is no compromise possible between them. They neither give nor ask quarter. One is true, the other is false. One is the doctrine popularly called apostasy, which means that a saved person, a saint, one born of God, made a partaker of the Divine nature, justified by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, may through sin forfeit his saintship, become a child of the devil, and be finally and forever lost. The other is known as the perseverance of the saints, which means that one born of God, made a saint by the effectual call of the Holy Spirit, justified by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, may do that which is wrong, grieve the Holy Spirit, lose the joy of salvation, and bring upon himself the corrective chastisements of the Lord; nevertheless shall persevere in faith and shall not be lost in the end.   
Apostasy is based upon salvation by works in whole or in part; security is based upon salvation by the grace of God. The one makes salvation a human project; the other makes salvation a Divine undertaking. If salvation is of man, failure is not only possible but certain; if salvation is of the Lord, it must be a success.

One of the doctrines is established by Scripture, the other is denied by Scripture. So all arguments pro and con must be based upon Scripture. Unaided human reason and human experience and observation have no place in the discussion. "What saith the Scripture?" must be our guiding star.

**WHAT THE DOCTRINE IS**

The doctrine we subscribe to is rarely, if ever, correctly stated by those who reject and oppose it. It is dressed up in a false and ugly garb, then ridiculed and held up to scorn. The opponents build up a man of straw and then proceed to tear it to pieces. They never deal with the doctrine as it is believed and preached by its friends.

1. It is no part of the doctrine that all church members are secure and certain to go to heaven. All church members ought to be saints, but alas, many of them are not. To those who have no other ground for thinking they are saved than church membership, this doctrine offers no hope or ground of rejoicing. Security is predicated of saints, born again people, who are justified by faith in Christ. These are preserved by God and persevere in their attachment to Christ as Lord and Saviour. Persevering faith in Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes saints from superficial professors.

"We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end" (*Heb 3:14*). One who has been made a partaker of Christ by faith will persevere in faith until the end of his days.

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him; If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed" (*Joh 8:31*). There is a faith that is temporal, where the root of the matter is not in the professor, where there has really been no experience of grace. This is the faith of the stony ground hearer. But real disciples have a Divinely given faith and continue in the word of Christ.

"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us" (*1Jn 2:19*). These were superficial professors, not real professors of the grace of God, and their departure from the fellowship of the saints made manifest their true character. John plainly says that if they had been real saints, they would have continued in the fellowship of the saints. This verse unmistakably supports our doctrine. Judas furnishes an apt illustration of the apostasy of false professors. Judas was never a real believer, although associated with real believers: "Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not who should betray him" (*Joh 6:64*).

2. It is no part of the doctrine that all who are active in religious work shall be saved forever. Many religious workers are not saved now. They are not saints. They have not been born again. They have not partaken of the Divine nature. The Saviour says, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity" (*Mat 7:22-23*). The flagellants were a religious sect in Italy in the 13th century. They were active as long as they could parade in the streets and publicly scourge themselves. But when their public processions were prohibited the sect died out. They could not survive in obscurity. In the time of Christ there were many who did things to be seen of men for human praise. And there is every reason to believe that the race of those who love the sound of human praise has not perished from the earth. All saints should show their faith by their works, but their works should be works of love to Christ, and not works of love for human acclaim. May this truth probe the hearts of both writer and reader.

3. It is no part of the doctrine that saints may not fall. Saints have fallen and been sorely bruised by the fall. But every fall does not mean a broken neck, either physically or spiritually. Many have fallen and lived to tell the story. And so in religious life, saints have fallen into sin, and who among us dares to deny that he has never fallen into sin? Where is the sinless person? The sinner was not saved by becoming sinless, and he is not kept saved by living a sinless life. The sinner was saved by trusting Christ as Saviour, and he is kept saved by the power of God through faith. He continues as he began; a poor helpless sinner trusting a mighty Saviour. The born-again person can never be lost, because he will never renounce his faith in Christ and go about looking for another Saviour or give up in despair. Hearken to the Scriptures: "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me" (*Mic 7:8*). "A just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again" (*Pro 24:16*). "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand" (*Psa 37:23-24*).

**PROOF THAT THE DOCTRINE IS TRUE**

Arguments from Scripture are so abundant that one hardly knows where and how to begin in arranging them. A saint is one who has been elected by God the Father, redeemed by God the Son, and regenerated by God the Holy Spirit. And so the first reason we shall give for the security of the saint is as follows:

1. All the persons of the Godhead are for him: "If God be for us who can be against us?" (*Rom 8:31*).

(1) The Father is for us in election: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?," (*Rom 8:33*). He is for us in Predestination: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son" (*Rom 8:29*). He is for us in the effectual call. "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called" (*Rom 8:30*). "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace" (*Gal 1:15*). He is for us in justification: "It is God that justifieth" (*Rom 8:33* b). He is for us in the gift of His Son: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all . . ." (*Rom 8:32*). He is for us in His purpose to glorify us: "and whom he justified them he also glorified" (*Rom 8:30*).

(2) The Son is for us In redemption "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:" (*Gal 3:13*); in Intercession "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (*Rom 8:34*); "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine" (*Joh 17:9*); "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (*Heb 7:25*); in His second coming "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (*Joh 14:3*); "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (*Heb 9:28*); "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. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 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. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (*1Th 4:15-18*).

(3) The Holy Spirit is for us: In regeneration "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (*Eph 2:3*); in intercession "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (*Rom 8:26*), as a seal "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (*Eph 4:30*); in our resurrection "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (*Rom 8:11*). Or to go over the same ground---the birth of the Spirit makes the saint safe. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (*1Jn 3:9*); "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith....We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not" (*1Jn 5:4*; *1Jn 5:18*); "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (*1Pe 1:23*); the indwelling of the Spirit makes him secure: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (*1Co 6:19*); "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;" (*Joh 14:16*); and the sealing of the Spirit makes him secure. A seal is a mark of ownership; it is to secure what is sealed; and it is a guarantee of safe delivery. Haldeman describes a beautiful vase he once saw. It was almost covered with outer coverings, and had a great seal upon it, and an inscription which stated that it had been purchased by an Oriental Prince, and was to be delivered to him in his palace in his capital city. Now the saint bears a seal, a mark, a stamp, and an inscription which declares that he has been purchased by Jesus Christ. This seal of the Holy Spirit marks us as belonging to Christ as His purchased possession, guarantees our safety, and also that we shall be delivered safely to His capital city in heaven. We are still surrounded with the outer covering of sinful flesh, but in that great day the covering will be taken off and we shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of our Father.

2. The saint is secure because all the attributes of God are for him The will of God is for him: "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day" (*Joh 6:39*). The power of God is for him: Christ said, "My Father... is greater than all and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand" (*Joh 10:29*). "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (*1Pe 1:5*); "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (*2Ti 1:12*). The love of God is for the saint. There is nothing able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (*Rom 8:38-39*); "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (*Joh 3:16*). God's mercy is for the saint. God is rich in mercy: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us" (*Eph 2:4*). It was mercy that made us alive when we were dead, and mercy will not destroy that which he saves. The holiness of God is for the saint "Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me" (*Psa 89:35-36*). God's word and His oath are given to the one who has fled to Christ for refuge, that he may have strong consolation: "For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:" (*Heb 6:16-18*).

God's wisdom is for the saint. Wisdom found a ransom: "Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom" (*Job 33:24*). Christ is made unto us wisdom. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:" (*1Co 1:30*). Divine wisdom took into account all contingencies in the work of salvation. God's justice is for the saint. Justice put Christ to death for the believer's sins, and justice will not punish two persons for the same offence. If one died as a substitute for all, then it follows all died: "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead" (*2Co 5:14*). The sin Christ died to was our sin imputed to Him; therefore, His death to sin was our death to sin, and this led Paul to say, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (*Rom 6:11*).

3. The saint is secure because he is not under the moral law as the way of life. One under law would have to keep the law perfectly or be condemned. If he only broke the law one time in one point, he would be a lawbreaker, and condemned. The only possible way of escaping condemnation and judgment is to get out from under the law. And the only way to get out from under the law is to trust Christ, Who is the end of the law for every believer. "For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them" (*Rom 10:5*). One cannot get out from under the law by obeying it. Obedience, if possible, would prevent condemnation, but it would not remove from under the law. And of course, one cannot get out from under law by breaking it; he only gets in the toils of it and is punished by it. Nor can one get out from under law by mourning. Mourning does not satisfy law. Neither can the law be set aside; it must be satisfied. The only way to get out from under the moral law of God is through faith in Christ Who met its penalty and satisfied its claims against the sinner by His death on the cross.

The believer is declared to be dead to the law. "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God" (*Rom 7:1-4*). Paul reminds us that the law has dominion over a man as long as he liveth. To be saved he must die to the law. He illustrates the thought by the law of marriage. The law binds the wife to her husband as long as he lives. When he dies physically, she dies to the law that bound her to that particular man. She still lives as a woman, but not as a wife. So the believer, says Paul, is dead to the law by the body of Christ. The death of Christ was the believer's death to the moral law of God, and being dead to the law he is no longer under it as the way of life. Christ said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (*Joh 14:6*).

The believer is "free from the law of sin and death" (*Rom 8:2*). There is no law by which the one who trusts in Christ can be condemned. God would have to resort to mob violence in sending a saint to hell.

4. The saint is eternally safe from the danger of hell because he is dead to sin; "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (*Rom 6:11*). This is death in the judicial sense and is on the ground of the substitutionary death of Christ. The believer is not yet dead to sin subjectively, but only objectively. He is not yet dead to sin as an experience, for he is more sensitive to sin as a saint than when he was a lost sinner. He is dead to the guilt and penalty of sin because Christ bore the penalty in His own body on the tree. "Once I was dead in sin, And hope within me died; But now I'm dead to sin, With Jesus crucified.

"O height I cannot reach! O depth I cannot sound; O love, O boundless love, In my Redeemer found!

"O cold ungrateful heart, That can from Jesus turn, When living fires of love Should on His altar burn.

"I live--and yet not I,   
But Christ that lives in me, Who from the law of sin   
And death hath made me free."

÷02-2-12 WHICH COMES FIRST IN CONVERSION: LIFE OR FAITH?

The subject on which I am about to write has long been a matter of controversy. It takes us into the arena where theological gladiators have fought for centuries. The keenest of intellectual swords have been wielded in the long combat. The ArmInian declares in triumphant tone that faith precedes life; the Calvinist, with the same spirit of certainty, says that life must precede faith, and is logically the cause of faith.

The writer believes that the controversy over this question is due to lack of distinguishing things that differ. The Scriptures speak of life in two different senses. There is life in the subjective, experimental and biological sense; and there is life in the objective and judicial sense. In other words, there is life in the sense of regeneration or the new birth, and there is life in the sense of justification. The first is life in respect to an inward state; the second is life in respect to an outward standing before the law of God. "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life" (*Rom 5:18*), speaks of "Justification of life.") The first is life biologically; the second is life legally or judicially. The first is life wrought in the sinner by the Holy Spirit; the other is life wrought for the sinner by the redemptive death of Christ. Life in one sense is from the Holy Spirit; in another sense it is from Christ. Life from the Holy Spirit gives spiritual qualities to the heart and mind which control the will; life from Christ takes us out from under the curse of the law. It is the difference between impartation and imputation. Life from the Spirit is life imparted; life from Christ is life imputed.

The above distinction is a necessary corollary of the fact that the sinner is dead in a two--fold sense. He is dead in the sense that he is helpless and unable of himself to see or enter the kingdom of God, or to perform acceptable works in the sight of God. He is also dead in the sense that the sentence of death, culminating in the second death (the lake of fire) has been passed upon him. In one sense death is depravity of nature in which the sinner is blind to the light of the gospel; in another sense death is condemnation in which the sinner is exposed to the wrath of God. It is the difference between defilement of nature and condemnation of the person.

**I. JUDICIAL LIFE FOLLOWS FAITH**

With the above distinction in view, we are now prepared to state and prove that life from Christ--life in the objective and judicial sense --follows faith. Every Scripture that predicated life upon faith in Christ refers to judicial life and presents life in contrast with condemnation and punishment. We can only take a few examples. *Joh 3:36* : "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Life in this passage is based upon faith in Christ, and is in contrast with the wrath or judgment of God. *Joh 5:40* : "And ye will not come to me that ye might have life." Our Lord here says that men must come to him for life, and coming to Christ is the same as having faith in Christ. *Joh 3:16* : "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Life in this verse is opposed to punishment, and is, therefore, judicial life. *Joh 5:24* : "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation." Note here that life is the opposite of condemnation, and therefore, must be life in the sense of justification. "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (*Joh 3:15*); "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (*1Jn 5:12*); "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:" (*Rom 5:1*). All these passages are fatal to Hardshellism--the position that preaching the Gospel is not essential to salvation. Everlasting life is based upon faith in Christ, and men cannot believe in Him of Whom they have not heard. "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?...So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (*Rom 10:14*; *Rom 10:17*).

**II. SPIRITUAL LIFE PRECEDES FAITH**

We ask our readers to keep our distinction in mind while we prove from the Scriptures that life from the Holy Spirit--life in the subjective and biological sense--precedes faith, and is logically the cause of faith.

And let it be understood that we are not contending that life precedes faith in point of time. We are not saying that one may be born of the Spirit one day or week and believe on the following day or week. The order we are contending for is that which is seen in the relation between cause and effect. We are saying that faith in Christ is the effect or evidence of the new birth. We do not leave room for the question-- "Can there be a regenerate unbeliever?" The effect of a thing may co exist with the thing itself. To illustrate: I shoot a bullet through a wall; the bullet and the hole were there at the same time, but the bullet caused the hole and not the hole the bullet. The new birth and faith may be simultaneous, but the faith did not cause the new birth, the new birth caused the faith.

That the birth of the Spirit precedes faith as cause precedes effect, we will now prove from analogy of Scriptures. We will compare three verses of Scripture. In *1Jn 2:29* we read "that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him." The verb here is in the perfect tense in the Greek and should read, "Has been born of Him." The question to settle is this: Is doing righteousness the cause or the effect of the new birth? Does practical righteousness logically follow or precede the birth of the spirit? The rankest Armenian among the Baptists will be compelled to say that the new birth precedes and is the cause of practical righteousness. Now, in *1Jn 4:7* we read: " . . . every one that loveth is born of God." The same perfect tense is used here and it should read, "has been born of God." Is spiritual love the cause or the effect of the new birth? Does spiritual love logically follow or precede the new birth? And again the rankest Arminian among us will say that love is the effect or evidence of the birth of the Spirit. Now, take *1Jn 5:1* : "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." The same perfect tense of the verb is used here as in the preceding examples, and should read, "Whosoever believeth.. has been born of God." Now what will the Arminian say? Will he dare to say that faith is the cause of the new birth? If he does then, to be consistent, he must also say that spiritual love and practical righteousness are also causes of the new birth.

The only passage that seems to militate against our distinction and position is *Gal 3:26*; "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." But the word translated children should be translated sons. The Greek is "huioi" and not "tekna". We are sons of God by faith, but we are children of God through the new birth. Sonship is through adoption and adoption is a legal term--it means "placing as a son." And we have already shown that the legal or judicial aspect of salvation is through faith in Christ. In this connection the words of J. M. Pendleton (Christian Doctrine, page 257) are most interesting:

"As to regeneration and faith, a plausible argument may be made in favor of the priority of either. For example, if we turn to "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (*Joh 1:12-13*), it seems natural to suppose that those who believed in Christ were those who had been born of God. So also according to the correct rendering of *1Jn 5:1*, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is (has been) born of God." Some use this passage as it reads in the Common Version, "is born of God," to prove that faith is prior to regeneration, because the means of it; but the argument fails in view of the fact that not the present, but the perfect tense is used in the original-- "has been born of God." But if we turn to *Gal 3:26*, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," the obvious view is that we become God's children by faith, or, in other words, that faith is instrumental in effecting regeneration. We see, therefore, that there may be a plausible argument on either side of the question."

We can only express surprise that Dr. Pendleton failed to see that the Greek in *Gal 3:26* reads "sons" rather than "children". The reader will please note that *Gal 3:26* is the only passage that Dr. Pendleton quotes as seeming to teach that faith is instrumental in effecting regeneration.

**VALUE OF THIS DISTINCTION**

The theological value of the distinction we have made is farreaching. It is a two-edged sword, cutting to pieces Arminianism on one side and Hardshellism on the other side. The Calvinist can accept the distinction and position helpfully but for the Arminian or Anti missionary to do so will spell the doom of his theology.

Moreover, what we have written is in full harmony with the New Hampshire Confession of faith. Article eight says that repentance and faith are sacred duties and inseparable graces wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God. This clearly makes regeneration the cause of repentance and faith. Article seven says that "Regeneration consists of giving a holy disposition to the mind; . . . so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life." If the writer is able to understand the meaning of language, then those articles state that faith is the effect or evidence of the new birth. Much of the confusion among Baptist today is the result of many of our prominent ministers subscribing to and recommending the New Hampshire Confession and at the same time repudiating it in their preaching.

The practical value of our position is that it honors the Holy Spirit by making Him the author of that life which is essential to seeing and receiving the Gospel. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (*1Co 12:3*). Our position is in perfect harmony with other Scriptural truths, such as, the effectual call, total depravity, human responsibility, and the sovereignity of God.

The distinction we have made was first made by our Lord in His conversation with Nicodemus. He first proclaimed life by the Spirit as essential to spiritual sight and activity. He declared that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. This is life in the biological sense. Later in the same message, He preached life through faith in Christ and this life was opposed to perishing. He did not say that sinners were born again by faith as many are saying today. Let us keep regeneration and justification distinct in our thinking and preaching.

÷02-2-13 RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR THE UNRIGHTEOUS

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also t o the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (*Rom 1:16-18*).

If I had but one sermon to preach and the whole world for an audience, this is the message I would bring. I would not allow a false modesty to keep me from saying that the truth in this sermon is most vital to every man.

Paul says that he is not ashamed of the gospel because it is what God uses in saving sinners. Then he tells how it saves, namely, be revealing "the righteousness of God," or how an unrighteous man may become righteous before God. Here is the touch & tone of the true gospel: it reveals how a sinner can become right with a holy and just God.

**SOME NECESSARY OBSERVATIONS**

I. Salvation is a dire necessity because men are UNRIGHTEOUS, both by inheritance and practice. God is a Lawgiver and the failure of moral beings to obey His law makes them unrighteous in His sight. And this unrighteousness merits and must receive penal punishment from God. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (*Rom 1:18*).

II. Unrighteousness is universal among men. "As it is written, There is none righteous, no not one" (*Rom 3:10*). This means that no man is righteous by his own record, on his own account, in his own right. In himself considered, every man is ruined by the fall and cursed by the Law. "For it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (*Gal 3:10* b). "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may be come guilty before God" (*Rom 3:19*).

III. Every man out of Christ is under the moral law of God as the way of life "For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them" (*Rom 10:5*). Many think that all were under the law before the coming of Christ, and that since His coming all are under grace. If this were true, all before Christ were lost and all since are saved. This would mean universal damnation in one period of time and universal salvation in another period. It is the function of law to punish the disobedient; it is the part of grace to save the disobedient. All men have been saved alike by grace through faith, whether in Old Testament times or since the coming of Christ. All sinners have the same Saviour regardless of the age in which they lived. The Old Testament believers looked forward to the coming Saviour; New Testament believers look back to the Saviour who has already come. "What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were" (*Rom 4:1-17*); "Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. (*Gal 3:21-24*). The only way to be saved is to get out from under the moral law of God, and the only way to do this is to trust Jesus Christ, who is "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (*Rom 10:4*).

IV. To be saved a man must have a righteousness that conforms to all that the law of God demands. Otherwise the sinner would be saved at the expense of justice. No attribute of God suffers in the salvation of sinners. The principle of justice operates in salvation as truly as in damnation, the difference being that in salvation the Divine attributes of mercy, grace, and love come in to satisfy justice by giving up Christ to be punished as the Surety of His people. Christ died for my sins in the sense that He was punished for them, and if He was punished for them then a just God will not punish me for them. "Free from the law, O happy condition, Jesus has died, and there is remission." The righteousness of the believer is called "The righteousness of God." This phrase occurs frequently and is one of the most important expressions in all the Bible. To be saved the sinner must have the righteousness of God, and this is what is revealed in the Gospel of Christ.

**MEANING OF THE EXPRESSION**

The righteousness of God does not mean the justice of God. God is righteous in the sense that He is just, but the Gospel does not save by telling us that God is just and will give us what we deserve. It is not good news to tell the criminal that the law will give him justice, neither is it good news to tell a sinner that God will give him justice--that would be bad news. Nor can the expression refer to a righteousness God requires from the sinner. To tell a sinner that God will save him if he will perform all the righteous acts called for in the law is to mock him in his helplessness and leave him forever hopeless.

The expression we have before us refers to the righteousness God has provided for sinners. This is good news indeed! Men need a righteousness (right standing before God), and without it are eternally doomed, and to be told that God has provided through the cross the righteousness demanded by His justice is the best news ever to fall on human ears. And so the Gospel reveals a righteousness provided and not a righteousness demanded; a righteousness imputed and not a righteousness imparted; a righteousness imported from heaven and not a righteousness exported from earth. The righteousness of God is a garment divinely woven and not one of human manufacture. When the fig-leaf aprons of Adam and Eve would avail not, "The Lord God made coats of skins, and clothed them" (*Gen 3:21*). Striking type of the failure of human works in salvation, and of the Lamb of God Who put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

The righteousness of God comes to the sinner through faith. "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested. . . even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe" (*Rom 3:21-22*). "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (*Rom 10:4*). "Him who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (*2Co 5:21* R.V.).

My dear reader, if you are lost, let me urge you to acknowledge before God and men that you have no righteousness of your own, and then trust Jesus Christ for the righteousness He provided by His obedience unto death-even the death on the cross. Then you can say with Isaiah, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God: for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation: he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness" (*Isa 61:10*).

"Jesus, thy robe of righteousness My beauty is, my glorious dress; Mid flaming worlds, in this arrayed, With joy shall I lift up my head."

**THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD DESCRIBED**

I. AS TO ITS AUTHOR. As already noted, Jesus Christ is the Author of this righteousness. He Worked it out by His death on the cross. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (*Rom 5:19*). This verse unmistakably teaches that we are guilty by the disobedience of Adam and righteous by the obedience of Christ. To be justified--by God one must either be righteous in person or by proxy. Theoretically, there are two ways to be righteous before God: one is by personal obedience "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD" (*Lev 18:5*); "For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them" (*Rom 10:5*), the other is by the obedience of a substitute and Surety. Practically and actually, there is but one way and this is through Faith in Jesus Christ, the Surety of the better covenant "By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament" (*Heb 7:22*); "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (*Heb 8:6*).

II. IN ITS EXTENT. The righteousness Christ wrought for sinners reaches to every born again believer. "And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (*Act 13:39*); "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (*Rom 10:4*); "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:" (*Rom 3:22*); "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (*1Co 1:30*); "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:" (*Rom 5:1*). The righteousness Christ provided was not needed for Himself, for He was God. Officially, back in eternity, Jesus Christ was in the form or place of God, and His righteousness was that of the Lawgiver. To be righteous as a lawgiver, the law must be enforced and the disobedient punished. To be righteous as a lawkeeper the law must be obeyed. And so Christ kept the law for us, and also paid the penalty we had incurred by violating the law. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:" (*Gal 3:13*). Here is an irrefutable argument for the Deity of Jesus Christ. If He were only a man He would have had His own obligations to the law of God, and although a perfect man He could not have rendered account before God for other men. We sometimes hear people say that they would trust Jesus as Saviour without being convinced of His Deity. But the writer makes bold to say that he would not trust Him if He were only a man, however good and glorious. The Bible says, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils" (*Isa 2:22*). No created being can save sinners. The Godhood of the Lord Jesus is absolutely necessary to His Saviourhood. The eternal Word became a man to represent other men before the court of heaven. "And if any man sin, we (the believers) have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (*1Jn 2:1*). Our Redeemer at Calvary is now our advocate in heaven.

**THE FIRST AND LAST ADAM**

In *1Co 15:45*; *1Co 15:47* "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.....The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven", Jesus is called the second man and the last Adam. Here He is considered not personally but representatively. Considered as an individual, Jesus was not the second man nor the last Adam. There were many men between the Adam of Eden and the Adam of Calvary, and there have been many men since Jesus. He is called the second man and the last Adam because there are but two representative men. God deals with all men through two men, and our eternal destiny depends upon which of these two men we have our standing in before God. Believers are accepted in the Beloved "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved" (*Eph 1:6*), and are complete in Him: "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:" (*Col 2:10*). So believers, considered as moral beings, have obeyed the law in the person of their representative and substitute, and are therefore righteous before God. Jesus Christ is "The Lord our Righteousness" (*Jer 23:6*).

"When from the dust of death I rise To claim my mansion in the skies, Even then shall this be all my plea-- Jesus hath lived and died for me,"

III. IN ITS DURATION. How long will the righteousness Christ provided last? It hardly needs to be argued that it will last forever. "Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness" (*Psa 119:142*). "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (*Heb 10:14*).   
"The righteousness of Adam or angels could only exist while they were in a state of obedience. The law was binding on them in every moment of their existence. The moment they disobeyed the advantage derived from all their previous obedience ceased" (Robt. Haldane). In contrast Jesus Christ was the God-man, and all that He did partook of His personal excellencies; therefore, in a limited period of time, He could work out a righteousness of infinite value in every respect. "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke and the earth shall wax old like a garment . . . But my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished" (*Isa 51:6*).

The paradise in which Adam was placed at his creation was here on earth. This paradise was lost through disobedience. But the paradise which we have promised us will be ours by virtue of the obedience of the last Adam, and is an inheritance which is incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God through faith. "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (*1Pe 1:4-5*). It is on the ground of this righteousness that God justifies the believer from all things, and delivers him from going down into the pit of everlasting destruction.

"Alas and did my Saviour Bleed? And did my Sovereign die?   
Would He devote that sacred head For such a worm as I?

Was it for crimes that I have done, He groaned upon the tree?   
Amazing pity! grace unknown! And love beyond degree!

Well might the sun in darkness hide, And shut his glories in,   
When Christ, the might Maker died For man the creature's sin.

But drops of grief can neer repay The debt of love I owe'   
Here Lord, I give myself away, "Tis all that I can do"

--Isaac Watts

÷02-2-14 PREDESTINATION - PROPHECY - PROVIDENCE

"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated, according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (*Eph 1:11*).

The three Bible words in the above caption express closely related doctrine, which find support in the above text. Since knowledge begins with definition, I shall begin with a definition of terms. Predestination may be defined as the purpose of God from eternity respecting future events. Prophecy is a declaration or revelation of future events and human actions. Providence is the work of God bringing to pass in history what is predestinated in eternity and prophesied in time. These three doctrines are based upon the will of God. And so we read that He "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."

We might put it like this: Predestination is the eternal determination or purpose of the Divine will; Prophecy is the revelation of the Divine will; and Providence is the execution of the Divine will.

This raises the question as to who or what is running this world. In answer to this question, there are four schools of thought. One school says that all things come to pass by a fixed law-the law of nature. According to this view, the Creator made the world, as a man might make a clock and wind it up, leaving it to run by itself without outside interference. The only part God has in world affairs is to allow it to run by natural and moral laws He Himself gave. This view rejects all miracles and believes only what can be accounted for on so-called scientific grounds. The second school says that things happen by a sort of chance; that nothing is fixed or determined, and that one thing is as likely to happen as another. The third school believes that everything comes to pass by a cold, impersonal force called fate. And finally there is the Bible and Christian view that all things come to pass by a Divine will called Providence; that is, by the administration of wise, loving, and almighty God. The God who created, sustains and rules to the praise of His own glory, and for the good of His people.

In our English Bible the word "providence" occurs only once: *Act 24:2*. Here it refers to the government or administration of Felix the Roman governor of Judea. The apostle Paul is on trial before Felix, charged by the Jews with the crime of insurrection, and as being a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. Ananias, chief priest, and the elders bring with them a lawyer Tertullus, who prosecutes the case against Paul. But before pressing his case, Tertullus flatters the governor by saying, "Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence, we accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness" (*Act 24:2-3*). What flattery and lying! During the administration of Felix, revolts in the nation were common and continuous, culminating in the final revolt that ended in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

While the word "providence" here refers to the rule of Felix over Judea, the word is much more applicable to the sovereign rule of God Whose kingdom is over all and from everlasting to everlasting.

**SOME GENERAL OBSERVATIONS**

I. While the Divine decrees and prophecies make a thing certain, there is no external force used in bringing it to pass. When an evil deed is predicted of someone, providence is not an external force that compels the act. We can never truthfully say that man had to sin as far as external force is concerned. God never forces anyone to sin; on the other hand He gives commandments and warnings and inducements not to sin. Nor can any man or group of men force another man to sin. If you should take me by physical force, place a gun in my hand, and by force compel me to pull the trigger, resulting in the death of someone, I would not be guilty of murder, or even a misdemeanor.

II. Let it be remembered and understood once for all that sin resides in the human heart--sin must be in the heart before it can be in the hand. "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornication, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (*Mat 15:19*). And let us also remember that God never put sin in the human heart. How it got there is a profound mystery. God made man in His own image and likeness and pronounced him good. In the mystery of the Divine administration, the first man sinned and lost the image of God in holiness. And the whole human race fell in the fall of the first Adam: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (*Rom 5:12-19*). ". . . God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions" (*Ecc 7:29*). God is never the Author or cause of sin.

III. In bringing sinful deeds to pass all God does is to leave men to themselves to do what is already in their hearts. "Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways" (*Act 14:16*). It is frightening to think that God may again abandon whole nations to their own ways. In Romans, chapter one Paul describes the moral degeneration of the Gentile (heathen) nations. First, men held down or suppressed the truth about God in the book of nature. Pretending to be wise they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into various images as objects of worship. There was the Apollo of the Greeks, the eagle of the Romans, the sacred bull of the Egyptians, and the serpent of the Assyrians. And God gave them up to degenerate from bad to worse. And the chapter closes with a long list of sins that are prevalent in our day, even here in so-called Christian American. It makes one shudder to scan the prophetic horizon. In "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence" (*Gen 6:11*), we read that the earth was filled with violence in the days of Noah just preceding the flood and in "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (*Mat 24:37*), we are told that these same conditions shall prevail just before our Lord returns in judgment. The masses will be so occupied with temporal and material matters that the judgment will take them unawares. Now back to our main thought, namely, that the eternal purposes and Scriptural prophecies make the predicted evils certain without imposing any necessity to do wrong upon anyone. God's sovereignty and man's responsibility are both true, although we may not be able to reconcile them.

**SOME ILLUSTRATIONS AND EXAMPLES OF OUR MAIN THEME**

I. Take the case of Judas Iscariot who was to betray Jesus. This was first predicted in "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me" (*Psa 41:9*), and quoted by Jesus in *Joh 13:18* : "I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me." Our Lord is here saying that He knew what He was doing when He chose Judas to be an apostle; He did it to make certain the fulfillment of Scripture. When Peter made his confession for the twelve, saying, ". . . we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus corrected him by saying unto the twelve, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" And John tells us that he was speaking of Judas Iscariot who should betray him. "And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve" (*Joh 6:69-71*). At the feast of the Passover, Jesus identified His betrayer by giving him the sop: "Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon" (*Joh 13:26*). If Judas had not betrayed Jesus, both the Psalmist and the Saviour would have been found liars. And yet nobody made Judas do that awful deed; he did it of his own free will and accord. He was simply giving expression to what was already in his heart. Our Lord chose Judas because nobody but a devil would do what he did.

II. Consider a few of the many prophecies concerning the death of Christ certain in many and minute details. The very first prophecy was in *Gen 3:15* "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel", where the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head, and have his heel bruised. In "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:" (*Gal 3:13*). Paul quotes *Deu 21:23* "His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance" to indicate that Christ would die by crucifixion, the Roman method of captial punishment. This necessitated a change of government, for if Jesus had been put to death by Jewish law, he would have been stoned. In *Psa 22:1-31* we have the cry of anguish (v. 1); the cruelty of the crowds (vv. 12,17); and the parting of His garments and gambling for His vesture (v. 18). And all these predictions were fulfilled at the place called Calvary. *Isa 53:1-12* we see the Messiah as despised and rejected of men, as being smitten of God, as making His grave with the wicked and with the rich in His death, as being satisfied with the result of His sufferings, and as praying for His enemies. Behold the mystery of Divine Providence in the fulfillment of all these predictions some 700 years later at Calvary. In *Joh 12:32-33* Jesus Himself predicted the manner and result of His death: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto me. This He said, signifying what death he should die." In John, chapter ten, He speaks of Himself as the Good Shepherd giving His life for His sheep, and predicting that His sheep would hear His voice and follow Him and receive everlasting life. In His prayer as High Priest, recorded in *Joh 17:1-26*, Jesus acknowledges that the Father had given Him authority over all flesh so that He might give eternal life to all the Father gave Him, and that while He was on earth He had kept those given to Him so that not one of them was lost. And then He says that the son of perdition was lost that the Scripture might be fulfilled. Now in the gospel accounts of the death of Christ we see all these Scriptures fulfilled, everything coming to pass by Divine Providence.

And in the book of Acts, Luke the historian, confirms the fulfillment of these prophecies. In *Act 2:23* he says this: "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel (will) and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Here we have God's will or purpose in the death of Christ being carried out by wicked hands. Nobody was forced to crucify Christ, men acted on their own free will and revealed the fact that the carnal mind is enmity against God. And the Lord Jesus was God wrapped in human flesh. In *Act 4:27-28* we have a quotation from the second Psalm, with this comment: "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." Here we have predestination (the determination or purpose of the Divine will), and providence (the execution of the Divine will) in the crucifixion of Christ. Politicians and religionists were doing God's will, but their motive was not to carry out His will. They were simply acting out what was in their heart. God did not put the evil in their heart, but He did control and direct everything they did for the accomplishment of His eternal purpose in Christ. The human motive was bad, but God overruled it all for the salvation of sinners and to the praise of His grace. Here is one of many places where God makes the wrath of man to praise Him, and preventing that which would not: "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain" (*Psa 76:10*).

Because of the overruling providence of God, what Joseph's brethren did in selling him into slavery was attributed to God Himself. When Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and they realized what they had done, they began to weep and be afraid. He confronts them by telling them that the hand of God was in it all for the salvation of human lives. "So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God" (*Gen 45:8*). And in *Gen 50:20* we learn that what made the difference in the Divine will and the human deed was in the motive. Joseph says to his brothers, "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." And so what came to pass at Calvary was overruled to save many sinners from eternal punishment in hell.

To God be the glory! Great things He hath done: So loved He the world that He gave us His Son; Who yielded His life an atonement for sin, And opened the Life-gate that all may go in.

O perfect redemption, the purchase of Blood, To every believer the promise of God; The vilest offender who truly believes, That moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

Great things He hath taught us, Great things He hath done, And great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;   
But purer, and higher, and greater will be   
Our wonder, Our transport, when Jesus we see.

÷02-2-15 WHOSOEVER WILL

"Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (*Rev 22:17* b).

There is virtue in fairness. We ought to be fair with everybody. I expect most people have at one time or other been the victim of unfairness. We are unfair with a person when we misrepresent him, and will not let him speak for himself. We are unfair with the Bible when we will not let it say what it does say. We must not make the Bible fit our opinions; we must make our opinions fit the Bible. The Bible can be misrepresented in at least two ways: by ignoring portions of it, and by misinterpreting texts that are not ignored. I believe the Bible is misrepresented in both ways. Verses are misrepresented by having the wrong meaning given them, and subjects are misrepresented when all the truth on the subject is not considered.

"Whosoever will" is a much misunderstood doctrine because all the truth is not brought into use in dealing with it. I heard a preacher once say that *Joh 5:40* does not say "Ye cannot come to me, but "that ye will not come." Now, he was not guilty of misquoting a verse, but he was guilty of misrepresenting a subject, because he ignored *Joh 6:44* which does say that "No man can come unto me except the Father... draw him." "Whosoever will" is made to teach that every man is able to come to Christ: whereas, the very opposite is the truth, for the literal rendering of *Joh 6:44* says, "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him."

**I. WHOSOEVER WILL MAY COME TO CHRIST AND BE SAVED.**

Nobody is turned away in this day of grace. God is no respector of persons. God draws no color line: black or white or any other color may come to Christ and be saved. God draws no social line: rich or poor, bond or free, banker or bootblack, learned or ignorant, society queen or harlot of the brothel--any and all may come to Christ with the assurance that they will be received, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (*Joh 6:37*). This blessed truth has been amply demonstrated. Look at some who have come and found salvation:--the dying thief, the fallen woman of Sychar, the persecuting Saul of Tarsus, the hard-hearted jailor: Jno. B. Gough, a sot drunkard, Jerry McCauley the river pirate John Newton the slave trader, John Bunyan the swearing tinker, and others too numerous to mention. If any despairing sinner reads these lines, let me urge him to come to Jesus Christ-trust in Him--look to Him--depend upon Him-and he will surely be saved.

**II. NO MAN CAN COME TO JESUS CHRIST OF HIMSELF**

Only those drawn by the Father come to Him. Here is a good place to distinguish between CAN and MAY. CAN speaks of ability; MAY means permission. If a young man should say to a girl friend; "CAN I walk home with you from church?", If she knows her English she is apt to say, "Well, you look strong enough to walk that far." But if he should say "MAY I walk home with you?" she would understand that he was asking her permission, and if she liked him she would say, "Yes, you may." "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (*Rev 22:17*) is an invitation to come to Christ and speaks of permission; "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day....And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father" (*Joh 6:44*; *Joh 6:65*), speaks of ability and says no one is able to come to or believe on Christ without being drawn. This drawing by the Father is not external force, nor is the coming a physical approach. The drawing that brings men to Christ is an inward and gracious work of God in the soul, and the coming is the exercise of mind and heart in which a person takes the place of a sinner and puts his faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour. When Jesus said, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" (*Joh 5:40*), those to whom He spake were already in His physical presence. He was saying, "You will not trust me for salvation." The clear implication is that had they trusted Him they would have received life. This verse speaks of responsibility to believe on Christ. Every man ought to come to Christ, for "he that believeth not shall be damned" ( *Mar 16:16*).

This brings us to a rather difficult question: Can there be responsibility where there is no ability? That depends upon the nature of the inability. If the inability is constitutional or created then there is no responsibility. Man, considered as a creature made in the image and likeness of God, has the ability to trust and love and obey His Maker. But inability caused by sin does not cancel responsibility. It is not because the sinner is a man that he cannot come to Christ for salvation: it is because he is a fallen man. He cannot come because of the state of his mind and heart--he does not have the disposition or will to come. It is not that he wants to come and can't. The sinner is dead in trespasses and sins and must be made alive by the Holy Spirit before he can do anything to please God. "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (*Joh 3:3*); "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (*Rom 8:7-8*): "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (*Eph 2:1-10*).

Whosoever will implies the free agency of man. A free agent is one who acts of his own mind or accord without external force or compulsion from without. The unregenerate are free in rejecting Christ; nobody forces them to reject Him. And the regenerate freely come to Him, even though drawn to Him. In coming to Christ there is free expression of the new heart and sound mind--the new nature created by God in amazing grace. The ability to believe on Christ as Saviour is a grace given ability. This truth is acknowledged when we pray for the conversion of the lost. Repentance and faith are inseparable graces wrought in man by the Holy Spirit. Both are said to be the gift of God. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (*Act 5:31*); "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (*Act 11:18*); "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;" (*2Ti 2:25*), "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase" (*1Co 3:5-7*).

**III. ALL THE FATHER GAVE TO THE SON WILL SURELY COME TO HIM**

ANOTHER PLAINLY REVEALED TRUTH OF SCRIPTURE IS THAT ALL THE FATHER GAVE TO THE SON WILL SURELY COME TO HIM. Christ says "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me" (*Joh 6:37*). This makes their coming certain, and to say it is not certain is to dispute what incarnate Truth says. The veriest tyro in English knows that the verb SHALL in the third person denotes certainty. "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (*Isa 40:31*); "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (*Joh 3:36*); "And 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..And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (*Joh 10:16*; *Joh 10:28*). And so our Lord says that all those given Him by the Father will surely come to Him. We cannot pry into the secrets of the eternal council to find out who were given, but they can be identified after they come to Christ. "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost" (*1Th 1:4-6*). And we can be sure that every one who comes was given to Christ. In praying to His Father He says, "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him" (*Joh 17:2*). Here we have universal dominion for a specific purpose. "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word" (*Joh 17:6*). I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine" (*Joh 17:9*). And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled" (*Joh 17:11-12*). Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;" (*Joh 17:20*). These verses speak of some given by the Father to the Son "out of the world." Here is limitation whether we like it or not. Christ gave His life for the sheep "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (*Joh 10:11*), and the sheep hear His voice and follow Him on a universal redemption. Let us ponder *Rev 5:9-10* : "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of (ek) every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on (epi) the earth."

**PARTICULAR REDEMPTION**

We will conclude this chapter by giving a lengthy quotation from Spurgeon on "Particular Redemption." "Now, you are aware that there are different theories of redemption. All Christians hold that Christ died to redeem, but all Christians do not teach the same redemption. We differ as to the nature of atonement, and as to the design of redemption. For instance, the Arminian holds that Christ, when He died, did not die with an intent to save any particular person;....that Christ's death does not....secure the salvation of any man living....Christ died, according to them, as much for Judas in hell as for Peter who mounted to heaven. They believe that for those who are consigned to eternal fire, there was as true and real a redemption made as for those who now stand before the throne of the Most High. Now, we believe no such thing. We hold that Christ, when He died, had an object in view, and that object will, most assuredly and beyond doubt, be accomplished. We measure the design of Christ's death by the effect of it... . We do not believe that Christ made any effectual atonement for those who are forever damned; we dare not think that the blood of Christ was ever shed with the intention of saving those whom God foreknew never could be saved, and some of whom were even in hell when Christ,....died to save them.... We are often told...that we limit the atonement of Christ, because we say that Christ has not made satisfaction for all men, or all men would be saved. Now our reply to this is that, on the other hand, our opponents limit it: we do not. The Arminians say, Christ died for all men. Ask them what they mean by it: Did Christ die so as to secure the salvation of all men? They say, 'No, certainly not.' Now, who is it that limits the death of Christ? .... We beg your pardon when you say we limit Christ's death....it is you that do it. We say that Christ so died that He infallibly secured the salvation of a multitude that no man can number. You are welcome to your atonement; you may keep it. We will never renounce ours for the sake of it. I am told that it is my duty to say that all men have been redeemed, and I am told that there is a Scripture...for it 'Who gave Himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time.' Now, that looks like a very great argument indeed on the other side of the question. For instance, look here. 'The whole world is gone after Him.' Did all the world go after Christ? 'Then went all Judea, and were baptized of him in Jordan.' Was all Judea or all Jerusalem, baptized in Jordon? 'Ye are of God, little children, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one.' Does the whole world there mean everybody? The words world' and all' are used in some seven or eight senses in Scripture, and it is very rarely that 'all' means all persons, taken individually. The words are generally used to signify that Christ has redeemed some of all sorts---some Jews, some Gentiles, some rich, some poor, and has not restricted His redemption to either Jew or Gentile" -Unquote.

Our heart can only say, "Amen" to these words from Spurgeon, than whom no greater preacher has lived since Paul. And we might add, that Spurgeon has done more to shape our theology than any other uninspired man.

The human race was lost in the mass when the first Adam sinned. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (*Rom 5:19*). Man was not redeemed in the mass, but as particular individuals. Nor are sinners regenerated in the mass, but as individuals one by one. Repentance and faith are not exercised by the masses, but as individuals one by one. And we say again, "whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."   
"Come, ye sinners, poor and needy, Weak and wounded, sick and sore; Jesus ready stands to save you, Full of pity, love and power.

Come, ye thirsty, come and welcome, God's free bounty glorify;   
True belief and true repentance, Every grace that brings you nigh.

Come, ye weary, heavy-laden, Lost and ruined by the fall; If you tarry till your'e better, You will never come at all.

Let not conscience make you linger, Nor of fitness fondly dream;   
All the fitness He requireth   
Is to feel your need of Him"

---J.Hart-

÷02-3-0 PART III - THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF SERVICE

÷02-3-1 GOOD WORKS

The Scriptures have much to say about good works. We "are created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (*Eph 2:10*). Believers must "be careful to maintain good works" (*Tit 3:8*). The rich in this world must be rich in good works, ready to share their good things with the needy "That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate" (*1Ti 6:18*).

Our Lord testified that the works of the world are evil "The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil" (*Joh 7:7*). He also testified concerning the Pharisees, that all their works were done for human praise: "But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments" (*Mat 23:5*). We also read of dead works, works of the flesh, and works of the devil. And so we need to discriminate in dealing with the subject of good works.

**I. QUALIFICATIONS FOR GOOD WORKS.**

Who can perform a good work in the sight of God? The Scriptures make it plain that none but the saved can engage in good works. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (*Eph 2:10*); So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (*Rom 8:8*); "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (*Heb 11:6*).

Good works are the fruit of the Spirit, and none but the saved have the Spirit. Good works are the result of salvation and not the cause of it. The Divine order is salvation, then service. We are saved to serve God and others. In every realm except mechanics, there must be life before activity. Every man by nature is dead in sins and alienates from the life of God. The belief that a sinner may work towards salvation is a heresy of the deepest dye. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;" (*Tit 3:5*); "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (*2Ti 1:9*); "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (*Eph 2:8-9*). All the work that the lost man does to ingratiate himself into the favor of God is a dead work and needs to be repented of. There is no way into the favor of God except through His Son. "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (*Eph 2:13*).

**II. THE NATURE OF GOOD WORKS.**

A good work in the Scriptural sense, the only true sense, is a work that pleases God, and brings upon the doer God's approbation and blessing. A man may perform an act that will meet the human conception of a good deed, but God may judge otherwise. What men might pronounce good, God might reject as evil. Men may reward for that which God will censure.   
How may one know when he is engaged in doing good? This is a very important question. Multitudes are in a whirl of socalled Christian activity, nervously executing man-made programs, only to reap in the end a terrible awakening and a sore disappointment. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (*Mat 7:22-23*).

It is not our aim to enumerate the good deeds a Christian may do, but rather to show the necessary elements in any work to make it a good work in the sight of God. As individuals, particular deeds may vary according to our relation to society and to our opportunities. Observe,

1. A WORK OF FAITH IS A GOOD WORK. To do that which God commands, just because He commands it, is a good work. A work of faith is possible only to those who have faith. Works of faith are often opposed to human reason. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews is filled with works of faith. Human reason did not dictate the acts of Noah, Abraham, and others mentioned in this chapter. The only reason behind a work of faith is that God says do it. And this is to become a fool in the eyes of the world. It was only because Noah believed God that he built the ark.

2. A LABOR OF LOVE IS A GOOD WORK. Christ said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." *1Co 13:1-13* emphasizes the necessity of love as an element in good works. Faith works by love. "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" *Gal 5:6*. Faith and love are twin graces God wrought, and where these are good works will surely follow.   
The unregenerate, so far as the external act is concerned, may do a good deed; however, the inward motive as well as the outward act is essential to a good work in the sight of God. A cup of cold water, given in the name of a disciple of Christ, is a good work, while the gift of a million dollars to a good cause may fall short of a good work. Here is the acid test for every good deed: is it done for the glory of God, and from love to Christ? if so---

(1) It will not be done for human rewards. This was the motive of the Pharisees in almsgiving. And it is to be feared that many professing Christians want their rewards here and now, and therefore, their motive is to please men rather than God. And the writer must confess that his greatest temptation has been to preach to please men-something he has had to confess before God. He dares not claim a holy motive in all he has done. A good work is done for the glory of God and will be rewarded by Him in the day of judgment. It is not wrong to please men if they are pleased by our seeking to please God.

(2) A labor of love is not done out of envy and strife. "Love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil" (*1Co 13:4-5*).

(3) It will not be done for prizes, banners, etc. All sorts of means are being resorted in today to keep church members active in some form of Christian activity. What is needed today is the faithful preaching of the Word, speaking the truth in love, and in utter dependence upon the Holy Spirit for results.

(4) Acceptable service must flow from fellowship with Christ. If we have not learned to worship in secret, we cannot worship in the public assembly. If Christ is not real to us; if we are not walking and communing with Him, it is but mockery to speak of Him to others. It is only when He is precious to us that we can sincerely recommend Him to others.   
Paul said that Christianity in the last days would be characterized by people having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (*2Ti 3:5*). And this is the certain result of too much public service apart from much secret prayer.

**ILLUSTRATION**

The story is told that when Handley Page was making an Eastern flight, he and his companions descended at Khobar in Arabia. While there a large rat attracted by the smell of food managed to get into the plane. When the flight was resumed Mr. Page discovered the presence of the rat by the sickening sound of gnawing behind him. He thought with horror of the damage those pitiless teeth might do to some vital part of the plane. What could he do? It suddenly occurred to him that a rat cannot stand a high altitude; it is made to live on the surface or burrow beneath the soil. So he decided to soar. He turned the nose of the plane upward and rose higher and higher until he himself found it difficult to breathe. He listened  
-and to his delight the rat was found to be dead. Now, there are moral pests in the nature of fleshly lusts that war against the soul: worldly amusements in various forms. Our only safety is to soar. These things cannot stand heaven's air. They die in the presence of Christ Who died for us. Prayer and Bible study-lift us into an altitude that is too high for sinful amusements.

**IMPORTANCE OF GOOD WORKS**

Good works are important as necessary evidences of salvation. They do not procure salvation but manifest it. They are not the cause but the effect of the new birth--created in Christ Jesus unto good works.   
The works of the Christian come before him in judgment to be rejected or rewarded. This is not true of the believer's sins; they were laid upon Christ and He bore them in His own body on the tree. In respect to salvation, the believer's sins were put upon Christ and judged in Him. In respect to chastisement, they are dealt with in this life. "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (*Heb 12:5-11*). The believer will be rewarded for his good works when Christ comes. "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God" (*1Co 4:5*).

Is thy cruse of comfort failing? Rise and share it with a friend! And through all the years of famine It shall serve thee to the end.

Love divine will fill thy storehouse, Or thy handful still renew;   
Scanty fare for one will often Make royal feast for two.

For the heart grows rich in giving: All its wealth is living grain;   
Seeds-which mildew in the garner Scattered, fill with gold the plain.

Is thy burden hard and heavy? Do thy steps drag wearily? Help to lift thy brother's burden God will bear both it and thee.

Lost and weary on the mountains, Would'st thou sleep amidst the snow? Chafe that frozen form beside thee, And together both shall glow.

Art thou wounded in life's battle? Many stricken round thee moan; Give to them thy precious ointment, And that balm shall heal thine own.

Is thy heart a well left empty? None but God its void can fill; Nothing but a ceaseless fountain Can its ceaseless longings still.

Is thy heart a living power?   
Self-entwined, its strength sinks low; It can only live by loving,   
And by serving love will grow.

--Author Unknown

÷02-3-2 A MANUAL FOR GODLY LIVING

(Exposition of Romans Chapter 12)

If one should select a portion of Scripture as a manual or guide to Christian living, surely he could do no better than to turn to the closing chapters of Romans. Here we have the Christian's duty in various relations of life. In this chapter we shall attempt an exposition of *Rom 12:1-21*.

We now enter what is called the practical part of Paul's letter to the Romans. If the doctrinal portion of Romans is distasteful, the practical portion will be even more so. He who despises the mercies of God will rebel at the commands of God. Practical Christianity must rest upon doctrinal Christianity. You cannot divorce doctrine from life. As G. Campbell Morgan puts it: "You cannot grow the tulips of the kingdom of God unless you get the bulbs from heaven." A man's conduct is the fruit of what he believes. The flower of a godly life has its roots deep in the soil of experienced grace.

Paul, after giving us the greatest of all expositions of the grace and mercy of God; gives vent to his feeling of adoring wonder at the ways of God: and follows with an exhortation to becoming conduct on the part of those who can follow him in the gracious experiences of the mercies of God.

**I. PAUL'S GREAT APPEAL (1, 2). Observe,**

1. HE BESEECHES. He does not command like Moses who gave the law. The Christian minister cannot give orders nor compel; he can only get things done by beseeching. A Christian hierarchy, whether in the form of a Baptist Board, or a Methodist Bishop, or a Roman Catholic Pope is contrary to the very norm of New Testament Christianity.

2. HE BESEECHES BY THE MERCIES OF GOD. This is the greatest argument for a consecrated life. Paul wants the mercies of God to be realized and bear fruit to the glory of God. The highest and purest of all human motives is to act out of appreciation for the mercies of God.

3. PAUL BESEECHES THE BRETHREN. Exhortation is ministry to the saints. He is not appealing to the sinner, but to those who have an experience of grace and mercy.

4. HE BESEECHES THEM TO PRESENT THEIR BODIES TO GOD. The believer's body is to be a living sacrifice in contrast to dead animals offered under the law. It is not to obtain but to acknowledge the blessing of salvation. It is a sacrifice of praise. The body is to be a holy sacrifice. Under the law the animals offered in sacrifice had to be ceremonially clean and physically sound; under grace the human body must be morally clean. A whiskey-soaked body is a filthy sacrifice. The sacrifice must be pleasing to God. It is not man nor even the church that we must please but God. Consecration is primarily to God and not to a cause or a work. One may be consecrated to a good work and yet scarcely ever think of God. Everything is to be done as unto the Lord. The sacrifice of the believer constitutes his "reasonable service." The Greek word for reasonable is logikos, and is variously translated reasonable, intelligent, rational, spiritual, etc. The word is found in one other place in the Greek New Testament. "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (*1Pe 2:2*) and is translated by the phrase "of the word." It comes from the same root as logos, which means word. The believer's service to God must be regulated by the word of God. This is most important, for one may be busy in doing what God has not commanded, and in the way God has not commanded; yea, one may be doing what God has forbidden.

5. HE BESEECHES BELIEVERS TO BE DIFFERENT. "And be not conformed to this world." World here means the inhabitants of the world morally considered. The world is bad; it lies in the lap of the Wicked One. "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness" (*1Jn 5:19*). The devil is its god. He has dominion over it. The world is selfcentered and Satan--controlled. The believer is not to agree with it, or be like it. He must not fall in with the world in its thinking and doing. He must think and do according to the Word of God.

6. "BUT BE YE TRANSFORMED." The Greek is "metamorphoo," and means a change in appearance. It is the word used for the transfiguration of Christ. In our text it denotes a moral change, to be effected by the renewal of the mind. A change of mind-new thoughts and new ideals-is wrought in regeneration, and this change must be renewed and deepened. Outward transformation must begin in the mind and heart. If a man's conduct is to be right his thinking must be right. In this way the believer will know "what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God," and be able to demonstrate it in his every day life. Believers are God's demonstrators, we are to demonstrate the fact and worth of God in human life. The commercial world uses this method in making sales. The car salesman will put you into his car and behind the wheel to demonstrate its speed and riding comfort. The refrigerator man will put a refrigerator in your home on trial to let you see its freezing qualities. In this day of keen competition many things are sold in trial. It is a solemn and pertinent question the believer should put to himself; what kind of a demonstrator am I for Jesus Christ Whom I profess to trust and love and obey? What impression does my life make on others?

**II. SPECIAL DUTIES BASED ON SPECIFIC GIFTS (3-8).**

1. Have a just estimate of your gift. There are different measures of faith--do not think you know it all--do not act as if you are the "whole cheese". Think soberly about yourself and your abilities. Do not be intoxicated with conceit. Recognize the gifts of others. Be humble.

2. We are many members in one body. Every church (local assembly) is a body of Christ likened to the human body. Each member has his own gift and place in the body, and what he does affects the whole body. Each member of the church ought to be dear to every other member.

3. Each member must exercise his own gift. It is not a natural talent, but a gift sovereignly bestowed by the Holy Spirit. There are seven of these gifts here enumberated:

(1) PROPHECY. The Spirit given ability to utter Divine truth. It strictly signifies the foretelling of future events, but seems to have a wider sense in the New Testament, including the gift of explaining the Scriptures. It is forthtelling as well as foretelling. There are no foretellers since the New Testament was completed. We have in the Bible all the truth we need for our spiritual good.

(2) MINISTRY. The Greek word means service, and is used in a wide sense. It is used of Christ in *Rom 15:8* "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:" , of Phoebe in *Rom 16:1* "I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:"; of the office of deacon in "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:" (*Php 1:1*), "Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre" (*1Ti 3:8*). In our text it does not seem to refer to an office, but to practical service in the church without naming the particular service. Every member is to render some service.

(3) TEACHING. The ability to teach God's word is a gift of the Spirit. It is a gift the pastor or bishop must have "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach" (*1Ti 3:2*). A mere exhorter should never be made a bishop, that is, a pastor.

(4) EXHORTATION. This means to excite to duty and dissuade from sin and requires a peculiar talent--a gift of the Spirit. It is not an office. We need laymen in our churches with the gift of exhortation --men who can arouse the brethren to greater activity; to be more than seat warmers. The exhortation of a Godly layman seems to have more effect than that of the pastor. (5) GIVING. Giving is both a duty and a grace "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia" (*2Co 8:1*). Giving is the duty of all and a gift of grace bestowed upon some. Where this grace is exercised there will be large gifts for the work of the church. Let large givers give without fanfare or ostention.

(6) RULING. The Greek word means "to go before", or "to take the lead". It is used of the bishop (pastor) in "One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;" (*1Ti 3:4*): "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine" (*1Ti 5:17*). As a leader the pastor must be zealous and diligent. The pastorate is no place for a lazy man.

(7) SHOWING MERCY. The gift of aiding the needy and of forgiving an enemy. And this must be done cheerfully and eagerly and sincerely. Gill thinks the last three gifts: giving, ruling, and showing mercy, relate to different branches of the deacon's office. Perhaps so.

**III. GENERAL DUTIES BASED UPON SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIPS (9-16).**

Verse 9. Love is to be sincere--without hypocrisy. Feigned love is disguised hate. "Abhorring evil." It is not enough to cease from doing wrong; sin must be hated. "Cleaving to the good." The Christian is not a mere negation; there is a positive side to his character. While hating evil he must love and hold fast to that which is good.

Verse 10. We are to love one another as members of the same family. And where honor or preference is involved we should want another brother to have it. While the worldly vie with one another in receiving honor; the saints should compete with one another in giving honor.

Verse 11. "Not slothful in business." This has no reference to secular work, but to service for the Lord. We are to be on fire for the Lord. Stifler renders the verse this way: "In zeal (the outward) not slothful; in spirit (the inward human spirit) fervent; serving the Lord."

Verse 12. "Hope. . . tribulation. . . prayer": the bulk of many a life. We may not be able to rejoice in present conditions but we can rejoice in hope of a better day. And this hope will give patience and steadfastness in the day of affliction, for hope sees an end to them. And while hoping and suffering we can keep on praying.

Verse 13. We are to relieve the necessities of the saints, and practice hospitality. This implies private ownership of goods and is far removed from Socialism and Communism. Some will be better off than others. Let those who have, voluntarily share with those who have not. But indolence must not be encouraged or even tolerated. "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies" (*2Th 3:10-11*) for a balancing truth. Every Christian home should be an inn where strangers of the household of faith might find entertainment: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (*Heb 13:2*).

Verse 14. Bless your persecutors. The saint must never answer in kind, must not fight the devil with fire; he knows more about that weapon than we do. We are to render blessing for cursing; not railing for railing.

Verse 15. Share the experiences of others. Rejoice with the rejoicing ones and weep with the weeping. Here is Christian wisdom. Christ did not weep at Cana, nor laugh at the grave of Lazarus.

Verse 16. "Be of the same mind one toward another." Be easy to live with. Regard one another mutually, and let this attitude reach the lowly. Don't be snobbish and exclusive. The world neglects and rejects the lowly, but Christ died for such people, and we should have fellowship with them in the body of Christ. And do not have a too high estimate of yourself.

**IV. CHRISTIAN GRACES TOWARD THE WORLD (17-21).**

Verse 17. Do not return evil for evil, but meet evil with good. And be honest. Watch your step for the eyes of the world are upon you. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (*Mat 5:16*).

Verse 18. Do your best to live at peace with all men. Be sure you are not at fault when peace is destroyed. If men hate you let them hate you for the truth's sake and not for the evil you do.

Verse 19. Do not seek revenge. Vengeance belongs to God. A Christian seeks revenge when he tries to get even with an enemy--he takes himself out of the hands of his Heavenly Father. It is a way of saying that you can handle your enemy better than He can. Do not usurp His place in judgment; wait for Him to act. He will set things right in His own time.

Verse 20. Befriend your enemy. Help him in time of need. In this way you are heaping coals of fire on his head. This is the only punishment you may inflict--and take care you do not do it literally. A woman who complained of the ill treatment of her husband was asked if she had ever tried heaping coals of fire on his head replied by saying, "No, but I did dash a bucket of scalding water on him."

Verse 21. Be a conqueror. "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Fight your foe with the weapon of good deeds. You conquer when you befriend an enemy, and leave vengeance with God to Whom it belongs. May grace be given to both writer and reader to heed these flesh-rebuking admonitions!

÷02-3-3 ADORNING THE DOCTRINE OF GOD OUR SAVIOUR

The emphasis of Paul's letter to Titus is "Good Works." In 1:16 he writes of those who profess a knowledge of God, but are unto "every good work" reprobates. In 2:7 he exhorts Titus to be a pattern or example of good works. In 2:14 he says that Christ redeemed us that He might have a people of His own "zealous of good works." In 3:1 the exhortation is to obey civil rulers and be "ready to every good work." However, in 3:7 he makes it plain and positive that we are not saved by works of righteousness, but according to His mercy. In 3:8 believers are to "be careful to maintain good works." And in 3:14 we are enjoined to "maintain good works for necessary uses."

Titus, a young Greek, was one of Paul's aides, and was given some hard assignments. He appears to have been stronger than Timothy, both in health and courage. The Gospel of Christ must have first been preached on Island of Crete by the Jews who were at Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. Paul and Titus had evidently gone there to develop the work, and when Paul left, Titus remained to "set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city" (1:5). In other words. Titus was assigned the task of organizing the believers into churches with elders or bishops as leaders and overseers. The date of the letter was about 65 A.D., some thirty years after the death of Christ.   
In this epistle Titus is given the message for various ages and groups: the old, the young, and the slaves. And the motive for all the good works is that the word of God be not blasphemed (2:5), and that the doctrine of God our Saviour might be adorned (2:10).

It is a wonderful hope to hold up before Christians, that they may adorn the Gospel of Christ. And this hope was first held up to slaves on the corrupt Island of Crete. It was not the hope of gaining their political and social and economic freedom, but of adorning the doctrine of our Saviour. This is a good place to say that with the Christian it is "Pie in the sky bye and bye." What the believer hope for is laid up for him in heaven "For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;" (*Col 1:5*). Our inheritance is reserved for us in heaven "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (*1Pe 1:4*). Christ did not die to guarantee an easy time down here, but to assure us of a glorious time throughout eternity. This is not to say that Christians should not be interested in human rights and social justice for all people without respect to color, race, or culture. The true believer is conscious of his obligations to do good to all men.

**I. THE POSSIBILITY OF ADORNING THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST.**

The world judges the church by the way it's members live. Every Christian is a working model of what the church teaches. If you have money to invest, and a promoter comes to you with a fine invention on paper and urges you to help him put it on the market; if you are wise, you will ask for a working model of it. If you had a cancer and someone recommends a certain remedy, you would want to know if there are actual cases of cure. So when a Christian professes he has something that will make a man better-something that will fill a man with new desires, new hopes, and new joys-something that will make one different from his former self, it is quite fair for the world to ask: "Is this so? Has it changed your life? Is your life a working model of Christianity?" The greatest motive any believer can have is to so live that the world will have to admit that there is something to the religion of Jesus Christ.

The thought is this: The doctrine of God our Saviour is more beautiful when embodied in a life. Practice must match profession. The best illustrated Bible is the good works of those who profess to take it as their guide and way of life.

**II. THE SOLEMN ALTERNATIVE.**

We either adorn the doctrine of God or we give occasion for others to blaspheme it. We are living for Christ or we are against Him. We are a credit to the gospel, or we are a reproach to it. There is no neutral corner, we are either fighting the good fight of faith, or we have surrendered to the devil, the flesh, and the world. There is no sitting on the fence; we are either in the field of GRACE, or in the devil's field of DISGRACE. On the Lord's Day we are in God's house with God's people, or where we should not be; that is, unless providentially hindered.

At a meeting of the Alcoholic Anonymous in Louisville several years ago, the leader went from man to man, and asked, "Why are you here?" And every man gave the same answer: "If I were not here, I would be somewhere drunk. It is my only protection against getting drunk."

What pastor has not been embarrassed by charges brought against his church because of the way members live? Living a godly life may not help you in the eyes of the world, but it will help the church, and keep the doctrine from being blasphemed.

**III. THE KIND OF LIFE THAT ADORNS THE DOCTRINE OF GOD.**

It must be a life that is uniformly and consistently guided by the Word of God. A life is basically different from the ways of the world. A life that is so conspicuous that a microscope is not needed in order to find Christian principles in it. Too many of us appear to be Christians on certain occasions and something else at other times. Like the Galatians, who did run well, but were soon slowed down. Or like Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, as unstable as water: "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch" (*Gen 49:4*), no dependence to be put in him. It has been well said that the best ability is dependability. Suppose everybody who has ever joined our church had been faithful to the end--what a church we would have. Nearly everybody, at some time or other, has dabbled in religion, but so many are superficial and do not persevere. Christ said to some Jews who believed on Him. "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." *Joh 8:31*. Persevering attachment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour is the grand mark of a born again believer.

Living the Christian life is somewhat like saving money: look after the pennies, nickels, and dimes, and the dollars will take care of themselves. Look after the homely virtues, such as sound speech, honesty in money matters, keeping one's word, dependability in church attendance, constancy in prayer and Bible reading--and the great things will fall in line.

Look how these slaves on the island of Crete were to adorn the doctrine of God. They were to be obedient to their own masters, doing what they were told without any back talk. They were not to steal from their masters, but show fidelityand in this way they would adorn the doctrine. Christian slaves, and there were many of them in the early church, were different from other slaves. Whatever our relation in society is, we must be different from the outside world, and thus adorn-beautify the Gospel of Christ.

And now in conclusion.   
**IV. HOW IS ONE ABLE TO ATTAIN SUCH A LIFE?**

How will one get the moral and spiritual strength for such a life? Let it be remembered that no one is able of himself for a life that will adorn the doctrine. Christ said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: For without me ye can do nothing" (*Joh 15:5*). There must be secret communion with Christ, if we are to beautify the Gospel. He must first beautify us before we can beautify Him. We must be on the mountain like Moses in fellowship with Him if we are to come down and walk among men so as to radiate the principles of true religion and adorn the doctrine of God.

The story is told of a 51 year old widow in Oklahoma City who was told by her doctor that because of a heart ailment she had only one year to live. She had worked hard and had saved some money. When she learned of her fate she set aside $10,000 to spend on herself in search of happiness. She asked for advice on how she might spend the money. She was told to travel but she did not like to travel. She was told to buy a new house and a new car, but she said the ones she had were good enough. She was told to go in for night life and "live it up." But she said that when she gambled she always won. Poor deluded woman! And how typical of multitudes who have much to live ON, but nothing to live FOR: no worthy motive and objective in life. Oh, that Grace may be given to both writer and reader, that we might live so as to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour!

"Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah, Pilgrim through this barren land; I am weak, but Thou are mighty; Hold me with Thy powerful hand; Bread of heaven,   
Feed me till I want no more".

÷02-3-APPENDIX "GOD IS FOR US"

D. F. Sebastian, Pastor First Baptist Church Plant City, Florida

"If God be for us, who can be against us?" *Rom 8:31*   
INTRODUCTION

This text declares the most glorious fact that ever broke upon the consciousness of my soul. "God is for us" --The "if" could be and should be "since." The text is not expressing a doubtful hope but a settled certainty. "Since God is for us, who can be against us?" It marks the beginning of a glorious climactic conclusion of the first eight chapters of Romans. Paul has shown that all are hopeless, inexcusable, and condemned sinners (chapter 1-3:20). Then he shows that God has provided a sufficient righteousness for sinners in Christ which is received by faith and not by works (3:21-5:11). Then he demonstrates the personal experience of one who receives this righteousness (Chapters 6-7). This eighth chapter begins with "no condemnation" and ends with "No separation"' to those in Christ Jesus. Our text is the climax of the glorious doctrine of salvation by grace set forth in the passage: "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us who can be against us?"   
I. FIRST OF ALL I WISH TO DRIVE HOME TO OUR HEARTS THE MAIN THOUGHT OF THE TEXT: "GOD IS FOR US."

In the heavens above us, as we gaze upon the universe of worlds and planets, we are reminded that God is above us. In nature we see that God is around us. In His law we feel that God is against us for we stand guilty before His just and holy law, but in Grace we are assured that "God is for us". God is our defender, our justifier, our shield, our champion. God for us means that every attribute of His being, and every ounce of His inexhaustible power are engaged in our behalf and for our eternal security His immutability guarantees that God will forever be for us. He does not change. He is not fickle in His purposes and He does not leave a task unfinished. "The eternal God is our Refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms." "I change not" is His own reassuring declaration. "Therefore the sons of Jacob are not consumed" (*Mal 3:6*). The security of the saint is not predicated upon the saint's steadfastness but upon the unchangeableness of God.

WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?

If God be for us, let hell and earth, darkness and damnation, men and devils do their worst. All their efforts to destroy shall come to nought and our God shall bring them to everlasting confusion. If God is for us why should we fear the face of man? Why should we cower before puny man's insults? Why should we go about with a defeatest complex? God is for US-God is for US! Hallelujah!

II. WHEN AND HOW IS GOD FOR US?   
1. God is for us in eternity past:

(1) For us in His foreknowledge: "Whom He did foreknow." "Foreknow" means more than a knowledge about us, for He knew about the devil and about all people. It is equal to foreordain, or chosen, or elected. It means that He foreknew with a purpose; foreknew effectually. *1Pe 1:2* says, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God." "According" means "measured by" or "in harmony with", or "in accord with." His choice of us was according to or measured by or equal to His foreknowledge of us. God knew what He would do for us and He knew what He would do with us. He is for us in foreknowledge. Before we were ever born or did good or evil God was for us in His purposes of Grace.

(2) For us in predestination. God predetermined the destiny and character of everyone of us in eternity past--determined and decreed our destiny. Not merely, decreed our going to heaven, but He also decreed our "conformity to the image of Christ." "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (*1Jn 3:2*).

2. God is for us in Time Present.

(1) In Effectual Calling. "Whom He also called" "called according to His purpose" called just as He purposed in eternity past, and called to accomplish His purpose in eternity future. Sinners are not called by chance nor by good luck but according to the purpose of God. There is a vast difference between a call and an invitation. Preachers give invitation to sinners but God calls sinners from death unto life. There is a general call in the Gospel to every man but there is a particular and effectual call of God to the "Foreknown" and "predestinated"-- "Them He also called."

He calls by the Holy Spirit and the word. He calls to life (regeneration) by the spirit and to justification by the Word. The one is vital, the other is legal and they both take place in the experiences of the sinner when he is saved.   
(2) In Justification. "Them he also justified." Justified means declared just or acquitted before His law. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." When God justifies or declares just His elect no charge shall ever be sustained against them. They may be accused by Satan and maligned by men, but heaven's declaration shall never be reversed and they shall never be brought into jeopardy for their sins again. "Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (*Rom 5:1*).

(3) For us in Providence. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (*Rom 8:28*). God is for us through all the experiences of this life. In sickness and health, at home and abroad, in prosperity and adversity, on the land and on the sea. His providence is working all things together for our good--nothing can be against us ultimately. At present the clouds may be dark, or the burden heavy, or the road dreary, but it is all in His plan and purpose working for our good. Who can be against us? "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord . . . though he fall he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand" (*Psa 37:23-24*). In all these things we are more than conquerors.

3. God is for us in Eternity Future.

(1) In Glorification. "Them he also glorified." Glorification is in the future. Then we shall be like Him. Then our vile body shall be fashioned like unto His own glorious body. Glorification is the consummation of all the previous purpose and work of Grace. All the threads of foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, sanctification, and providence shall find their place in the divine pattern and be unfolded in the image of Jesus Christ. We shall be like Him, and God the Father shall look upon us as the ultimate product of His eternal redemption.   
4. God is for us in one Eternal Present.

All of this is spoken in the past tense as if it had already taken place. God's purposes are so certain of fulfillment that He expresses them as already accomplished. There can be no shadow of doubt as to our security since God Who cannot lie has already declared the end from the beginning.

Dr. A. C. Dixon says that this passage portrays God's plan of Eternal Salvation as a great suspension bridge which spans a deep river chasm. The large cables are anchored in the mountain bed rocks on either side and are stretched over the top of great pillars and swung above the river. Large and strong arms of steel hang from these cables and support the bridge structure as constant streams of traffic go across. Foreknowledge and Predestination take their anchor back in the Eternal Counsels of the Triune God before time was-Glorification anchors the cables of Divine Grace in the Eternity yet future-while Calling and Justification take hold of the elect in actual experience here in time as we are carried safely over the turbulent currents of life. God is for us all the way.

III. THE PRACTICAL EFFECT OF THIS DOCTRINE IN OUR LIVES

1. Gives Us a Sense of Security. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" We are no more doubting and fearing saints but shouting and confident people--at rest upon His power and promises.

2. Produces Loyalty and Faithfulness. "For thy sake we are killed all the day long." Persecution, distress, famine, nakedness, peril or sword do not drive us from our Lord but bring us close to Him. All that Satan may do against us brings us closer to our God--we die rather than be unfaithful to Him. 3. Produces Conquerors. "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." This doctrine has been opposed upon the ground that it produces carelessness, indulgence, and laziness on the part of those who believe it. This is Satan's slander of the saints. No doctrine has ever produced as many martyrs as has this glorious doctrine. Call the roll of martyrs and few Arminians are in the number. Paul, the writer of our text, sealed his testimony with his blood.

4. The Greatest Anchor for the Soul. The greatest source of peace for the mind and the most glorious ground for shouting that my heart has ever experienced is the text: "What shall we say then to these things? If God be for us who can be against us?" Amen and amen!

÷03-00 DEFINITIONS OF DOCTRINE VOLUME III   
THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH   
C. D. Cole

It is our privilege to be able to present Volume III of Definitions of Doctrine by the late Claude Duval Cole. Bro. Cole died reading Volume II (Sin Salvation Service) the same morning he had received it in the mail. He had already started putting together Volume III for us to print. I have a brief outline of the way he wanted it to be published and we intend to stay as close to the original outline as possible. Since he was combining several outline studies and rewriting them and the Lord did not permit him to finish this third volume, I will try to put it together in such a way that would be much like he intended it and yet I will not change any of his writings. The way that you receive it is the way he wrote it. There will be some repetition in some places since some of the material covered in one subject is mentioned in another subject.

Also, I had written him concerning one or two things in this volume which were not clear to me as to the meaning he intended and due to his death, I never received an answer. We will publish them with a reservation as to one or two points and their real meaning. In particular concerning the organization of a church; I believe, and the Bryan Station Baptist Church practices, that a new church being organized must have church authority. Also, concerning the Bride of Christ. I will not try to elaborate on this but that the Bride, in my understanding of the Bible, will be made up of the faithful members of the Lord's New Testament Baptist Churches. There are others that will be saved but the Bride of Christ is the chosen of the elect. Others will be guests at this great wedding.

Be that as it may, we send forth this volume, praying that the teachings concerning the most precious institution on this earth (The Lord's Church) will be a great blessing to those that read it, and will help to strengthen God's people in the faith once delivered unto Saints. Volume I and II have spread worldwide. They are being used in many churches as teaching guides, in many colleges as textbooks, being translated into other languages. The Lord has blessed Bro. Cole's books in a great way. We feel that this volume will be a great blessing to many on the true church and its teaching that have been neglected in this day of departing from the faith.

Yours in the service of God,   
Alfred M. Gormley   
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XXXI. The Ministry XXXII. Feed My Sheep

÷03-01 THE DEFINITION OF THE CHURCH

The unity for which Christ prayed seems to be as sadly lacking among His followers with respect to the church question as any other. Christ's prayer for unity among His people has been for a long time a serious question to the author, in the light of his belief that Christ's prayers are always effectual. Modern Ecumenicalism is not the answer to the problem since it seeks organic union at the expense of truth. In this chapter we shall try to arrive at a Scriptural definition of the church. Observe:

**A. THE COLLOQUIAL USE OF THE WORD CHURCH.**

1. The meeting house is familiarly spoken of as the church. But this is foreign to any New Testament use of the word. The New Testament Church was not the house, but "in the house." *Rom 16:5*; "The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house" (*1Co 16:19*); "Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house" (*Col 4:15*).

2. Christianity is usually referred to as the church to distinguish the followers of Christ from the state and from the world. Church history, therefore, is nothing more than the history of Christianity.

3. Denominations of Christians are commonly spoken of as churches, embracing believers in various groups without regard to faith and practice.

**B. SOME MODERN NOTIONS OF THE CHURCH.**

1. The Universal Visible Theory, also called the Imperial Theory. This finds expression in the Roman Catholic Hierarchy. The church is a visible empire with a visible human head.

2. The Universal Invisible Theory. This makes all the saved, members of the church.

3. The Church Branch Theory. This makes the various denominations mere branches of the main stem which no longer exists.

**C. THE PRE-CHRISTIAN USE OF THE WORD CHURCH.**

The word church comes from the Greek word ekklesia, which means to call out for the purpose of assembling. The government of ancient Greek cities was democratic, being administered by duly qualified citizens in a lawful assembly, called together from time to time to transact business for the public good. And this assembly was called an ekklesia. The Greek word ekklesia in itself has no religious connotation. It simply means assembly regardless of the kind. In *Act 19:39* "But if ye inquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly" it is used of the Greek assembly corresponding somewhat to our city council or board of aldermen. The word ekklesia is also used of the church (congregation) in the wilderness (*Act 7:38*). By accommodation ekklesia is applied to the mob gathered against Paul at Ephesus. In *Act 19:32*, we read that the ekklesia (assembly) "was confused," referring to the mob or unlawful assembly. The townclerk told Demetrius and his craft to take their complaint against Paul to the lawful ekklesia (assembly). And having restored order, the townclerk dismissed the ekklesia (mob). "And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly" (*Act 19:41*).

**D. THE EKKLESIA OR ASSEMBLY OF CHRIST.**

The English word church comes from the Greek word kuriakon, which means "of or belonging to the Lord." Kuriakon occurs only two times in the Greek New Testament. It is used of the Lord's Supper (I Cor.ll:20), and of the Lord's Day (*Rev 1:10*). It is never translated church in the New Testament. Kuriakon was used by the early Greek Christians for the Lord's house or meeting place. The Teutonic tribes, when converted to Christianity, adopted this Greek word for their house of worship. It is found in the German Kirche, the Scottish Kirk, and the Anglo-Saxon Circe. The Greeks never employed kuriakon for the people, but only for the house.

In using the word ekklesia Christ did not coin a new word, but a word in current use and easily understood by both Jew and Greek. He did not employ the word kuriakon, but ekklesia which can only refer to people, a people called out to form an assembly. In response to Peter's confession of His deity, Christ said, "Thou art Peter (petrol) and upon this rock (petra) I will build MY ekklesia (assembly)." *Mat 16:18*. He thus distinguished between His assembly and other assemblies. Paul makes the same distinction in his letter to the Thessalonians. He writes to the ekklesia which is in God the Father (this distinguishes it from the Greek political assembly), and "in the Lord Jesus Christ," which also distinguishes it from the Jewish synagogue. In this way Paul made sure that his letter would reach the right assembly.

In the Greek New Testament the noun ekklesia occurs 115 times. It is translated church 112 times and assembly three times. The word church actually occurs 113 times in our King James Bible, but in *Act 19:37* it is not ekklesia but the word for temples. The King James translators tried to use church for ekklesia in all cases, but in *Act 19:32*; *Act 19:39*; *Act 19:41* to do so would have been manifestly absurd; and so in these instances they had to give the correct rendering; ASSEMBLY.

Christ Himself set us the pattern for the use of the word ekklesia. In *Mat 16:18* when He said, "I will build my church (ekklesia)." He used the word abstractly of an institution, without defining, particularizing, or locating it. Just as we speak of the American home, the American boy, and other institutions without referring to any particular home or boy. In *Mat 18:17* our Lord used the word ekklesia (assembly) in the concrete sense of a particular assembly to which one might tell his grievances. And so when Christ's ekklesia, as an institution, becomes concrete and operational it is an actual assembly of His followers in organized capacity. It is a visible organization seems necessary inasmuch as it is composed of visible people. J. W. Porter says, "If there is any other sort of church than that of a visible congregation, revelation and investigation have alike failed to locate its whereabouts or define its functions. Such an inconceivable, intangible, invisible concern as the imaginary invisible church has never been known to convert anybody or to perform any functions of an actual church."

When Christ said, "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell (hades) shall not prevail against it," *Mat 16:18*. He was speaking of the church prospectively something to be built "I will build." The church was a concept in the mind of Christ just as the building is a concept in the mind of the architect before it is erected. Christ saw all the material that was to make up this holy sanctuary, every living stone that would go into it, before it had been quarried from the hard rock of sinful humanity. "Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (*Eph 5:25-27*). And so the church Christ founded to build the church for which He died, is promised perpetuity and glory.

The church of Christ as an institution finds expression in two kinds of assemblies: the local assembly here on earth; and the general assembly of Firstborn ones, now enrolled in heaven and to be gathered there as a glorious church. *Heb 12:23*.

**CHURCHES OF CHRIST**

Whenever the word church is used in the New Testament of something larger than a particular, visible, assembly here on earth the word is always plural, like the churches of Galatia, Asia, and Judaea. The church of Christ here on earth finds expression in many particular assemblies of visible people in process of salvation; the church of Christ in heaven will find expression in one universal assembly of visible people whose salvation has been completed. But there is no such thing as an invisible church here on earth or in heaven.

To a man in Florida who would not unite with any church or particular congregation, and who insisted that he belonged to the big church of Christ, the writer said something like this: In the New Testament the churches could be located and written to. I would like to write to your church; please give me its address and the name of its pastor. Needless to say, he was shut up.

In his commentary on Matthew, Dr. Broadus says: "The word church is not used in the New Testament to denote a congregation, actual or imaginary, of all professed Christians, unless it be in *Act 9:31* (correct text), and in *1Ti 3:15*. In the former the word probably denotes the original church at Jerusalem, whose members were widely scattered throughout Judaea and Galilee and Samaria by the persecution and held meetings wherever they were, but still belonged to the one original organization. When Paul wrote to the Galatians nearly twenty years later, these separate meetings had been organized into distinct churches; and so he speaks (*Gal 1:22*) in reference to that same period, of "the churches of Judaea which were in Christ." In *1Ti 3:15*, the church is naturally the particular local church with which one is connected.

The New Testament never speaks of one particular assembly or church as a part of the whole, but of each assembly as "the whole church." In *1Co 14:23*, Paul says, "If therefore the whole church be come together into one place...." Writing to the Romans from Corinth, in his closing salutation, Paul says, "Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you" (*Rom 16:23*). Speaking of the church under the metaphor of the human body, *1Co 12:27*, Paul says "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." The article is absent in the Greek. The same is true when the church is represented under the figure of a temple. The church at Corinth is called "the temple of God" in *1Co 3:16* and also in *2Co 6:16*. In the second chapter of Ephesians the church is in view under the figure of a building or temple. Local congregations are in view in verse 21; "In whom (Christ) all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple (sanctuary) in the Lord." In verse 22 the church at Ephesus is referred to: "In whom (Christ) ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." We have given the correct text in these quotations. In *Eph 3:21* "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." His redeemed people, making up the glory church, will be Christ's eternal monument as Savior. "When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day" (*2Th 1:10*). The ekklesia or church in glory will be the one real temple, body, flock, and bride of Christ. In glory the church will have been built and be forever to His glory. And because each local particular assembly on earth is a representative of His institution called the church, all the figures applied to the future church in glory are also applied to each and every local assembly of saints. (Note: See introduction of this volume as to the belief of the publisher about Bride of Christ.)

A man once said to B. H. Carroll, "How dare you apply such broad terms as 'the house of God,' 'the body of Christ', and 'the temple of God,' to your little fragment of a denomination!" Carroll replied: "I do not apply them to any denomination, nor to any aggregate of particular churches, but the scriptures do apply every one of them to the particular congregations of Christ's disciples."

In the Scriptural sense there is no such thing as the Methodist Church, or the Presbyterian Church, or the Baptist Church, etc. We should never speak of The American Baptist Church, or the Southern Baptist Church, for there is no such thing. The Southern Baptist Convention is made up of individual messengers sent to it from thousands of Baptist churches, and these messengers have no delegated authority. Naturally, we Baptists believe that our form of church government conforms more nearly to the New Testament pattern. There is no hierarchy or grades of ministry among us. All members are equal in authority and this authority is expressed by vote. One may have more influence than another, but all have the same authority.

There is more and more being said today about "One church in one world." This means one big church made up of the churches of all denominations. But such a thing is utterly foreign to scripture, so far as Christ's church is concerned. Such an idea is retrogression rather than progress. It reverses the missionary program. In the early days Christ's church as an institution found expression in one church, the church at Jerusalem. Under persecution the church was scattered, and the members went everywhere preaching the word. And wherever disciples were made a church was organized. And some years later, we read of the churches of Judaea. And when the church at Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas as missionaries, we soon read of churches in Galatia and other provinces.

If and when we have one church in one world, who is to be the head of this one big church? Will the head be Christ or Anti-Christ? The writer ventures the prediction that the head of this one big church will be a man living in a big house in the city of Rome, the City of Seven Hills, on the banks of the Tiber. Let no Protestant ever suppose that the Roman system of a graded ministry culminating in the supremacy of the pope will ever be relinquished or compromised. Yet with a sad heart we fear that Christendom is headed in that direction.

Suppose history repeats itself, and there again becomes one big world church: such as the Roman Catholic Church before the reformation; suppose the reformation under Luther and others reverse itself and the Protestant denominations return to Rome; will this mean that the perpetuity promised by Christ will be repealed? Perish the thought! Just as in the past, the true churches of Christ will not be a part of the big world church, which will really be the Roman Catholic Church. The institution Christ promised perpetuity to will not perish from the earth, and this institution will always find expression in particular assemblies; which will not be swallowed up by the big ecumenical body.

÷03-02 THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

A. Its Members. B. Its Officers.   
C. Its Autonomy and Independence.   
D. Its Perpetuity.

There is no account in the New Testament of any mode of procedure by which churches were organized. As an institution Christ founded the church while on earth, left it in care of the apostles and prophets with delegated authority. Before his return to the Father He gave the commission to the church through the apostles and promised His presence with them until the end of the age. He also promised to send the Holy Spirit as their helper in the task of perpetuating the church. The Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost and the book of Acts is an account of what was done from Pentecost until the imprisonment of Paul. The first organized church was at Jerusalem. This church was scattered through persecution, this led to missionary endeavour and the organizing of churches in Asia and Europe. The second church was at Antioch in Syria. From this church Paul and Barnabas went out as missionaries. Then we read of the churches in Galatia and other provinces of the Roman Empire.   
It seems evident from the New Testament that Jesus gave no formal prescription for the organization of any church. For sometime after Pentecost the disciples of Christ had no thought of separating themselves from the religious life of Israel. Temple-worship was adhered to "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart" (*Act 2:46*); "Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour" (*Act 3:1*), being supplemented by the teaching of the apostles, and by fellowship in prayer and the breaking of bread "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (*Act 2:42*). Organization was of gradual development according to emerging needs as when deacons were selected to serve tables so that the spiritual leaders might give themselves to the ministry of prayer and the word. "Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word" (*Act 6:2-4*).

Baptist churches come into being today somewhat after this manner. A group of believers in a community wish to become a church. The members in conference will make this wish known to other churches, and these churches send messengers to counsel them in accomplishing their desire. For the sake of order and recognition these messengers will inquire into their belief, and if it is thought wise, the visitors endorse their articles of faith and recommend their constitution as an independent church. These visiting brethren do not organize the church. Since the church is to be self governing it must of necessity and logically be self constituted. And so those wishing to become a church enter into covenant to that effect; and another church is born. The help from the outside is for the sake of order and fellowship and is not absolutely essential. (Note. See Introduction to this volume as to the belief of the Publisher and the organization of a new church.)

From the Book of Acts and church epistles and also from the pastoral epistles we learn all that we need to know about the organized church. Observe:

**A. ITS MEMBERS.**

It is quite clear that the members were born again and baptized believers in Christ as Lord and Savior. And nobody else has any business in a church of Christ. There must be blood before water, and salvation before church membership. The church is a fellowship and partnership of believers and believers are saved people. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (*Joh 3:16*; "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (*Joh 3:36*); "And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (*Act 13:39*); "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (*Rom 5:1*). When sinners repent towards God and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, their immediate duty is to be baptized and enter into the fellowship of the church as a servant of Christ.

**B. ITS OFFICERS.**

*Eph 4:11* : "And he gave some men to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, some to be pastors and teachers, for the .......equipment of God's people for the work of service, for the building up of the body of Christ..............." (C. B. Williams).

1. Apostles and Prophets. These were temporary and had no successors. Prophets were not needed after the New Testament was written. Apostles had delegated authority not given to anyone else. That their office was temporary is obvious from their qualifications.

(1) To be an apostle one must have seen the risen Lord "Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection" (*Act 1:22*); "Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?" (*1Co 9:1*). Paul was the last person to see Him after His resurrection "And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time" (*1Co 15:8*).

(2) One must have wrought "the signs of an apostle." "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds" (*2Co 12:12*). And so from the very nature of the qualifications the apostolic office was temporary. There are no apostles among us today.

(2) Evangelists. These were traveling preachers whose labor was not confined to any given locality. And we have these with us today.

(3) Pastors and Teachers. These are local and are confined to a single church. It is the writer's opinion that this refers to one office, the pastor who is also the teacher in the church. Others may teach, but they are not a commissioned officer in the church. The text we are following says nothing about elders, or bishops, but from other scriptures we learn that they belong to the same office as pastor and teacher.

As an apostolic delegate, Titus was left by the apostle Paul in Crete to complete the organization of the churches and to ordain elders, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee" (*Tit 1:5*). And in giving their qualifications these elders are called bishops "For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;" (*Tit 1:7*). And in *Act 20:28* the elders from Ephesus are enjoined by Paul to "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, (bishops), to feed (pastor, shepherd) the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." And so these elders were to do the work of an overseer and pastor in their respective churches. And in I Tim. II a bishop must be apt to teach. So the spiritual leader in the church must be able to care for the church as overseer and teacher. Baptist churches have leaders but no lords. "Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen" (*1Pe 5:14*).

When the church is thought of as a working body, the spiritual leader is called BISHOP. When the church is viewed as the Lord's flock, he is called PASTOR, which means shepherd. When it is conceived as a school of God's children, he is called TEACHER.

And so the elder of a church is the pastor and bishop and teacher; all referring to the same office involving different duties.

A prelate of the Church of England asked Dr. George Truett, "Do you Baptist have bishops?" "Yes, indeed," replied Truett. "I did not know that. How many do you have in the United States?" "Some 60,000 more or less." replied Truett. The prelate was confounded and said, "Pon my word, I didn't know that." Of course he didn't, for he did not know what a New Testament bishop is.

4. Deacons. This office originated in a crisis caused by liberal giving. During prolonged revival which began at Pentecost there were many poor people, particularly widows. The well to do put money into a common fund to care for the poor. Barnabas sold some property and put the proceeds into this common fund. Ananias and Sapphira also sold a possession for this purpose and kept back part of the proceeds, pretending to give it all. All giving was voluntary and nothing like modern communism.

The apostles were administering this fund. The Grecians (foreign born Jews) complained that their widows were not getting their share of this fund. The apostles neither admitted nor denied the charge. They suggested a division of labor and urged the church to select seven "full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business" (*Act 6:3*). This suggestion was accepted by the whole multitude, and seven were chosen and "set before the apostles," and ordained by the laying on of hands. The reason for this new office was that the apostles might give themselves exclusively to prayer and ministry of the word. The result was that "the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly..." (*Act 6:7*). For a better account of this the reader will turn to Acts the 6th chapter.

The church is a spiritual institution in a material world and has material needs and matters of business to look after. And so we may think of deacons as the business administrators of the church.

**C. ITS AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE.**

The churches of the New Testament were autonomous (self governing) and independent. Each church managed its own affairs. No other church or groups of churches had any authority over it. Each church was responsible only to Christ, its Head. Each church dismissed and received members, and exercised discipline over them. Each church determined its own activity and made its own program.

At the same time cooperative relations were entered into by New Testament churches. There are many examples of this. See *Rom 15:26-27*; *2Co 8:1-24* th and 9th chapters; *Act 15:1-41* th chapter. And so it is today, Baptist churches cooperate in many enterprises. But in and through it all each church acts voluntary and maintains its independence. The writer has a way of saying that the churches of Christ are dependent, independent, and interdependent. Each church is dependent upon God for success; it is independent, in that it is free from dominance of any other body; and it is interdependent, in that it works with other churches in kingdom enterprises. No church has the right to be a local church in its interests and labor. It must look beyond its own doors to other fields of labor. Any church that does not have missions on its heart has the death rattle in its throat.

**D. ITS PERPETUITY.**

After Peter confessed his belief in Jesus as the Christ (Messiah of the Old Testament), Jesus told him that this truth was not taught him by any human being, but by "My Father which is in heaven" (*Mat 16:17*). "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter (petros), and upon this rock (petra) I will build MY church; and the gates of hell (hades, the unseen realm of the dead) shall not prevail against it." In these words Jesus promised perpetuity to His church: it would not be swallowed up in death. This does not mean that no church will ever go out of existence, but that His institution would remain and always be found in churches. Many of the New Testament churches have ceased to exist, but there has never been a time when true churches ceased to exist. Our Lord provided for perpetuity when He gave the great commission to make disciples, baptize disciples, and teach them (disciples) .... "And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world (age)" (*Mat 28:20*). And until Christ returns there will be churches making and baptizing and teaching disciples. When Christ's saving work has been finished He will return in judgment, and the day of grace will be over. And who knows how soon this may be?

÷03-03 THE NAME OF THE CHURCH

We believe a church of Christ is an organized body of baptized disciples, equal in rank and privilege, agreeing on what the Bible teaches, and covenanting to do what Christ has commanded. His command was to make disciples, and this can only be done by preaching the gospel to the lost. And this is the only way the church can perpetuate itself. There will be no disciples tomorrow if they are not made today. Evangelism is the life blood of the church.

We are now confronted with this question: By what name is the church of Christ to be known and identified? What is the proper name of His church? The writer is so bold as to say that there is no proper name by which the church is to be called and identified. If the reader dissents from this, before he is too critical, let him turn to the Bible and find the proper name of the church. And when he has found it, he may reject the position we have taken.

The true church is to be identified by its characteristic features rather than by name. "Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife" (*Rev 21:9*). I will not show you the name of the bride, but the bride herself.

The followers of Christ are called by a variety of names in the scriptures, but none of them is a proper name. They are called believers, brethren, children of God, children of the kingdom, saints, sheep, disciples, etc. But none of these is to be thought of as the proper name of the church. These names indicate their relation to God, to Christ, and to one another.

They are called "Children of God" because God is their Father.   
They are called "Children of the Kingdom," to indicate that they have been born into the kingdom.

They are called "Children of Abraham" because of their spiritual descent from Abraham who is the father of the faithful.

They are called "brethren" to indicate their relation to one another as equals.   
They are called "sheep" figuratively to fit in with the figurative title of Christ as the good Shepherd.   
They are called "disciples" because of their relation to Christ as their Teacher.   
Now let the reader, if he can, use any of these words as the proper name of the church.

They are called "Christians" three times in the New Testament, but this name seems to have been given as a term of reproach. "And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (*Act 11:26*). This name originated at Antioch, but this does not mean that it was then and there that they began to call one another by this name. In *Act 26:28* the name Christian is used by King Agrippa as a sort of slur. I do not agree with the usual interpretation that Agrippa was about to become a Christian. The Greek here is difficult to translate and there are several different renderings. Perhaps the latest, "Good News for Modern Man" renders it thus: "In this short time you think you will make me a Christian?" Notice, that in reply, Paul did not use the word Christian. In *1Pe 4:16* the word Christian is used the third and last time. The Amplified New Testament renders the verse like this: "But if (one is ill treated and suffers) as a Christian (which he is contemptuously called), let him not be ashamed, but give glory to God that he is (deemed worthy) to suffer in this name." Be that as it may, these verses afford little ground for applying the name Christian to the church. If the name "Christian Church" is correct it is strange that we have no example of any of the believers calling one another Christians, and that no epistle was addressed to "The Christian Church." Nobody objects to being called a Christian unless it is used as a term of reproach, in which case we should be glad to suffer in this name.

Several Bible names have been adopted as the proper name of the church by several denominations. For example, we have "The United Brethren," and "The Plymouth Brethren," "The Disciples," and "The Church of God," and "The Church of Christ," and "The Church of the Latter Day Saints." It is a wonder that we do not have a denomination named, "The Sheep Church." If any of the Bible names were meant to be the proper name of the church, then the most heretical and false churches could adopt the name as proof they were the true church.

Names given to churches in the New Testament indicate the kind of people who were in the church. And for any denomination to take to itself any one of these names is to imply that such people are to be found only in their denomination. For instance, the Mormons call their church "The Church of the Latter Day Saints," clearly implying and claiming that they are the only saints in the latter days. Perish the thought!

**THE NAME BAPTIST CHURCHES**

Let us now examine the name Baptist for a church of Christ. We never use the definite article "The Baptist Church," without locating a particular church. There is no such thing as "The Baptist Church" in a provincial or national sense, as in the case of most other denominations, such as "The Methodist Episcopal Church," or "The Presbyterian Church," etc. When Baptists wish to speak of something larger than a particular assembly they use the plural: Baptist Churches.

The name Baptist is a denominational name to distinguish it from other denominations. There were no denominational names until there came to be distinct denominations. Before the time of the so called Reformation under Martin Luther there were scattered churches under different names, and the Roman Catholic Hierarchy. The Reformation started in the Roman Catholic Church, and was only partial. The reformers took with them some of the heresies of Rome such as baptismal regeneration, a graded ministry and a form of government much like that of Rome. And some of the Protestant denominations hated and persecuted Baptists.

Baptists are sometimes accused of being narrow bigots because we believe Baptist churches are after the New Testament pattern. The line must be drawn somewhere, for all the hundreds of diverse and conflicting denominations cannot be the church Christ founded and to which He promised perpetuity.

While claiming to be the true church, Baptists do not deny the salvation of others. We put salvation in the person of Jesus Christ, and believe any and every sinner who pins his faith and hope to Jesus Christ will be saved. We never tell the sinner to unite with a Baptist Church in order to be saved. Like John the Baptist we point the sinner to the Lamb of God, even the Lord Jesus Christ, Whose blood cleanseth from all sin.

The writer is a Baptist but not a Baptist braggart. We lay no claim to superiority in character or conduct or education. When you find a Baptist with a superiority complex, you may be sure that he is an off brand. The churches of the first century were not made up of perfect people in character and conduct. In an experience of salvation the sinner becomes nothing in his own eyes and Christ becomes all in all. Before his conversion Saul of Tarsus was proud and self-righteous, but after he trusted Jesus as the Christ he thought of himself as less than the least of all saints. "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" (*Eph 3:8*); "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" (*Rom 7:14-25*); "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe. Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample" (*Php 3:1-17*); "For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God" (*1Co 15:9*).   
The first New Testament preacher was called John the Baptist. "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea" (*Mat 3:1*); "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John" (*Mat 11:13*); "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it" (*Luk 16:16*). Proof that John's baptism was valid is in the fact that the followers of Christ and members of the first church had only John's baptism. The only difference between John's baptism and that of Christ is that John's looked forward to the coming of Christ, and since then valid baptism looks backward to the Christ who has already come. John baptized those who confessed their sins and who trusted the Christ who was to come; we baptize those who profess faith in Jesus Christ who has already come.

÷03-04 THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH

There is a Divine model of church polity. The Government of the churches of Christ is too important to be left to chance or human opinion. Whatever is left to human discretion in religion, pertains to matters of minor importance, such as the building of meeting houses, the hours of public worship, the manner and order of divine service. Specific legislation on these points would not be practicable. To be sure there are divine principles to be adhered to in all things, but there are some things for which we have neither divine pattern nor explicit teaching. That there is a divine model of church government may be argued.

1. From Scriptural Analogy. Moses was commanded to make the Tabernacle after the pattern shown him in the mount. "And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount" (*Exo 25:40*); "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount" (*Heb 8:5*). When the temple was erected, Solomon followed the plan given to him by his father David: "Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlours thereof, and of the place of the mercy seat, And the pattern of all that he had by the spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, and of all the chambers round about, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries of the dedicated things: Also for the courses of the priests and the Levites, and for all the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and for all the vessels of service in the house of the LORD. He gave of gold by weight for things of gold, for all instruments of all manner of service; silver also for all instruments of silver by weight, for all instruments of every kind of service: Even the weight for the candlesticks of gold, and for their lamps of gold, by weight for every candlestick, and for the lamps thereof: and for the candlesticks of silver by weight, both for the candlestick, and also for the lamps thereof, according to the use of every candlestick. And by weight he gave gold for the tables of shewbread, for every table; and likewise silver for the tables of silver: Also pure gold for the fleshhooks, and the bowls, and the cups: and for the golden basons he gave gold by weight for every bason; and likewise silver by weight for every bason of silver: And for the altar of incense refined gold by weight; and gold for the pattern of the chariot of the cherubims, that spread out their wings, and covered the ark of the covenant of the LORD. All this, said David, the LORD made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern" (*1Ch 28:11-19*). If it were necessary to make the Tabernacle and Temple according to a divine pattern, then it would seem that the church, which is a habitation of God through the Spirit, should be after a divine pattern.

2. From New Testament Examples. The first New Testament church was the one founded by Christ at Jerusalem. The second was the church at Antioch. Other churches sprang up here and there under missionary endeavor, and all of them were patterned after the church at Jerusalem. These churches had common faith, a common baptism, and a common Lord or Head. Whatever was ordained for one of them was ordained for all. "But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches" (*1Co 7:17*); "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (*1Co 14:33*); "But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God" (*1Co 11:16*). These churches are to serve as patterns for the churches of all time. The faith or body of divinity has been once delivered, and whatever was ordained for the churches of the first century was likewise meant for the churches of the twentieth century. Otherwise the churches of the twentieth century would either be without a Bible, as a rule of faith and practice, or else would have a new Bible. Since God has not and will not give a new Bible the churches of this century must use the Bible long ago given.

**THREE FORMS OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

There are three forms of church government in existence today among the professed followers of Christ. All groups of professing Christians, that is, all denominations may be, generally speaking, classed under these three forms. They are Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Congregational.

1. The Episcopal form is a graded ministry; a system of big "I,s" and little "U,s." Episcopacy recognizes three orders or ranks of ministers, namely, deacons, priests, and bishops.

The Roman Catholic Church is a world church, recognizing the bishop of Rome as supreme head. The Romanist view is based upon the idea that Christ gave to Peter such authority and that the Bishop of Rome (the Pope) is the successor of Peter.

The Episcopal form is also represented in national and provincial churches. This means that the members of the church in any province or nation are bound together in national or provincial organizations, and that this organization has authority over the local groups. This is the form held by: the Episcopal and Methodist denominations

2. The Presbyterian form recognizes two classes of elderspreaching elders and ruling elders. The authority in this form of government is in the "Session" which is composed of the pastor and ruling elders of the local congregation. They transact the business of the church, receiving and dismissing members, etc. An appeal, however, can be made to the Presbytery, and from the Presbytery to the Synod, and from the Synod to the General Assembly.

3. The Congregational or Democratic form of church government is the Scriptural form. This means that each local congregation or assembly is a little democracy under the rule of Christ. "Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing" (*Eph 5:24*). It is independent of every other congregation. From the divine side, the church of Christ is a monarchy with Christ as its Lord and Head (*Eph 5:24*); from its human side it is a democracy, "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren...Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ" (*Mat 23:8*; *Mat 23:10*). An absolute monarchy on its Divine side requires for its complement on the human side and absolute democracy.

**THE DEMOCRATIC FORM OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT PROVED**

1. It may be argued from the very word ekklesia, which was chosen by Christ to designate His churches. The word designates something that can assemble. A world church or a national or a provincial church could not assemble under present conditions. Like the Greek cities, each assembly is independent and therefore complete in itself as to government of itself.

2. The whole matter of discipline, formative and corrective, was committed by Christ through the apostles to each individual church, and not to church officers or to a higher body. *1Co 5:1-13*; "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations" (*Rom 14:1*); "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (*Rom 16:17*); "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (*2Th 3:6*); "And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican" (*Mat 18:17*).

3. It is the duty of the whole church to maintain unity in its faith and practice. "Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits" (*Rom 12:16*); "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (*1Co 1:10*); "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (*Eph 4:3*); "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (*Php 1:27*). A. H. Strong says: "A quiet and peaceful unity is the result of the Holy Spirit's work in the hearts of Christians. New Testament church government proceeds upon the supposition that Christ dwells in all believers. Baptist polity is the best polity for good people. Christ has made no provision for an unregenerate church membership, and for Satanic possession of Christians. It is best that a church in which Christ does not dwell should by dissension, reveals its weakness, and fall to pieces; and any outward organization that conceals inward disintegration, and compels a merely formal union after He has departed, is a hindrance instead of a help to true religion." These are plain words and our hearts should be exercised by them. There is much outward union today, where there is no unity of the Spirit in the faith.

**OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH**

There are only two commissioned officers in a New Testament Church, namely, pastor and deacon. The pastor is also known as bishop, and elder. Bishop, meaning overseer, denotes the duties, and elder, the rank of office. Bishop and elder are equivalent terms. "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre" (*Tit 1:5-7*). When the church is looked at as a flock of sheep, the bishop is called pastor or feeder of the sheep.

The deacons are to be helpers to the pastor. Their official duties consist primarily, if not exclusively, of looking after temporal and material needs of the body, such as feeding the poor, financing the church, etc. The pastor is to be free from temporal and secular matters that he may give himself to that which is exclusively spiritual, prayer and the ministry of the word. He is to teach and, therefore, must give himself to study. He must be "apt to teach". "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach" (*1Ti 3:2*); "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient" (*2Ti 2:24*). In order to have something to teach he must study. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (*2Ti 2:15*). The members must support him with their carnal things. "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things" (*Gal 6:6*); "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?... Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel" ( *1Co 9:11*; *1Co 9:14*).

Deacons ought to be men of spiritual power, for they are to handle the money of the church: "Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre" (*1Ti 3:8*). They are to be sound in the faith, for they are to support the pastor when he preaches the truth. Much criticism of the pastor could be silenced, when he preaches on unpopular doctrines, if the deacons, "holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience" (*1Ti 3:9*) would give their support. Next to the pastor, the deacon need to be learned men in the once delivered faith.

÷03-05 CHURCH HISTORY

What is known and taught as Church History is in reality history of Christianity rather than a history of the church Christ founded and promised perpetuity to. History reveals that the true Church as an institution was represented by local congregations as opposed by a developing and growing hierarchy until the bishop of Rome is made Pope or Supreme Bishop. This hierarchy is made up of the collective body of bishops with the pope as supreme bishop. This hierarchy is independent of the lay members in Roman Catholic churches who are nothing short of spiritual slaves being told what to believe and do. This false church claimed to be the only mediator of grace, and to cut oneself off from it was to lose all hope of salvation. The first general organizations were diocesan (district).

Things became so rotten in Roman Catholicism until some of the members could stand it no longer and being excommunicated became founders of other denominations of Christians. This period began in the reformation under Martin Luther, when Protestantism was born. The Lutheran Church was organized in 1520; the Episcopal (Church of England) began with Henry VIII in 1534; the Presbyterian by John Calvin in 1535; Dutch Reformed separated from Roman Catholicism in 1540; Congregational founded by Robert Brown in 1580; Methodist by John Wesley in 1740; Free Will Baptist by Benjamin Randall in 1780; Disciples of Christ organized by Alexander Campbell in 1827; Mormons by Joseph Smith in 1830; Anti Mission Baptists by Daniel Parker in 1832; Nazarenes by S. F. Breece in 1835; Christian Science by Mary Baker Eddy in 1884.

Now the history of Baptists is altogether a different story. If there has been a New Testament church existing down through the ages it has to be the Baptist Church, since all other groups have a beginning sometime since 1520. Our contention is admitted by others. Alexander Campbell, in his debate with McCalla (Presbyterian) had this to say: "From the apostolic age to the present time the sentiments of Baptists and the practice of baptism has had a continued chain of advocates; and public monuments of their existence in every century can be produced."

John Clark Ridpath (Methodist) wrote to W. A. Jarrell (Baptist) as follows: "I should not readily admit that there was a Baptist Church as far back as A. D. 100, though without doubt there were Baptists then, as all Christians were then Baptists."

In preparing their history, the Dutch Reformed Church, devoted a chapter to the Dutch Baptists. And in this chapter is this statement: "The Baptists may be considered as the only Christian community which has stood since the days of the apostles and as a Christian society which has preserved pure the doctrines of the Gospel through all ages."

**SOME DISTINCTIVE BELIEFS**

1. The New Testament is the only law of Christianity-the sufficient rule of faith and practice. We do not go to the Old Testament for what we believe and practice as a church. This in no wise means that the Old Testament is not true as the word of God. But we do not get our doctrine as a church from the Old Testament. The Church of Christ is a New Testament institution. The Bible and the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants.

2. Individual responsibility. This covers a lot of ground. It does away with proxy religion in baptism, etc. This calls for freedom of conscience and religious liberty. Every person must give account of himself to God. Calls for obedience to God when there is conflict between God's command and human authority. Calls for separation of Church and state. Calls for liberty not toleration. I do not want to be tolerated by the state in religious matters. I want to be left alone, to follow my own conscience. I do not want to have to get any license to preach from any human government. I got a license to marry people because marriage and the home are state institutions, not religious and spiritual.

3. The church is a body of baptized believers, equal in rank and privilege, administering its own affairs under the headship of Christ.

÷03-06 THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM

A. The Subject: Only a believer (born again).   
B. The Mode: Only by immersion.   
C. The Design: Only to symbolize the burial and resurrection of Christ.   
D. The Authority: Only a church of Jesus Christ.   
**A. THE PROPER SUBJECT**

Baptism is only for believers, and believers are saved or justified. "And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (*Act 13:39*); "And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (*Act 16:31*); "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (*Joh 3:16*). "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (*Joh 3:36*); "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (*Rom 5:1*), "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (*Eph 2:8-9*). This excludes unregenerate adults and all infants. A Jesuit Theologian, S. J. Hunter, said: "It is impossible for infant baptism to be discussed directly between a Catholic and a Baptist. They have no common ground. The Baptist urges that the scriptures everywhere teach faith as a prerequisite to baptism. The Catholic defends his practice as to infants by the authority of the Church, which the Baptist refuse to accept." (Outline of Dogmatic Theology Vol. 3, page 222.)

ARGUMENT:

1. To baptize any but believers is to accept Catholic authority rather than Scriptural authority. The Scriptures nowhere command baptism for any but believers. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (*Mat 28:19*); "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (*Act 2:41*); "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (*Act 8:12*); "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized" *Act 18:8*); "Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus" (*Act 19:4*).

2. To baptize infants destroys the privilege of personal obedience to the command to be baptized. There can be no personal obedience on the part of an infant when it is immersed or sprinkled.

3. To baptize infants or unregenerate adults is to merge the church and the world. It is filling the church with the world. Infants have no personal responsibility and are not lost and need no so-called saving rite of baptism.   
4. To baptize any but the saved is to deny that the church should be composed of only lovers of God and of Christ. Think of having enemies of Christ in the church which is His body, and the custodian of His truth. And nobody loves God except the born again believers. "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" (*1Jn 4:7*); "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him" (*1Jn 5:1*). In these two verses the perfect tense should read"has been born of God." Love and faith are results of the new birth from God.

**B. THE PROPER MODE** Baptism is to be by immersion only.

ARGUMENT:

1. From the meaning of the word baptize. Greek scholars are in agreement that the word means to dip, immerse.

2. From the "Church Fathers." Cyril 315-386 A. D. Bishop of Jerusalem: "For as he who sinks down in the waters and is immersed (baptized)...." Basil, Bishop of Caesarea, 370 A. D. "Imitating the burial of Christ by the immersion (baptism)...." Gregory, Bishop of Constantanople, 380 A.D.: "Let us, therefore, be buried with Christ by the immersion (baptism) that we may also rise with Him...."

3. From the admissions of those who do not now immerse. D. Dollinger, a Roman Catholic historian: "At first Christian baptism commonly took place in the Jordan; of course, as the church spread more widely, in private houses also. Like that of St. John, it was by immersion of the whole person, which is the only meaning of the New Testament word. A mere pouring or sprinkling was never thought of." (The First age of Christianity and the church, page 324-325). Mr. Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church, in his comment on *Rom 6:4-5* admits that the reference is to immersion as the primitive mode of baptism. The Catholic Encyclopedia: "The most ancient form usually employed was unquestionably immersion.... In the Latin Church immersion seems to have prevailed until the twelfth century. After that time it was found in some places even as late as the 16th century.." (See The Catholic Encyclopedia, in 15th vol., edited by Charles G. Herberan, Ph.D., LL,D., pages 261, 262). Prof. Marcus Dods, Edenburgh explained baptism as "a rite wherein by immersion of water the participant symbolizes and signalizes his transition from an impure to a pure life, his death to a past he abandons, and his birth to a future he desires."

4. From the practice of the early church. The first instance of baptism by any other mode than immersion was about the middle of the third century. A man named Novatian was ill and was baptized by having water poured around him. The first public (official) authority for sprinkling was given about 811 A.D. by Pope Steven II. Some of the French clergy informed the pope that there were some too sick and some too small to be immersed and asked for permission to sprinkle them. The pope replied, "If such were cases of necessity, and if sprinkling were performed in the Name of the Trinity, it should be valid." At the Council of Ravenna in 1311, the Roman Church decreed: "Baptism is to be administered by triune aspersion (sprinkling, CDC) or immersion."

The Westminster (Presbyterian) Assembly met in 1643 to compose a Confession of Faith. Baptism was hotly discussed; 24 voted to retain immersion; 25 voted for sprinkling or pouring.   
5. From the New Testament metaphor by which baptism is represented. It is called a burial and a resurrection. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (*Rom 6:4*); "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead" (*Col 2:12*).

**C. THE SCRIPTURAL DESIGN**

On this point there are two views of baptism: The sacramental and the symbolic. The sacramental makes baptism a saving sacrament; it is to confer grace. The symbolic declares that grace has already been conferred. One makes baptism essential to regeneration and remission of sins; the other makes it a symbol or figure of what saves, even the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

W. M. Nevins says, "The design in Baptist Churches is not in order to obtain the remission of sins. It is not a means of grace. It is not in order to obtain regeneration. It has nothing to do with our salvation. It is a picture showing forth the gospel: the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, and signifies that the one baptized is dead to the old life of sin and risen to a new life in Christ."

The author states his view of baptism as a symbol in a somewhat different way to most of his brethren. To him it is not a symbol of regeneration but of justification. It symbolizes the believer's death to the guilt and penalty of sin; and the Bible word that denotes this judicial death is justification rather than regeneration. *Rom 6:7* says, "For he that is dead is freed (justified) from sin." This is judicial death and not death in the experimental sense. Regeneration is not the Bible word used to denote death to sin. Regeneration does kill the sinner to the love of sin, but not to the experience of sin. Regeneration is the putting of the divine nature within, but it does not remove the old nature. The new birth makes one more sensitive to sin; it does not kill him to the sense of sin.

**D. THE SCRIPTURAL ADMINISTRATOR OF BAPTISM**

Who is to authorize the believer's baptism? This question reverts back to the question to whom or to what was the commission given? It was given to something, an institution that would be perpetuated until the end of the age. It was spoken to the apostles, not as individuals but as representatives of the church. And so the church is to make disciples, baptize disciples, and teach disciples what God has commanded to be observed or practiced. The believer must be received by the church; he unites with and his baptism must be authorized by the same church.

Only a church of Christ--a Scriptural church can execute the commission to baptize. And so every group of Christians must prove itself to be a Scripturally constituted church before it can Scripturally execute Christ's command.

Until the time of the reformation beginning with Luther, there were widely scattered churches, each a little democracy in contrast to the Roman hierarchy with a human head. These scattered churches were called Anabaptists because they insisted on baptizing all who came to them from the Roman hierarchy. The name Anabaptists was applied to them because they were charged with rebaptizing those who came to them from Rome. They rejected the name and claimed that those they baptized had never been baptized. The early conflict was not over the mode of baptism because the Roman Catholic hierarchy immersed for several centuries. The issue was over the authority to baptize. None but a Scriptural Church has authority to baptize, for the command to baptize was given to the church that would be in existence from the days of Christ to the end of the age. The strongest argument that Baptist Churches represent the institution to whom the commission was given is the witness or testimony of those who are not Baptists.

Mosheim, the Lutheran historian writes: "The true origin of that sect which acquired the name of Anabaptists, by their administering anew the rite of baptism to those who came over to their communion, is hid in the remote depths of antiquity, and is, consequently, extremely difficult to be ascertained." The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge has his to say: "The Baptist's, who were formerly called Anabaptists, and in later times Mednonnites, were the original Waldenses, and have long in the history of the church received the honor of that origin." On this account, the Baptists may be considered the only Christian community which has stood since the apostle's, and which has preserved pure the doctrines of the gospel through all the ages."

Greek word for sprinkling: Rhantizo: *1Pe 1:2* "of the blood of Jesus" *Heb 12:24*; "blood of sprinkling" *Heb 10:22*; "hearts sprinkled... and bodies washed in pure water."

THE DIDACHE: An ancient Christian document, referred to as the "Teaching of the twelve Apostles," written in Greek and dealing with the organization, belief, and worship in the early church. Its date is probably between 120 and 150 A.D. and is thought to have originated in Egypt or Syria. It was found in 1873 in an 11th century manuscript in the Monastery of the Holy Sepulchre in Istanbul.

Composed of two parts: 1. A description of the Two Ways, one of life, the other death, in the form of rules for Christian conduct. 2. Deals with the rites of baptism and Lord's Supper and defines the office and duties of Christian leaders. The Didache; Here for the first time pouring (Greek-ekcneo) is used for baptism (baptizo). We give the translation by Philip Schaff, a Presbyterian: "Now concerning baptism, baptize thus: Having first taught all these things, baptize ye into (eis) the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, in living water, and if thou hast not living water, baptize into other water; and if thou canst not in cold, then in warm (water). But if thou hast neither, pour water thrice upon the head in (eis) the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Analysis: This is actually saying, baptize (immerse) in any kind of water; living, cold or warm, but if this is impossible because lack of sufficient water, then ekcheo (pour) water three times upon the head in the name of Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. It is actually saying if you can't baptize in water then pour water on the head. Here we have the first error in baptism which was in the design resulting in a change in mode. Because it was thought that water had power to regenerate it had to be applied in some way to the individual. It is not known who wrote this ancient document. Baptizo is the Greek word for baptism and is never used for anything but immersion. Ekcheo is never used for baptism.

÷03-07 FOOTWASHING NOT A CHURCH ORDINANCE

SHOULD WE WASH FEET IN THE CHURCH? Many sincere Christians think so. And they point you to the words of Jesus:. "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." (*Joh 13:14-15*).

The writer faced this question early in his ministry, and decided that if the scriptures taught that we should wash feet as a church ordinance, he would urge his church to do so. I make no claim to infallibility or personal perfection, but I am sensitive to the commands of scripture, and have a heavy conscience when I realize that I have ignored any portion of scripture.

A. AFTER A THOROUGH STUDY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, I REACHED THE POSITIVE CONCLUSION THAT JESUS DID NOT COMMAND US TO WASH FEET IN THE CHURCH.

Here is my ARGUMENT:

1. There is no mention of footwashing in any of the church epistles, such as Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, etc. The church epistles were written to regulate the faith and practice of the church. There is ample instruction concerning baptism and the Lord's Supper in the church letters, and one would judge that if footwashing was to be observed as an ordinance, there would be some instruction concerning the when and how it is to be observed.

2. Footwashing was to be practiced in the home and not in the church. The one other place where the washing of feet is mentioned in the New Testament is *1Ti 5:9* "Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man, well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work." The early church took care of its poor, especially the widows. And to guard against abuse there were conditions under which church support was to be given. In writing to the Thessalonians, Paul said they were not to feed the man who is too lazy to work. "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat" (*2Th 3:10*). And so widows were not to be supported unless they had a record of good works, some of which are enumerated, including the washing of saints feet. Any honest reader will admit that the good works mentioned were to be done in the home, and not as a church ordinance.

3. Footwashing was to be an act of humble service. One must get on his knees to wash anothers feet. But no service is rendered when feet are washed at church. The writer used to go with his father (a very godly man whose memory is cherished) to his church on Footwashing Day. And he observed that his father always washed his own feet before leaving the house for church. His feet were not dirty and no service was rendered by the brother who washed his feet. But in olden times when sandals were worn it was a deed of lowly service to wash the feet of a guest.   
If anyone who believes in footwashing as an ordinance to be observed in church, that it is an act of humility to show how humble one is, our reply to that is, that humility is a grace that cannot be paraded, and to attempt to show off humility is spiritual pride; pride of the worst kind.

The writer recalls an incident of many years ago. Bro. Jeff Rogers was a humble country preacher who looked more like a Kentucky colonel, or the proverbial Philadelphia lawyer. Bro. Rogers loved horses and one day as he was riding his favorite steed down the road, he met his neighbor on horseback. They stopped for a friendly chat, and after awhile the conversation was about religion. Finally, the neighbor said, "Bro. Rogers you are not a very humble man, are you?" Bro. Rogers dropped his head and replied, "No, I am not as humble as I ought to be. But I suppose you are a very humble man?" And the neighbor, lifting himself up in the saddle, said, "Yes I am, and I show it!" referring to the fact that he practiced footwashing at church.

4. Footwashing is not needed as a church ordinance. The purpose of the ordinances is to symbolize the gospel: the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Baptism presupposes His death and symbolizes His burial and resurrection. The Lord's Supper symbolizes and proclaims His death at Calvary. Footwashing does not give us a picture of Calvary. Moreover, it is not needed since baptism and the Lord's Supper give us a full picture of the gospel facts: the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

B. THE FOOTWASHING EPISODE EXAMINED AND EXPLAINED

1. The Occasion. We can do no better than to quote from Halley's Bible Handbook. "This was occasioned by their contention among themselves as to which of them were to have the chief offices in the Kingdom. That had been one of their standing problems, "Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest. And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him, And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great" (*Luk 9:46-48*). In spite of Jesus repeated statements that He was going to be crucified, "And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know it. For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day. But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him" (*Mar 9:30-32*), on which they somehow, even to the last, took to be parables. They seemed to think that the Triumphal Entry, five days before, portended that it was about time for Him to erect the throne of a world empire in Jerusalem. Jesus finally had to get down on His hands and knees and wash their feet, the menial service of a slave, to burn into their minds that He had called them to serve, and not to rule."

2. The Conversation. After it became apparent that none of the disciples was going to perform the menial service of washing their feet, Jesus gets up from supper, laid aside His garments, and girded Himself with a towel. "After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel...Then cometh he to Simon Peter; and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." Peter protested this act of humble service and said, "Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." Still ignorant of what Jesus was teaching, Peter goes to the opposite extreme and says, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." Jesus corrects him by saying. "He that is washed (bathed) needeth not save to wash (a different word) his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all" (*Joh 13:5-11*). Here Jesus reminds Peter that when one has had a bath he will not need another bath so soon but will only need to have his feet washed. And then Jesus says that all of them had had a bath save Judas.

It is evident from this dialogue, that Jesus was teaching something more than a lesson in humility. We may think of this episode as an illustrated lecture on spiritual footwashing. When it was over, Jesus returned to the table and "said unto them Know ye what I have done to you?" (Verse 12). They certainly knew that He had done them a menial service, but they did not get the spiritual meaning of what He had done. He then goes on to say, "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (Verses 14-15).

3. Lessons To Be Learned.

a. A lesson On Humility. He set them an example of lowly service to one another. We follow this example when we are willing to render humble service to one another. The writer is reminded of an experience he had several years ago. He was conducting a revival meeting and being entertained in a certain home. One night after he retired, some member of the family came and took his shoes and polished them and returned them. He never found out who did it, but whoever did it was following the example Jesus gave. That was a deed of humble service, for my shoes needed a shine. But there is a deeper lesson than this.

b. A Lesson In Spiritual Cleansing. Peter was going to deny Jesus and would need to be restored before he could have part WITH Christ in blessing to others. It was not a question of salvation but of service. Peter did not lose his salvation, but he lost fellowship with Christ in service. Peter did not get the spiritual meaning of the incident at the time, but Jesus said that he would understand it later. And now we are to see Peter as he gets the deeper meaning.

Our Lord's prediction that Peter would deny Him had come true. "Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice" (*Joh 13:38*). Jesus had been denied by Peter (a saved man), betrayed by Judas (a lost man), and crucified. The disciples had returned to their nets, thinking their cause was lost through the death of their Master. But Jesus is alive and will fulfill His promise to Peter. Jesus had risen from the dead and appeared to the disciples after they had fished all night and caught nothing. Jesus tells them where to cast the net, resulting in a large catch. Then He serves them, giving them bread and fish. Now it was time to wash Peter's feet in the true spiritual sense. Behold how He does it.

"Simon, son of Jonas, lovest (the strong word) thou me more than these? Simon answered He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love (weaker word) thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest (strong word) thou me? Peter replies He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love (weaker word) thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest (Peter's weaker word) thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest (weaker word) thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love (weaker word) thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. (*Joh 21:15-17*).   
And now Peter's feet are washed; he is restored to fellowship with his Lord in service. He now has a part WITH Christ. Peter was no longer a boaster; he had learned that he did not love Christ as he had boasted. But he does stick to his claim to love Jesus a little. And this is all the writer can claim, and like Peter he insists that he loves Jesus a little. His prayer is that he may love Him more, even with a dying love.

Jesus told His disciples to wash one another's feet. This, too, has a double application: physical and spiritual. We should follow His example in stooping to serve our brethren in their physical and material needs. And we should also serve them in spiritual things. In *Gal 6:1* we are told how to do it. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Here we have spiritual footwashing.

If a brother is caught in some sin, it is our duty to restore him. We must wash his feet, provided our own feet are clean. A sinning brother must not be left in his sins. He must not be neglected on the one hand nor dealt with harshly on the other hand. He must be brought to face his sin, repent of and turn from it. He must not be dealt with in a holier than thou spirit, but in meekness, remembering that we, too, might be tempted and fall into sin. There are two difficulties in restoring a sinning brother. It is often difficult to get the sinning brother to acknowledge his wrong doing. It is also difficult to get the one who attempts the restoration to do it in a spirit of humility.

C. THE HISTORY OF FOOTWASHING AS AN ORDINANCE.

It is sincerely believed by many that footing as an ordinance is an ancient practice. History seems to disprove this. ARGUMENT:   
1. From Church History. Dr. E. J. Daniels, Florida evangelist, has searched here and there for information on the custom of footwashing, and found that footwashing was not practiced by any group of Christians prior to the fourth century. He quotes from the fourteenth edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica, and also from Dr. A. H. Newman's Manual of Church History.

2. Confessions of Faith. The Philadelphia Confession (1742) based upon the London Confession (1689) makes no mention of footwashing. Nor do we know of any old confessions of faith that speaks of footwashing as a church ordinance.

The Bible is not much concerned about people's feet in the physical sense. Feet are used in the Bible to represent moral conduct. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly" (*Psa 1:1*). "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord." (*Psa 37:23*). "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (*Rom 10:15*).

There are many dirty feet among God's children, and so few who ever make any effort to wash them. God has made provision for sinning saints, and so we read, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our 9).

÷03-08 THE LORD'S SUPPER

*1Co 11:17-34*

The old covenant religion of the Old Testament was characterized by ritual or ceremonies and the priest was the important person in worship. He offered sacrifices for his own sins and then for the sins of the people. These ceremonies were typical. They found their end and fulfillment in Christ when He offered one sacrifice never to be repeated. This made them of a temporary nature.

The new covenant religion of the New Testament has only two ceremonies or ordinances: baptism and the Lord's Supper. These, are not sacraments of saving efficacy, but symbols of what does save. Together they give us a picture of the whole gospel. Paul defines the, gospel as the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (*1Co 15:3-4*). Baptism is a picture or symbol of the burial and resurrection of Christ and the Lord's Supper sets forth His death. Baptism takes us to the place where Christ was buried and arose again. The Lord's Supper takes us to Calvary where He died for OUR sins. Baptism tells us what we are in Christ; dead to sin and alive unto God through Christ. As a burial, baptism presupposes the believer to be dead and alive. Baptism is for a dead person.   
We have met as a church, to observe the Lord's Supper. We should be as Scriptural as possible; and to do this, we shall ask three questions: 1. What is it? 2. Why should we observe it? 3. How should we observe it?

**A. WHAT IS THE LORD'S SUPPER?**

1. It is a memorial service. It is to be observed in memory of Christ. This implies His absence from us. We never hold a service in remembrance of someone who is still in our midst. Christ is present with us in the Holy Spirit, but not in person. While alive, He instituted the Lord's Supper as a means of remembering Him after He was gone.

2. It is a church ordinance a church act. There is no example of the Lord's Supper being observed by an individual or in a private home by the family. Christ is one bread or loaf and the church that observes the Lord's Supper is one body. At Corinth it was observed individually, or, in groups for gratification of appetite and resulted in some being drunk and others hungry. Paul says tarry one for another-wait until all members are present. Do not make a common meal of it.

Thinking of it as a church ordinance, we might ask; Who is to come to the table? Is it for everybody or are there restrictions? In one sense it is for everybody-nobody is barred. But there are certain steps to be taken in coming to the table.

(l) One must be saved. He must come to Christ before coming to His table.

(2) One must be a baptized believer. Baptism is the initial ordinance to be observed only once; Lord's Supper is the recurring ordinance to be repeated again and again. No differences among denominations on this question. (3) One must be a church member. The believers at Corinth were members of the church there and as such were told to wait for one another.

(4) There must be self examination. We will consider what this is later on.   
**B. WHY SHOULD WE OBSERVE IT?**

Because Christ commanded it. Why did he command it? As a way of helping us remember His death. Paul said: "ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." (*1Co 11:26*) The word for "shew" here is translated "preach" 10 times, "declare", 2 times and "show" 3 times. It is a sort of visual aid-a picture of Christ's death to the eyes.

As a mother might tell her children to meet at her grave to commemorate her sacrificial toll for them, so Christ bids His people to meet to commemorate His dying love for them.

**C. HOW SHOULD WE OBSERVE IT?**   
We are not left in the dark about how to observe the Supper.

1. It must be observed worthily, that is, in a worthy manner. It is not a question of personal worthiness, or else none could come to the Lord's table. It is not to honor ourselves as if we were worthy. It is to honor Him, Who is altogether worthy.

2. Now what is the worthy manner of observing it? There must be the exercise of three faculties: memory, faith, and hope.

1. Memory must work. Memory looks back. We must remember Christ; not father, mother, wife, brother, sister or any other person. We must look back to Christ dying on Calvary. He said, "This do in rememberance of me" (*1Co 11:24*). We must do this to show His death. We are taken to think of Christ as a baby in the manger, or as going about doing good. We are to think of Him as He hung on the cross.

2. Faith must be exercised. What does faith do? It discerns His body. By faith we commune or participate in His broken body and shed blood. We do not have His actual body and blood, but only the emblems of them and we are symbolizing our faith in His death for our salvation. Just as eating is appropriating food for our body, so faith is an act of appropriating the benefits of His death. We symbolically appropriate or eat the emblems of His body and blood and thus declare our faith in what He did for us at Calvary.

3. Hope must be exercised. We show His death till He comes. He is absent now. The Romanist insists that the real body and blood of Christ are in the elements, "That by and at the consecration of the elements they are changed into the real body and blood of Christ; and that it is bread and wine only in appearance." What a travesty of the truth! Paul taught the very opposite. He said, "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (*1Co 11:26*). Paul says we eat of this bread and drink of this cup, emblems of His body and blood.

Communion is a much misunderstood word. We are talking about communing with one another. It is not communing with one another but with Christ. Dr. Bob: "It is a spiritual participation in the blood of Christ which is symbolized by the cup." While He is away we show our faith in His death by eating and drinking the elements that represent His body and blood.

÷03-09 THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

This is an important question and one upon which there is much disagreement. It is a question that needs to be prayerfully studied. I sincerely believe that the churches, generally speaking, in their cooperative work have become sidetracked. And the sidetrack leads into the wilderness of debt and confusion. As a result, the by products of Christianity have become the main thing. I am afraid that we have been seeking prestige with the world rather than power with God.

**A. SOURCES OF INFORMATION.**

1. The Commissions of Christ. Christ told his people what they were to do while He was here. This ought to be of great help in defining our mission in a church capacity. These commissions are of two kinds. One kind is of a temporary character; the other is of perpetual obligation.

1. The temporary commissions.

a. The first commission to the twelve. "But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his 19; 6:7-13; *Luk 9:1-6*. This commission was limited to the Jews. "These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (*Mat 10:5-6*). "It gave miraculous power to heal and to cast out evil spirits. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give" (*Mat 10:8*). It provided for Spirit guidance in speech.

b. The commission to the seventy. *Luk 10:1-24*. The same provisions as in the commission to the twelve. Both were of a temporary nature.

2. The great and perpetual missionary commission to the apostles in church capacity. "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (*Mat 28:16-20*). This is the commission under which the church is to work until the end of the age. It provides for a perpetual church; for a perpetual gospel; for perpetual ordinances; for a perpetual task; and for His perpetual presence.

3. The practice of the early church under the instruction of the apostles.   
**B. THE CHURCH HAS A FIVE POINT PROGRAM.**

1. The Missionary Program. The church is to perpetuate itself by making disciples. There can be no church perpetuity apart from missionary activity. Disciples can only be made by preaching the gospel. Without missionary endeavor churches are limited to a single generation. Disciples are to be made to the end of the age, and the making of disciples guarantees church perpetuity.

2. The Teaching Program. The church is to edify itself. This means the teaching of the Word of God, for it is teaching the disciples to observe all things commanded by Christ. No place for secular education either in the great commission or in the practice or the early church. The church is not responsible for the education of the world, but for the education of the saints in the Word of God.

3. The Ceremonial Program. The church is to guard the ordinances. The preservation of these ordinances in their original purity and simplicity will help to preserve the gospel in its purity. The perversion of the gospel had its beginning in the perversion of the ordinances. When men began to trifle with the ordinances the true gospel was perverted.

4. The Benevolent Program. The church is to care for its poor. The church at Jerusalem took steps to take care of its poor widows. Paul took offerings on the mission field for the poor saints at Jerusalem.

5. The Disciplinary Program. The church is to regulate itself. It is to keep itself pure and chaste by disciplinary measures. Christ gave the church the discipline commission in "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (*Mat 18:18*). Paul commanded the church at Corinth to exclude the man guilty of incest. "But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (*1Co 5:13*). He commanded the church at Thessalonica, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (*2Th 3:6*).

**C. SOME THINGS THE CHURCH HAS NOT BEEN COMMISSIONED TO DO AND FOR WHICH THERE IS NO NEW TESTAMENT PRECEDENT.**

1. It is not the duty of the church as such to reform the world. Christ and the apostles were not reformers in the modern sense of that term. The church is not a world betterment society, but a missionary society with regenerating power. This power is in the preaching of the gospel in power and demonstration of the Spirit.

2. It is not the duty of the church to feed the world. The church is not commanded to look after the material interests of the world. Of course, as individual Christians, we should do good to all men, and relieve suffering wherever we come in contact with it. But to enter into an organized capacity looking to the material welfare of the world is to become sidetracked. No Scriptural command nor example for taking part in indiscriminate relief campaigns, such as are being put on from time to time. Paul took up a collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem. 3. It is not the duty of the church to educate the world. Here is a task beyond the power of the church. To the extent that the church joins in secular education to the same extent she loses her spiritual power. Secular education is an individual and state matter and not a work committed into the hands of the church, which is a spiritual institution. Schools have crippled the missionary program of Baptists as no other one thing has.

4. It is not the duty of the church to furnish lucrative positions for men and women. That is what the Baptists are doing as a denomination. The army of executives and secretaries and statistical and enlistment experts supported by so-called mission money is alarming.

5. It is not the duty of the church to provide entertainment for the world. Much of our organized work is in that direction. The wife of the pastor of one of my previous pastorates was putting on a swimming party for the young people at Disneyland. She told them she could not do it at home, for the former pastor had taught them that it is wrong.

6. It is not the duty of the church as such to build hospitals. This is a by product of Christianity, and may be done by individuals in a purely voluntary capacity, but to make it the program of all the saints is to become sidetracked. This is a work that can be and is being done by men who are not Christians. But the main task of the church is to do that which nobody else can do, namely to preach the gospel of Christ to the uttermost part of the earth.

**÷03-10 THE CHURCH'S PENTECOST**

*Act 1:1-26***;** *Act 2:1-47*

Introduction: Acts is to the gospels what fruit is to the tree. In the gospels we see the corn of wheat falling into the ground and dying; in Acts we see it bringing forth much fruit. In the gospels we see the sufferings of our Lord; in Acts we see the glory that should follow according to "Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (*1Pe 1:11*). In the gospels we see our blessed Savior in His humiliation; in Acts we see Him in His exaltation. In the gospels we see Him on the earth; in Acts we see Him enjoying the fruit of His labors. In the gospels we see Him on a cross; in Acts we see Him on a throne. In the gospels we see Him purchasing the church with His own blood; in Acts we see the church in actual existence, first among the Jews and then among the surrounding Gentiles, sweeping militantly from Jerusalem to Rome. In the gospels we have the worldwide commission from the lips of our Lord; in Acts we have the execution of that mission.

Acts is the historical book of the New Testament. Luke writes as a historian and not as a theologian. We have in Acts the first church of church history. The book of Acts covers about thirty two years and in that time the gospel went from Jerusalem to Rome. Here is ample evidence that the church of Jesus Christ is a missionary institution. The primary business of the church is to witness unto Christ around the world, and the church that is not engaged in that business has no business in the world and is a cumberer of the ground. The church that does not have missions on its heart has the death rattle in its throat.

In *Act 1:1-26*; *Act 2:1-47* we have the church's Pentecost: it is the church endowed with power to witness by receiving the Holy Spirit. NOTICE:

**A. PREPARATION FOR PENTECOST**

1. For ten days the Lord was absent from the church. He had ascended to heaven. The church was helpless upon the earth. The resurrection had been fully proven. All believers believed Christ to be alive and enthroned in heaven.

2. There was a waiting group of one hundred twenty believers in Jerusalem. We know who they were: eleven apostles, the four brothers of Jesus, a number of unnamed women, Mary the mother of Jesus, and others whose names we do not know.

3. Consider the place of meeting. It is usually thought that these one hundred twenty were in the upper room somewhere in the city of Jerusalem. This idea is based upon the fact that when the apostles witnessed the ascension of the Lord to heaven that they returned from Olivet to Jerusalem and "went up into an upper room" (*Act 1:13*). But it is my belief that they were in the temple. Luke closes his gospel with an account of the ascension *Luk 24:5-53*. Then in *Act 2:46* we read: "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." So these Scriptures would indicate that the waiting company was in the temple. It is difficult for us to realize what a huge building the temple of Herod was. Eidersheim says that the temple area would accommodate more than two hundred thousand people. There were many rooms and Solomon's porch with its many colonades furnished many places for gatherings. Christ often preached in the temple and in Solomon's porch where there were many benches where people could rest when there was a recess from the ritual of the day. That is the picture that I see of the ten days waiting. One can hardly see how the one hundred twenty could have been in an upper room and receiving three thousand additions in one day.

4. Next consider what they were doing. There was not much they could do.

(1) They prayed. They could not preach, although surrounded by many thousands of Jews who had come to Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost. They must have been praying for God to send the Holy Spirit He had promised.

(2) They held a business meeting. Peter took the initiative. He quoted Scriptures about Judas and his successor: "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me" (*Psa 41:9*); "Let his days be few; and let another take his office" (*Psa 109:8*). He used these to justify his suggestion that they elect a successor to Judas. Peter then reminded them of the qualifications of an apostle, he must have been with them since the days of John's baptism and also be a witness of the resurrection of Christ. Two qualified men were nominated: Joseph, and Matthias. They chose by lot and the lot fell on Matthias. "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD" (*Pro 16:33*). Morgan thinks all this was out of order and not in the will of God; that Paul was the successor to Judas. I cannot go along with that idea. Paul was not one of the original twelve and did not take the place of Judas. Paul was the special apostle to the Gentiles and was qualified and chosen by Christ at the time of his conversion.

**B. THE PHENOMENA OF PENTECOST**

1. Two physical signs of the Spirits coming, one to the ear and the other to the eye. "Sound from heaven like a rushing mighty wind...and there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire and it sat upon each of them" (*Act 2:2-3*). Symbols of the power of the Holy Spirit. Power like that of wind and speech suggested by tongues were for their witnessing under the influence of the Holy Spirit. And they began to speak in tongues or languages they had never learned by studying, they spake as the Spirit gave utterance. All was a demonstration of the Power of the Holy Spirit.

2. The sensation in the city was great. A great crowd came to the scene and was amazed to see Galileans speak in their tongue. How is it that we hear and understand what is said? How is this to be explained? Some said these men are drunk.

**C. PETER'S EXPLANATION**   
1. Too early to be drunk third hour of the day or 9:00.

2. Peter finds explanation of this phenomena in "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit" (*Joe 2:28-29*). Joel was speaking about the Holy Spirit and this is what you have seen. This is that Holy Spirit of which Joel was prophesying. *Joe 2:28-32*. Peter then quotes *Psa 16:10* where David says, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (Hades) neither will thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." David could not have been speaking of himself, for he is dead and buried and we know where his grave is. He was speaking as a prophet and his prophesy has been fulfilled in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Peter then quotes *Psa 110:1*, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." And so Peter says that all this means that Jesus is alive and has shed forth what you have seen and heard. Peter accuses the Jews of crucifying their Messiah and says that God had raised him from the dead.

You say these men are drunk; I say they are filled with the Holy Spirit. You say Jesus of Nazareth is still dead; I say he is alive, the living Christ is the explanation of what you have seen and heard this day. Peter is now preaching to the throng of unbelieving Jews and he presses his point. He preaches for conviction. He has them on the run and will pursue them relentlessly. He has not said a word of comfort thus far. They must be converted of their sin in putting Christ to death before they are ready for any message of comfort. "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (*Act 2:37*).

They had been convicted of their awful sin; of their awful mistake, they now realized they had crucified the Lord of glory. And their question is: Is there any way out of the trouble we are in? Is there anything we can do about what we have done? And Peter says, yes, there is something you can do about it. You can reverse your attitude, you can change your mind or way of thinking about Jesus. And you can show you have changed your mind or attitude by being baptized.

The verb here for repent is plural; all were told to repent and each one who repented was to be baptized for (eis) the remission of sins. And they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

÷03-11 TESTED IN FELLOWSHIP

*Act 2:42-47***;** *Act 3:1-26***;** *Act 4:1-37***;** *Act 5:1-42*

Introduction: The early church was a fellowship as well as a school. The members continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers.

As a fellowship they had all things common. This was an inspired fellowship, nothing political or legislative about it. It was voluntary and not compulsory. They were so knit together as one soul that they said nothing they had was their own. Those who had property sold it and put the proceeds into a common fund. Nothing was taken from anybody. Out of this common fund distribution was made according to the needs of the members.

This was a voluntary and temporary measure to meet the present emergency. This fellowship was tested. It resulted in tragedy as well as victory. Barnabas sold his property on the island of Cyprus and put the proceeds into this common fund. This large gift was the envy of Ananias and wife Sapphira. They had some property and they wanted honor, but they did not want it to cost them too much. They conferred and agreed to sell the property and keep part of the price, but leave the impression that they were giving all. That seemed innocent, but it wasn't that easy, they had to say out right that what they gave was all it brought. Peter asked the embarrassing question. As Ananias made his offering, Peter asked, "Is that all the land brought?" Then Peter went into action: "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price?" (*Act 5:3*). It was yours. You did not have to sell and when you sold it you did not have to bring all of it or any of it; but you lied unto the Holy Ghost when you planned to leave the wrong impression. Ananias had heart failure and died on the spot. Fear spread through the crowd as young men took his body to the cemetery. Sapphira came in and was asked by Peter the same question: "Did you sell the land for so much, naming the amount they gave?" She said, "Yes, that was the price." Then Peter brought the indictment and made the announcement that the young men were coming for her body. She was so frightened that she dropped dead at his feet, and the young men made another trip to the cemetery and buried her by the side of her husband.

All this checked the rush to join the church, but it also resulted in more believers being added to the Lord. The people magnified them. The church had the respect and confidence of the people. They brought their sick into the streets in the hope that the shadow of Peter might fall on them. They were having a great time in their healing services.

But all this aroused the ire of the Sadducees. The high priest and other members of his party had the apostles arrested and jailed. But the angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and sent them back into the temple to preach Jesus. They got there early next morning. The high priest called the Sanhedrin court into session and sent officers for the prisoners. The officers came and found they were not in prison and went back with this report. We found the prison shut and guards at their places, but no prisoners inside. This threw the court into a panic and they could see no way to stop the movement. While they were expressing their fears, a reporter came and said "Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people" (*Act 5:25*).

The temple police went and brought the apostles without violence for they feared the people. The prisoners were placed before the council and questioned. The high priest asked them if they had not been charged not to teach in the name of Jesus. Peter replied, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (*Act 5:29*). They preached Jesus to the court and charged them with murder of Jesus whom God raised up. The court was cut to the heart and took counsel to slay them. They were saved temporarily by Gamaliel, a pharisee who was a member of the court. He offered wordly wisdom.

**ZEALOUS IN WITNESSING**   
*Act 6:1* thru 8:40

This section begins with a crisis resulting from the community of goods. There were two social classes in the church: The home-born Jews and the foreign-born Jews who were called Grecians or Hellensist. They spoke the Greek language and were not so narrow as the Jerusalem Jews. The Grecians had a complaint. They murmured that their widows were not getting their share in the daily ministration.

The twelve called a meeting of the church and had full discussion of the matter. They neither confessed nor denied the charge. But they said, We need a division of labor. It doesn't make sense for us to serve tables, minister to the poor; our job is to minister the word and pray. "Look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business...And the saying pleased the whole multitude and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, Prochorus and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:" (*Act 6:3*; *Act 6:5*). Apostles have set an example for preachers of all ages.

Two of these men whom we think of as deacons soon became prominent, not in serving tables, but in witnessing. Stephen became a martyr and Philip a foreign missionary.

Stephen did great wonders and miracles. He was soon opposed by the members of a certain synagogue to which he also probably belonged. They were not able to meet him in debate. He was too much for them. They got somebody to accuse him of blaspheming Moses and God. So they brought him into court and had false witnesses who said they had heard him continually blaspheme against the temple and the law. "We have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us" (*Act 6:14*).

But as the court looked at Stephen they saw a face that looked like an angel. The high priest asked Stephen if he wished to plead guilty or innocent. Stephen reviewed Hebrew history, shot through and through with instances of sin and failure on the part of their fathers. When he comes to Solomon who built the temple, he says, "Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (*Act 7:48*). Then he bursts forth with an awful indictment: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost," etc. (*Act 7:51*).

This cut them to the heart and they gnashed on him with their teeth. They had heard the charge of murder once too many times. He saw the heavens opened and Jesus standing on the right hand of God and he told them what he saw. They screamed at him and stopped their ears and ran upon him. They stoned him, but he went down praying. We are here introduced to a new character in Acts: Saul of Tarsus. He held the clothes of these who stoned Stephen and consented to his death. This young man took the lead in this awful persecution against the church. He will be heard from later.

The church was scattered. Everybody had to leave Jerusalem except the apostles. A deacon by the name of Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. He had a good hearing and a big revival. When the apostles hear about Philip's big meeting at Samaria, they send Peter and John. When they came they laid hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost.

÷03-12 THE EARLY CHURCH TESTED IN FELLOWSHIP

*Act 4:32-37***;** *Act 5:1-14*

In our studies in the book of Acts we have seen the early church tested by persecution. This test was met by prayer. When the apostles were warned not to talk or teach about Jesus Christ, the church prayed for boldness to be better witnesses. And when they had prayed the place where they were assembled was shaken and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spake the word boldly. Before opposition they stood firm.

But they were to face another test, a test within the fellowshipthe test of stewardship. The new problem was that of poverty within the church. And it is wonderful to read how they met this problem: "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; But they had all things common" (*Act 4:32*).

This spirit-filled church was also spirit-taught. They recognized the principles of stewardship. Stewardship implies ownership without possession and also possession without ownership. God owns all while men possess all of this material world.

This recognition of the principles of stewardship led the church to meet the problem of poverty within the fellowship. The early church was full of poor people, especially poor widows whose husbands had forsaken them because of their faith in Jesus Christ. What will become of these poor people? This spirit filled church will find an answer to the problem. And so we read that they had all things common. That is, they created a common fund from which to take care of the needy. This was a voluntary matter; there was no coercion; nothing was taken from anybody. It was not the result of legislation but from a spirit of compassion.

The church did not vote for all members to sell what they had and put the proceeds in a common fund. What each member had was given voluntarily, and the Holy Spirit guided so as need arose there was money in the common fund to meet it. It was not done all at once so that nobody owned anything from that point on. It was not done to make all members equal, but for actual need. The principle of private ownership was retained else there could be no stewardship. As the Spirit led the members sold their property and put the proceeds into the hands of the apostles to be administered where there was need. The tenses of the verbs in the account indicate that it was an occasional course of action and not a once for all act.

An example of what was being done is given us. A man named Joseph, better known as Barnabas, a Levite, of the country of Cyprus, having land sold it and brought the money to the apostles to be used for relief of the poor.

Now over against this true exhibition of the spirit of Christian stewardship they have an effort to play a double role. A man named Ananias and his wife wanted the credit for a generosity they were not willing to practice. They too, sold some land and divided the money, secretly laying a part of it aside, while pretending to give it all.

Ananias came alone and handed money to the apostles. Peter discerned his deceit and hypocracy and charged him with lying to the Holy Spirit. Ananias had dealt falsely not with men but with God. Peter goes on to say in effect, that he did not have to do this. You did not have to sell the land and when you sold it you did not have to give it. It was in thy power to use it as you pleased. Your sin is in trying to deceive the Holy Spirit.

When Peter got through Ananias dropped dead and fear filled the hearts of all who heard it. The two young men gave him a speedy burial. Peter pronounced no judgment; his death was a direct act of the Holy Spirit.

Three hours later, Sapphira his wife, not knowing of what had happened to her husband, came in to where the apostles were. Peter inquired about the price they got for the land, mentioning the amount Ananias had given. Sapphira said, Yes, that was what we got for it. Peter himself must have been shocked when he said to her, "How is it that ye agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those which have buried thy husband are at the door and shall carry thee out" (*Act 5:9*). And instantly she dropped dead and the same young men coming in found her dead and buried her by the side of her husband.

Look at the effect of all this!

1. Great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard what had happened. One translation reads, "The whole church was appalled, great awe and strange terror and dread seized them and all others who heard of these things."

2. "And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people" (*Act 5:12*). The gospel grew and miracles of healing increased after the leaven had been purged out.

3. And unbelievers were afraid to join the church.

÷03-13 THE FIRST PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH:

*Act 3:1-26***;** *Act 4:1-37*

It is interesting to recall what Christ said to His disciples to prepare them for what they were to face after He left them. *Joh 14:1-31*; "But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues" (*Mat 10:17*); "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever...But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (*Joh 14:16*; *Joh 14:26*); "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service...Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you" (*Joh 16:2*; *Joh 16:7*). To be forewarned is to be forearmed.

The infant church was not to be popular and at ease very long. "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (*Act 2:46-47*). The first persecution after Pentecost is recorded in *Act 3:1-26*; *Act 4:1-37*. Consider:

1. The Occasion: healing of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate.

2. The Cause: Peter's sermon. He explains the miracle. Negatively: Why marvel at what you have witnessed? It was not done by us, not by our power or piety we deserve no credit or glory.

Postively: God has done this to glorify His servant Jesus whom ye denied and delivered up to death when Pilate wanted to release Him. "But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;

And killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses." (*Act 3:14-15*).

Peter says "that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers" (*Act 3:17*). They had without knowing it fulfilled what God had said through all the prophets. Paul: "If they had known it the princes of this world would not have crucified the Lord of Glory." Ignorance did not excuse them, for Peter calls upon them to repent and be converted that their sins might be blotted out, and that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.

Now this sermon by Peter arouses the anger of the Sadducees, "And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead" (*Act 4:1-2*).

3. The Source of Persecution: religious leaders or the Sadducees. The first persecutors of the church were religious people, Sadducees and the Pharisees. The Roman government tolerated all religions and licensed them. When they conquered a country they would allow the people of that country to practice their religion. And so the Jews were permitted to practice their religion. But when the Romans discovered that the Christians were distinct from the Jews, here was a religion that was not licensed and it became a target for persecution from the state.

Most persecution of the people of God has been in the name of religion. One might recall the massacre of the Hugenots of France on St. Bartholomew, August 24, 1572. Bartholomew was one of the twelve apostles but in the New Testament there is nothing said of him other than that he was one of the apostles. But according to ancient and unreliable tradition, he was a missionary to many countries. The Roman Catholics have made a saint of him and named a day in his honor. Now in the 16th century there was a long war between the French Protestants and Roman Catholics. Charles IX was King of France and after making a treaty with the Hugenots and when they felt safe to practice their religion, they were massacred in great numbers on August 24,1572. The Roman Catholics deny that they were responsible for this wholesale murder, but Gregory XIII who was Pope at that time celebrated the event with a big bonfire and had a medal struck to commemorate the event.

And one might recall the persecutions of the Baptists in early colonial days when the Church of England was the state church in Virginia and Massachusetts and other colonies. One day some Baptist preachers were hailed into court for preaching without Episcopal license. Patrick Henry heard about the trial and hurried to the place where they were being tried. He hurried to the clerk and asked for the paper of indictment. In a very dramatic way he held the paper aloft and said something like this: "What are these men being tried for? This paper says for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. Are there no thieves around here to be hailed into court? Have all the murderers been apprehended, that you must try men for preaching the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ?"

And so the Roman Catholics are not the only people who have engaged in religious persecution. One might recall the suffering of John Bunyan, who lay in Bedford jail twelve years for preaching without a license in England. Many times Bunyan was offered his liberty if he would quit preaching. But every time he would say, "Let me out today and I will preach tomorrow."

And so the apostles when ordered not to teach or preach any more in the name of Jesus, simply replied, "What do you think we ought to do obey God or men?"

÷03-14 DESPISE YE THE CHURCH OF GOD?

*Rom 12:4*; *1Co 12:12*; *Eph 1:15-23*; *Col 1:18-24*

Introduction: Just as there is no man with whom we can compare Jesus Christ; so there is no institution with which we can compare the church of Christ.

We have in these passages a definition of what the church is, the relation of its members to one another, and its function in the world. The church is called Christ's body, and He is called the head. It is His executive body to execute His will in the earth. The church has both executive and judicial powers but no legislative powers. The laws of the church are already made; they are here in the New Testament. This is the church's lawbook. The church is accepting Christ's headship when it works and behaves according to this book.

The church is compared to a human body. "Many members but one body" (*1Co 12:20*). Every member is necessary. "Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary" (*1Co 12:22*). It is a divinely constituted body. "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him." (*1Co 12:18*). "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." (*Act 2:47*). The saved were added to the church daily. Nobody was in the church but the saved and all the saved were in the church. If lost people get in the church, who is responsible for their staying in the church? The church is responsible.

In its functioning the church is:

1. A witnessing body. It perpetuates itself through mission work by telling others about Christ. By witnessing to the lost it builds itself up. Witnessing is every member's duty and privilege. A heavenly and earthly ministry. To angels as well as men. "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God" (*Eph 3:10*). "For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered" (*1Co 11:6*).

2. A disciplinary body. Under the head it has judicial authority over its members. Anything but a mob has disciplinary power over its members. Take any kind of organization it must have powers of discipline over its members. I have been excluded from three fraternal bodies-three lodges. "But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (*1Co 5:13*). "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (*2Th 3:6*).

IN THE CHURCH (***Eph 3:21***)

Introduction: We saw this morning that the church is called the body of Christ. To show the relation to Himself and to one another the church is compared to a human body. If all members of Christ's church were as interested in one another as the members of the human body are interested in one another, we would have a different situation here and everywhere. When one member suffers all members suffer with it. That's true of the human body. The toe ache or toothache makes one feel bad all over. The human body does not have to have something wrong with all its members for the man to be sick. He may have a bad heart; he is a sick man. The church is sick when one or more members is sick spiritually. Do you suffer when you see one of our members sin against Christ and the church? Do you try to do anything about it? Don't tell me it is none of your business what other members do? None of your business if he quits coming to the assembly? None of your business whether he orders his speech and life aright or not? None of your business whether he honors the Lord with his substance or not?

Our text says to Him "be glory in the church". You cannot glorify Jesus Christ and ignore His church. All the good we do must be done as a member of His body, the church, if we get any reward for it.

Are you in the church? How does one get in the church? The only way is through public profession of faith in baptism. A person is saved by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ and then makes public profession in baptism. Nobody is in the church except baptized people. And nobody but a baptized person can glorify God.

When is a person in the church? He is in the church from the time he is baptized until he dies or is excluded from the church. Of course membership may be transferred from one body of Christ to another. We are in the church seven days in the week. All we do we do as members of the church whether we are conscious of it or not. I am told the KluKlux had an arrangement for preachers so that if they were asked if they were members of the KluKlux could say that they were not and this automatically excluded them for the time being. But we do not get out of the church that easy. The church does not come into existence only when it meets for worship; it is in existence as long as its members are in existence and trying to give glory to Jesus Christ. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (*Mat 28:20*).

÷03-15 THE CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST

*Rom 12:4-5*; *1Co 12:14-27* Text: *1Co 12:27* "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

The word church in our English Bible is a translation of the Greek word ekklesia. This word literally means, what is called "out". It comes from a compound word-ek which means out; and kaleo, to call. A better translation of ekklesia would be assembly since it is applied to people who are called out to form an assembly.

In the Greek New Testament ekklesia occurs 115 times. It is translated church 112 times and assembly 3 times in the King James version. The word church has a religious connotation, but the word ekklesia itself has no religious meaning. And that is why ekklesia is translated assembly 3 times in *Act 19:1-41*. Here it is used of the Greek political assembly and also of the unlawful assembly or mob gathered against Paul and his companions. At Ephesus, Paul had preached against idolatry, saying there were no gods made with hands. This preaching was hurting the business of those who made little images of the temple of the goddess Diana. Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen raised a mob against Paul. After a great uproar and much confusion the town clerk finally restored order and then dismissed the ekklesia or mob. He tells the complainants that they should have brought their case before the lawful ekklesia or assembly, which was the Greek court. If our translators had uniformly translated ekklesia they would not have had to change from church to assembly, but would have used assembly in every instance.

Jesus was not coining a new word when He said to Peter, "Upon this rock I will build my" (*Mat 16:18*) ekklesia. He used a word familiar to both Greek and Jew. The Greeks had their ekklesia, which was an assembly of citizens of a free city called out to transact public business. The Jews had their religious ekklesia or synagogue. And so Christ distinguished between His ekklesia and others by using the pronoun MY. He was saying in effect, I am going to have MY ekklesia which will be different from the ekklesias you are familiar with.

The word ekklesia (translated church 112 times and assembly 3 times) occurs only 2 times in the gospels. In *Mat 16:18* when Jesus says "I will build my" ekklesia. He uses the word in the abstract and institutional sense without particularizing or locating it. Just as we might speak of the American home, or the American boy, or the American bride, without referring to any particular home or boy or bride. In *Mat 18:17* Christ used the word ekklesia the concrete sense of an actual assembly to which one might tell his grievances. And so when Christ's ekklesia as an institution takes on concrete form and becomes operational it is an actual assembly of His followers in organized capacity.

Whenever you find the American boy, or home, or bride, it is a boy or home or bride. And so when you find the body of Christ on earth it is always a body of Christ, that is, a local assembly. That is why Paul called the church at Corinth a body of Christ, a body with many members.

There is more and more being said today about "One church in one world." This means one big church made up of churches of all denominations. But such a thing is utterly foreign to Scripture, so far as Christ's church or assembly is concerned. Such an idea is retrogression and not progress. It reverses the missionary program. In the early days Christ's church as an institution found expression in one church, the church at Jerusalem. Under persecution the members of this church were scattered. They went everywhere preaching the word and wherever disciples were made a church was organized. And some years later we read of the churches of Judea. When the church at Antioch sent out Paul and Barnabas as missionaries, we soon read about churches of Galatia and other provinces.

If and when we have one church in one world, who is to be the head of this one big church? Will the head be Christ or AntiChrist? I venture the prediction that it will be a man living in a big house in the city of Rome. Let no Protestant ever suppose that the Roman system of a graded ministry with the supremacy of the pope will ever be relinquished or compromised.

We usually think and speak of the church as a witnessing body of

believers with a worldwide commission to preach the gospel to every creature. The church is to be interested in lost humanity throughout the world. Missions are essential to the perpetuity of the church and the church that does not have missions on its heart has the death rattle in its throat. Stop the missionary program and the church will soon become a relic of the past. If new members are not added by missionary endeavour the gates of hades the unseen realm of the dead will soon swallow up the church. And so Jesus Christ implied missions when He said the gates of hades would not prevail against the church. We are rightly urged to lift up our eyes and look on fields white unto harvest. But in this message we shall turn our eyes inward to see what Christ intended the church to do with respect to its own members. And now let us think of our church as a body of Christ and apply scriptural principles in the ministry to our own members.

1. We are one body, but many members. No member of the human body is the whole body and no member of our church is the whole church. And no member is the head for Christ is the head and master. He made this plain when he said, "One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren" (*Mat 23:8*). Headship belongs only to Christ and this means authority. Our pastor is our leader but not our master. Paul made the same point when he wrote, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (*2Co 4:5*). And Peter writes that the elders or pastors must not lord over God's heritage. Dr. Eades used to say that the pastor had three duties when acting as a shepherd. He is to feed the sheep, fleece the sheep, and flog the sheep. And all these things were to be done by preaching the word. The pastor is not a man with a big stick; he is a man with a big book. Dr. Pettie preached to his church on the subject of money. One of his men who did not like to be fleeched said to him after the sermon, that he ought to fleece the sheep. The doctor said, "Well, I believe in feeding the sheep and I have tried in my sermons to feed the sheep, but I also believe a well fed sheep ought to be of some value in wool and mutton. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (*2Ti 3:16*). "An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law" (*Rom 2:20*).

2. All our members are on the same footing so far as salvation is concerned. All the saved have been born of the same Holy Spirit, redeemed by the same blood, and have a right to membership in the same body of Christ. One Sunday morning in our capital city, Charles Evans Hughes and a Chinese laundry girl walked the same aisle to join a Baptist Church. In receiving them the pastor remarked that the ground is level at the cross. In *Gal 3:28*, Paul says "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

3. All members are not equal in talent and importance, but all are important and are needed. In the human body the members which seem to be more feeble are nevertheless necessary. And those parts we think to be less honorable are treated with greater honor. And so it should be in the body of Christ. And now let us consider some of the weaker members and some of the less honorable members of the body of Christ to see how they are to be treated.

(1) Some of our members are shutins; they are too feeble to assemble with us. But they are needed and we should make them feel that they are wanted. Our sick and helpless and sorrowing people furnish us a field for sympathetic and loving service. They are a challenge to us to demonstrate the spirit of Christian sympathy and compassion. The spring of compassion would soon dry up if we did not have the poor and weak and helpless with us and among us. Paul says that we are "distributing to the necessity of the saints; given to hospitality." (*Rom 12:13*). I want to commend all our members who minister to the poor and sick and sorrowing. And I want to thank all of you who have been so helpful to me and mine in our recent infirmities.

(2) There is hardly any doubt that we have some members who are in a backslidden condition. They are out of fellowship with Christ and the church and have lost the joy of salvation. We should not rejoice in their backsliding, but we should see in them an opportunity to demonstrate the Christian spirit. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (*Gal 6:1*).

(3) And we have some members who are of an ugly and contentious spirit and hard to live and work with. But all such who are saved are entitled to membership. They give us the opportunity to demonstrate the Christian spirit in dealing with our enemies.

Paul says, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink, for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." (*Rom 12:20-21*). I expect most of us throw away many opportunities to demonstrate the Christian religion at this point. We think we are wiser than God and that to get even with an enemy is better than loving him.

Back in October last year I had a paragraph in the church bulletin dealing with the patience a pastor must have. I quoted a pastor in Florida who said that when he learned that one of his members did not like him, he would determine to win that man by loving him and showing him special kindness. I was also told of a man who made this confession. He said something like this: "Our minister had one trait which you do not often find anywhere. He never seemed to remember an injury. I was prejudiced against him when he came to us and often spoke disparagingly of him and sometimes even bitterly. And I knew he was informed of it all. But he always treated me as though I were his best friend. It breaks my heart now to think of it and if I ever meet him in heaven, I will throw my arms around his neck and beg his forgiveness." The comment I made on this was that we cannot do in heaven what we should have done on earth.

A few days after the bulletin was mailed out, I received a letter from a pastor in another part of the state. In this letter he said in part: "Several weeks ago I began reading your paragraph on the qualities a pastor should possess. I have received a challenge from each of them, but I am writing this letter to thank you especially for the one this past week. It helped me to make a decision that kept me from making a mistake." He went on to tell of a certain man in his church who had been very ugly and mean towards him and he was about to lose all patience with him. After praying much Saturday night, I came to the study Sunday morning and found the Madisonville Bulletin open on my desk. I began to read your paragraph and took it as a message from God. And with His help I shall try again to win this man. "Doing nothing for others is the undoing of ourselves."

"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will (*2Ti 2:24-26*). "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (*Eph 4:32*).

"Is thy cruise of comfort failing? Rise and share it with a friend And through all the years of famine It shall serve thee to the end.

Love divine will fill thy storehouse, Or thy handful still renew;   
Scanty fare for one will often Make a royal feast for two.

For the heart grows rich in giving; All its wealth is living grain;   
Seeds which mildew in the garner Scattered, fill with gold.

Is thy burden hard and heavy? Do thy steps drag wearily? Help to lift thy brother's burden God will bear both it and thee.

Lost and weary on the mountains, Wouldest thou sleep amidst the snow? Chafe that frozen form beside thee, And together both will glow.

Art thou wounded in life's battle? Many stricken round thee moan. Give to them thy precious ointment, And that balm shall heel thine own."

÷03-16 GOD'S SPIRITUAL HOUSE

*1Pe 2:5*

Introduction: The church is spoken of under many metaphors or figures. It is compared to many familiar things. It is compared to the human body (*1Co 12:27*); a farm (*1Co 3:9*); a flock (*1Pe 5:2*) and a building or house (*1Co 3:9*; *1Pe 2:5*).

The church is also considered in a present and a future aspect. In its present aspect it is an institution finding concrete expression in each local assembly, as the church at Corinth, Ephesus, etc. In its future aspect it will be one big church called "the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven" (*Heb 12:23*). These two aspects must not be confused. The local assemblies are temporary; the general assembly will be eternal. The local assembly may have lost people in it. The general assembly will have only born again people in it. The local assembly is present; the general assembly is future.

Every local assembly is a miniature of the great assembly which will meet in heaven where the congregation will never break up but will serve Him day and night forever.

When Christ said He would build His church, I believe He had in mind both the present and future aspects of the church: the church as an institution finding concrete expression in the temporary and local assembly, and the church of the future which will be made up of all the saved. There will be a time when all the saints will be in one big, visible church or assembly.

**THE BUILDING OF THE CHURCH**   
The church is said to be built. It does not build itself. "I will build my church" (*Mat 16:18*).

There are always three parties to consider when you think of building a house; the architect, the contractor, and the occupant. So in thinking of the church as a spiritual house we will follow the work of the architect, the contractor, and the inhabitant. The house is for somebody to live in.

*A. THE ARCHITECT.*

1. The architect designs the building. He makes the plans or blueprints. The plan of the house is in the mind of the architect and he draws the plan or pattern for the contractor to go by. He shows the size or dimension of the building and where every piece of material is to go.

2. The architect prepares the specifications, showing the kind and quality of materials to be used. Nothing is left to chance or to the whims of the workmen. Moses was God's contractor in building the tabernacle and he was warned to build it according to the pattern shown him in the mount.

3. God is the architect of His own house, "whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (*Heb 3:6*). God made the plans and specifications back in eternity. Everything about His house was determined and settled upon. He determined the size and the material. He determined the number of stones that should go into His house, when they should be put in, and where they should come from.

When the architect draws plans for a building, the material for that building may be scattered over a large area. The lumber may still be in the forest, the stone may still be in the quarry, and the brick and mortar may still be in the soil. The stones for God's spiritual house are human beings and they lay in the quarry of human nature, a shapeless mass without life or form or beauty.

*B. THE CONTRACTOR.*

Just as there is a divine architect there is also a divine builder. *Mat 16:18*. Christ is the builder of His church. He employs human workmen, but the power is His. When Zerubbabel was commissioned to rebuild the ancient temple at Jerusalem, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (*Zec 4:6*). So the church of Christ is built by divine power.

*C. THE BUILDING.*

1. ITS NATURE. It is a spiritual house. It is not made of wood or brick or literal stones. It is built of men who have had a spiritual birth. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house" (*1Pe 2:5*).

2. ITS FOUNDATION. It has a personal and a doctrinal foundation. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (*1Co 3:11*). Christ is the foundation of our hope and faith.

The doctrinal foundation is laid by the apostles and prophets. And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (*Eph 2:20*). They laid the foundation for our faith by preaching the gospel to us. We have their ministry in the New Testament.

In the foundation, Christ is said to be the chief cornerstone. A cornerstone is to hold two walls together. You cannot have a building without a cornerstone. A building is not just a lot of walls placed indiscriminately here and there. The walls must be tied together that which ties them together is the cornerstone. These two walls may be thought of as Jew and Gentile or as bond and free, or as male and female, or as rich and poor (*Gal 3:28*).

3. ITS STRUCTURE OR THE WAY IT IS BUILT

(1) These stones come to Christ. To whom coming, as to a living stone. This is not a physical coming, it is a heart and mental approach to Christ. In coming the sinner leaves himself, that is, he ceases to hope in himself. Before I was saved I depended upon what I had done or expected to do for salvation; now I depend upon what Christ has already done, when he died "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (*1Pe 3:18*).

(2) These stones come by being drawn to Him. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (*Joh 12:32*); "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day" (*Joh 6:44*). This drawing is by the Holy Spirit who is sent both by the Father and Son.

(3) The outward means of drawing is by the Gospel. The gospel is dynamite in the hands of the Spirit. With the Gospel the Holy Spirit blasts these dead stones from the quarry of nature, to shape and polish and fit them for a place in the temple of God. These stones have a heart and mind and will, and all are exercised in coming to Christ.

*D. THE OCCUPANT.*

Who is to live in this house. "In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (*Eph 2:22*). God is a Spirit and builds himself a spiritual house in which to live. "The most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (*Act 7:48*); "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" ( *1Co 6:19*).

The tabernacle built by Moses and the temple of Solomon were typical of the church. As soon as they were finished, the shekinah glory, the symbol of God's presence, took up its abode in these buildings. "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle" (*Exo 40:34*); "And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD" (*1Ki 8:10*); "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (*1Pe 2:5*).

Conclusion: This present world and its order of things is to the church what the scaffolding is to the building. When the building is completed the scaffolding is taken down. When the church of Christ is completed when all the living stones are placed in this spiritual house, the present order of things will be torn down and taken away, and God shall dwell among His people. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea" (*Rev 21:1*).

÷03-17 THE IDEAL CHURCH

Introduction: Webster: "An ideal is a standard of perfection; a perfect type, whether a reality or a conception only." "There will always be a wide interval between practical and ideal excellence." But for church and individual Christians this interval need not be as wide as it too often is. The ideal is a goal to be striven for-something every member should make the largest contribution possible towards.

What are the characteristics of the ideal church? What are its leading features? What will be the outstanding things about it?

A. It will be a church of the open Book. The Bible will be its law book and guide book. If I might choose a symbol for our church it will be the open Bible. The church of the open Book will be a place where the wicked will be warned; the lost may find salvation; the new born child of God may find food; the student of the word may get lessons in the deep things of God; the sorrowing may find comfort.

Sir Walter Scott: "Bring me the Book." "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" (*Col 3:16*).

B. It will be a church of the opened heart. It will be a church of brotherly love. Love may be defined as a sort of instinct planted by God in the new birth. "Beloved, let us love another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" (*1Jn 4:7*); "Ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another" (*1Th 4:9*). Brotherly love will be manifested, 1. In hospitality; 2. In sympathy.

It used to be said of Christians by men of the world; "Behold, how they love one another."

The church of the opened heart will be a praying church. Prayer is another spiritual instinct planted in regeneration. When Ananias was told to go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and call for Saul of Tarsus, erstwhile enemy of the saints, it was said to Ananias "For behold, he prayeth" (*Act 9:11*). No need to fear a praying man.

The morning congregation reveals how popular the church is: the evening, how popular the pastor is, and the prayer meeting how popular the Lord is.

C. It will be a church of the opened purse. The church of Jesus Christ has been greatly cheapened in the eyes of the world by lack of a spirit of giving on the part of its members. The church has the biggest task of any other institution on earth; it is a globe encircling task and a time long task.

There is more in the Bible about giving than any other subject. Nearly all our Lord's parables are related to money. The tithe did not originate with Moses, but it was incorporated in the laws given by Moses to redeem Israel.

In the Old Testament "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase" (*Pro 3:9*). In the New Testament, "Let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him" (*1Co 16:2*).

In *Heb 7:8*, we read that under the Levitical economy that the priests who die received tithes, but that now the priest who ever liveth receives them.   
Paul tells us, "I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (*Act 20:35*). This is called the commandment nobody believes. A man once said: "giving is good enough for me."

I'm not a gold digger, but I do mean to do my best to cultivate a spirit of giving in this church. My method will be to give you the word of God and pray that it might develop you in the grace of giving.

÷03-18 THE PURPOSE OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Why join a church of Christ? What is the church of Christ for? What is its mission in the world? These are elementary questions, but they need to be asked. Let each one of us here today check and double check himself by asking this question. As I go over the list of our members, I often wonder why such and such a person ever joined the church. It is to be feared that many join the church from a motive that is entirely unscriptural, and even sinful.

Negatively:

1. Not in order to be saved. I expect this motive heads the list of wrong motives in joining the church. The lost man persists in feeling that he has a better chance of being saved if he is in the church. But the very opposite is true. Church membership is dangerous for a lost man because: 1. It gives him a false hope. 2. It adds to his condemnation.

2. Not for business reasons. I will not say much about this motive because I think it does not apply to many if any of our members. Our church is so unpopular with the world that I think some stay out for business reasons. What makes a church unpopular? The truth.

3. Not for social reasons. I do not think this motive is very prevalent among our members. Have you ever realized that Christianity is largely split up into social groups. True even of individual churches. Old men's class, young men's class, young married women's class, young business women's class, etc. Then there are family groups, groups according to wealth, etc.

4. Not to be petted. Some want to go where the folks are the nicest to them. The only heaven some people want or will ever have is a place where they are the center of attraction. I think I have known people who have left one church and joined another for no other reason than that their own church did not seem to give them the attention they felt they should have. Instead of assuming their obligation to help the church show its attention to visitors and strangers, they wanted to be treated like a visitor. As a member of this church, I must not expect attention to be shown me; I must help the other members show attention to visitors.

Positively:

1. To help preach the truth. "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (*1Ti 3:15*). "We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow helpers to the truth" (*3Jn 1:8*). The church is a base of supplies for the truth. It is a great spiritual commissary where the bread of life is dispensed. That is my vision for this church that our ministry may be enlarged and that the truth may go from us by word of mouth, beginning right here at this pulpit and reaching every spot where we have a member, that it may go from us by our written ministry beginning here in our community and reaching to all parts of the earth.

2. To let our light shine. Every saved person has some light, spiritual light. Light and darkness: day and night, are Scriptural symbols of truth and error; good and evil. Lost people are called children of darkness; saved are called children of light and of the day. "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of the light" (*Eph 5:8*); "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (*Eph 5:11*).

Now a candlestick is the place for a light. "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (*Mat 5:14-16*). And the spiritual candlestick for spiritual light is the church. "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches" (*Rev 1:20*).

3. To evangelize the world. To evangelize means to gospelize. To gospelize is to tell good news. It is to tell the world the good news of a Savior from sin, the good news that a specific for sin has been found. If you had a friend or even an enemy who was dying with tuberculosis and you had a certain cure for that disease, wouldn't you get the news to him in a hurry? You wouldn't have much trouble in telling him about it, would you? Or if you saw a man starving for material food, you wouldn't have much trouble in finding words to present him with some food, would you?

Brethren, we have a specific, a certain cure for sin and we ought to present it to lost men everywhere. It is the only thing we have that is sure. We do not have a sure cure for tuberculosis or pneumonia or smallpox or cancer. Every remedy has at some time or other failed, but we have a remedy for sin that has never failed when taken.

**WHY SHOULD CHURCH MEMBERS ATTEND CHURCH?**

One of the saddest things I know is the difficulty we have in getting members to attend church. The forces of antichrist point to this fact as a proof that church members themselves do not believe in their religion, not even worth their effort to attend meetings.

**Why go to church?**

1. Because God commands it. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (*Heb 10:25*).

2. Because you cannot have a church without it. Church is an assembly. Shut the church doors, let the people stay in their homes and never get together, and you would have no church. The building does not make the church, and it is physically possible to have saved people and yet not have a church. Suppose there are 100 saved people in this community, they stay in their homes or go about their business, they have no contact with each other in a religious way, they have no fellowship in the word of God, they never meet to pray or sing or hear the word of God, would they constitute a church? No. I said it was physically possible to have saved people in a community without a church, but it is not morally possible. Love for God and for one another will bring them together. We come to church to have fellowship in word.

3. Because we need to learn. The church is a school. Believers are called disciples or learners. Christ had a school and His followers were called disciples. The pastor of the church is their teacher. "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient" (*2Ti 2:24*). A church meeting is a school of spiritual instruction. From this viewpoint the churches look bad.

(1) From standpoint of attendance. We get alarmed about our day school if the attendance is much below enrollment. We expect a boy to grow up to be a sort of numbskull if he misses about half of his classes. And when he does come and the lesson is taught he doesn't know what it is all about. He doesn't get the lesson taught because he failed to get something else that must be learned first.

(2) From the standpoint of actual knowledge. A spiritual numbskull is a saved person who has not grown in grace and the knowledge of the truth, as it is in Christ Jesus.

÷03-19 THE IMPORTANCE OF CHURCH ATTENDANCE

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (*Heb 10:23-25*).

Introduction: This text is a large order for the greatest of preachers and yet simple enough for babes in Christ to understand. It is a twofold exhortation.

First, we are to hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering. This means we are to keep on believing in Jesus of Nazareth as Savior and Lord and never give up the good hope that is in Him. It is the same exhortation Peter gives when he says, "Hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (*1Pe 1:13*). Hope is a child of hard times. Hope has to live in a wicked world. The very word hope implies present trouble. It means something better in the future. If the present benefits of salvation are all that we will ever have there would be no place for hope and salvation would not be a blessing but a curse.

Salvation is free because it is priceless and we have nothing to pay, it is free because Jesus paid it all but the working of it out in daily living is a costly thing. It means a life dedicated to God and separated from the world and these two things go together. There can be no dedication of life to God apart from separation from the world. God and the world are incompatible. John says, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (*1Jn 2:15*). Someone has said that you might as well talk about a heavenly devil as a worldly Christian. And this is the truth so far as living the Christian life in our daily walk.

Now the basis for this exhortation is that God is faithful who promised. God has made promises in His Son and every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ can pin his faith and hope to Jesus Christ with the assurance that God will keep His promises.

Second, is the exhortation to consider how to stir up one another to love and good works. Here is a vital question for us to consider: How may I stir up my fellow believers, my brethren in Christ, to love and good works? Does it matter to you how your brother lives? Do you take the position that it is none of your business what your brother or sister does? This is the spirit of Cain who asked, "Am I my brother's keeper?" (*Gen 4:9*). We certainly are, everyone of us, our brother's keeper and to say it does not matter to us what becomes of our brother or sister is to be guilty of great sin.

**CHURCH ATTENDANCE**

Now the text we wish to emphasize is a clause taken from this second exhortation: "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another." Here is a bad habit; a prevalent sin, but how few are awake to the seriousness of it. Even the most faithful do not think of it as a sin. It would create a sensation if the pastor should tell of the sins told him about various members of our church. Bad language, untruthfulness, and drinking. A lost man was quoted as saying, that if he ever made a change he would not be found in some places he finds some of our prominent church members in. I question the accuracy of his statement that they are prominent members. How does he know? He is never here to see who is prominent. But to give occasion for the enemies of the cross to blaspheme is a terribly wicked thing and woe to the member who does.

But the point I wish to put to the front right now is that I never hear of failure to attend church spoken of as if it were a sin at all.

**THE IMPORTANCE OF CHURCH ATTENDANCE**

1. It is a command of God. It is not a mere piece of advice. It is not something that is optional; it is as obligatory as the command of God can make it.

It is not merely the wish of the pastor, it is the command of God who cannot be trifled with. To hem and hew and offer excuses is to make reply against God. "O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" (*Rom 9:20*). These words ought to awaken anyone who is not utterly beyond hope. Notice the first two words and the last word. "O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" Here God and man are put in sharpest contrast; God in His infinite greatness and holiness and power and wisdom; and man in his infinitesimal smallness and ignorance. In the Greek there is strong emphasis on the 'thou' "O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" It will be a happy day for some of us if God will brand that text upon our hearts so that we will never be able to forget it. If God leaves us alone to criticize Him and object to His commands, it will be absolutely fatal to us. And He may do that. "Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways" (*Act 14:16*); "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth" (*Rom 9:18*). O man, who art thou anyway? And who is God?

As an individual man is only one of the more than 2 billion 500 million human beings now inhabiting this globe. And what is this globe we call the earth? It is but a speck in that part of the universe we know about. This earth is so small that if the sun were hollow, you could pour into it 1,200,000 earths like ours and still there would be room enough left for them to rattle around in it. And the sum is very, very small as compared to Arcturus and some of the other stars whose diameters have been recently measured. And there are now known to be more than 225 million of these great worlds we call stars and God made them all. Will you defy Him and say His commandments are grievous?

It is this God who made this vast and stupendous universe and who made you and me, and who holds our very breath in His hand, who is the author of my text, and He says, "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together" (*Heb 10:25*).

2. It is one way we encourage one another. Not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another. Of all the people who need help and encouragement it is those who love the church and want to see it prosper in its work for Christ. The church is a workshop for Christ and all the members need to be at their post of duty. The church is a school of religious instruction and all members ought to be faithful scholars.

The church is a lighthouse for Christ and every member needs to "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (*Mat 5:16*). It is a sin to put our light under the bushel or under the bed, and that is what people do who try to hide the good they do. Of course we are not to parade our good works to receive praise of men, but we are to do them before men that God may be praised. If the motive is wrong in displaying it for your own glory it is just as wrong to hide it through pretended humility.

If I give for the support of the church, or if I do anything else for its good, and nobody knows about it, how can it be any encouragement to anyone?

3. To neglect church attendance and I mean regular attendance. I mean attendance on all services is the most ridiculously senseless thing anybody can possibly do.

It is like employing a foreman and not furnish him with any workers. Or like appointing a general and not give him any soldiers. Or like hiring a shepherd and not give him any sheep to feed. Or like having a leader without any followers. Or like employing a teacher and no pupils to be taught. Or like a doctor with no sick people to be ministered unto.

Now the pastor has these several relationships in his spiritual ministry. He is a shepherd, teacher, minister, captain, and leader of spiritual forces, but what can he do without the forces? What can a pastor do without deacons? What can a Sunday School Superintendent do without teachers? What can the preacher do without hearers?

Every church member ought to feel it as binding on him to be in his pew as the pastor does to be in his pulpit. There is nothing that so takes the spirit out of a preacher as to face empty pews. It is not the opposition of the outside world that breaks the preacher's heart; it is the absence of those who once made a pledge to God.

I suppose no name stands out as representative of devotion to Christ and consecrated courage than that of Paul. He was, approximately at least, all that any faithful minister might hope to become. He often stood alone in the midst of foes, and yet no man was ever more dependent upon the sympathetic help of his associates. You know how he lamented the departure of Demas. His words seem to drip with tears as he says, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world" (*2Ti 4:10*). And about the last word he ever wrote he said to Timothy, "Do thy diligence to come before winter" (*2Ti 4:21*).

Writing to the Corinthians the great apostle Paul says this: "When I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia" (*2Co 2:12-13*). Paul had a wide open door at Troas but he was so depressed at the absence of Titus that he could not preach. Where is the God called preacher who does not understand the meaning of the absent Titus? Titus may be a deacon upon whom the pastor depended. Titus may have been one with no official position but some godly woman whose regular attendance has come to be expected and if she is absent it throws the pastor into a state of depression. The absence of the faithful makes the preacher feel as though the church were empty.

4. There can be no church without it. The word church means assembly and an assembly is a congregation of people. And if the members do not meet together there can be no church.

You can have a church without money for the members can meet in the homes or under the branches of trees or even in the open, but you can't have a church without the members coming together. I say all this, not to minimize money, but to magnify church attendance.

We need money here and we have spent a lot of money on this building and for other purposes within the past few years, and we are having to spend a lot more in taking care of these windows but we need faithful members who will meet with us at least twice on Sundays and once on Wednesday night.

We have some whose large offerings we hardly see how we could do without, but I count their attendance of more importance than their money as important as that is. I think I speak sincerely when I say that if you can't both give money and come to church too, if you must leave one of them off, then leave the money off and come to church.

÷03-20 CHURCH LOYALTY

*Eph 5:22*

Introduction: Among our many needs we need to be more church conscious. But in being church conscious we must be careful that it is the fruit of being Christ conscious. It is quite possible for one to be church conscious and yet have little or no thought of Christ. One may be a worker in the church and yet not love Christ. But one cannot love Christ and despise Christ's church.

Dr. Lee: "Church members need to confer with themselves often concerning the warmth and strength of their church loyalty. The Christian who is loyal to his church above all other institutions is like the man who is loyal to his wife above all other women, and like the patriot who is loyal to his flag above all other nations; and like the child who is loyal to his father and mother above all other men and women." And he further says that the person who regards the obligations of any relationship lightly is a light weight.

One may love the church for its material benefits and have no love and appreciation for its spiritual ministry. We ought to love the church for Christ's sake and if we love it for His sake we will love it for its ministry of Christ and His word. We will be loyal to its teaching and preaching ministry. Our minds may trick us here. We may be loyal to the church in a program of eats and entertainment and have little sympathy for its spiritual ministry. The man who is more eager to attend a banquet than the prayer and preaching service of his church is not Christ conscious. The woman who had rather serve in the kitchen than to sit in the upper room to learn of Jesus Christ is not church conscious in the proper sense.

The word church seems to be used in Ephesians in the mystical sense. It consists only of saved people, and is considered in the making, to be completed when the day of salvation is ended. There is a sense in which only the born again are church members. The lost are in the church only in our eyes and not as Christ sees them. They are in the church only as being outwardly tied on and not as being vitally connected and drawing sap and life from Christ, the head.

Why is the church to be so important to us? Why are we to be loyal to the church above every other institution? Because of its relation to Christ:

(l) It is His body. He is the head of the church to control it. The church is subject to Him, and as members we must be subject to Him. "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church" (*Eph 1:22*). The church has no earthly head.

(2) It is His bride. The church is the object of His undying love. He took the sweetest and most sacred of all human relationships to illustrate the relationship between Himself and His church. No bride has ever been loved as Christ loved the church. No husband has ever given himself to his wife as Christ gave Himself for the church.

(3) Of what Christ has already done for the church. He gave Himself in death for it. He could not have the church He wanted without dying for it. He couldn't choose a bride for its beauty. He chose it and died for it while it was still in an ugly and sinful state. Men choose their brides because of their beauty and worth, but Christ chose a bride that had no beauty and worth. He chose her to make her worthy and beautiful. The beauty and glory of the church cost Christ His life on the cross. He had to go down into the depths of shame to get the pearls with which to adorn the bride. He had to suffer to make her sinless. He had to die to give her life. The church was important to Christ and therefore it ought to be important to us. Christ cares little for empires, and kingdoms, and democracies. They will all fail and come to naught. The church is the only living and eternal institution.

(4) The church is important because of what Christ is yet going to do for it. "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (*Eph 5:27*). There will not be a pimple of imperfection when Christ is through with His church. In *Rev 19:7* John gives an account of the coming wedding day "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen"

(*Eph 3:21*).   
How are we to show our love to the church?

1. By faithful attendance upon its service. The word church means an assembly and the members must assemble. They can't do much for Christ and remain apart. They must "not forsake the assembling of ourselves together". We need a sensitive conscience on church going. It is hard to convince some folks that it is a sin to neglect church attendance. One of the best ways to cripple the influence of the church is to stay away from its meetings. And this is about the best way to show contempt for the church.   
2. By loyalty in supporting its ministry. The church has a ministry to itself and to the lost. It is to build up itself in love and reach out with its life giving message.

A columnist recently said in speaking on loyalty: "Funny, even people who laugh at loyalty in a man somehow admires it in a dog." And a preacher recently said, "Loyalty is appreciated, admired and praised when found in lower animals. The dog that is loyal to his master is respected. Many dogs show themselves of finer quality in this regard than some people."

Dr. Lee: "The word loyalty seems to have gone on a voyage and been lost in shipwreck on a trip and can not find its way back. The church member who is not loyal to his church is as worthless and undependable as houses without foundations, as ships without rudders, as unarmed soldiers in battle, as dishes without food when the hungry are to be fed."

**÷03-21 CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

I was asked awhile back if I believed in church discipline. I promptly replied that I do and that I have tried to practice it in my ministry over the years. I know of no doctrine that has been so ignored and neglected on the one hand, or has been so distorted and abused on the other hand. Usually when discipline is mentioned the sole thought is that of turning someone out of the church. This is only a small part of discipline the serious and final part.

There are several aspects of discipline and these must be distinguished. Our text book must be the Bible.

1. Self discipline. This involves the whole of Christian living to the end of life. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (*Rom 12:1*); "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (*1Co 6:19*); "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (*2Pe 1:5-8*).   
In *1Co 9:24-27*, Paul uses the figure of an athlete to tell how he disciplined himself. "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." He says the athlete strives for a fading crown, but Paul was striving for an unfading crown. The athlete, whatever the contest, disciplines himself; he watches his diet, he abstains from certain kinds of drink and food, he gives up a lot of delicacies and fleshly delights to fit himself for the contest. And Paul says, I watch my body with its fleshly desires; I keep it in subjection, I keep it fit for the service of God, lest when I have preached to others I myself might be a castaway or disapproved or fail to get the prize. And so every child of God must by all means discipline himself, put away fleshly lusts that war against the soul.

2. Discipline by the word. This involves the work of the pastor. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:" (*2Ti 3:16*). He is to use the word of God for teaching, for reproof, for correction and instruction in righteousness or right living. The test of my preaching is not whether you enjoy it, but whether or not it makes you better Christians. And so the purpose of discipline is to make people better, not richer or happier. Webster: "To train in self-control or obedience to a given standard." The noun: "Training which corrects, molds, strengthens, or perfects."

3. Discipline by our Heavenly Father. "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:" (*Heb 12:5*). Webster: "To chastise; to punish." Discipline by our Heavenly Father is called chastisement and is for our good, to make us better.

4. Restorative Discipline. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (*Gal 6:1*). This is to be done by Christians who are spiritual, close to the Lord and living above reproach. The Greek word for RESTORE is used of a dislocated limb put back in place. And so the sinning brother is like a limb out of place and must be dealt with tenderly and in meekness, remembering that we, though spiritual, might also be tempted and do wrong.

We see another example of restorative discipline in "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us... And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother" (*2Th 3:6*; *2Th 3:14-15*).

And still another example of this kind of discipline in settling personal differences. "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican" (*Mat 18:15-17*). This is very plain. And in such a case there is evidently exclusion from the church.

The next and last case of discipline is found in *1Co 5:13* "But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." Here is the case of a man living in unholy wedlock, a sin that would hardly be found among the heathen, the case of a man living with his father's wife, who must have been his stepmother. And so Paul does not mince words, but tells the church to exclude him, put that wicked man away from among yourselves. RSV: "Drive out the wicked person from among you."

Even in this extreme case the good of the sinner was in the mind of Paul. "For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the 5).

In his second letter, Paul seems to refer to this man. Read *2Co 2:1-10*.

All this adds up to the solemn truth that we ought to take our Christian profession seriously. Salvation is free but service to God is costly. And as members of the same body of Christ we are tied together and belong to each other and are responsible for one another. What I do, not only as your pastor, but as a member, is of importance to every one of you. And we should not see one another sin and do nothing about it.

÷03-22 SALVATION AND REWARDS

*Eph 2:8-10* *Rev 22:12*

Introduction: There is a necessary distinction between salvation and rewards. To ignore this distinction will lead to confusion and perversion of the gospel. Salvation is for the lost; rewards are for the saved. Salvation is for believers; rewards are for workers. Salvation is by grace through faith; rewards are for faithful service. Salvation is common to all the saints; one will be no more saved than another, rewards are proportioned to the work done. "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be (*Rev 22:12*). Salvation is a present possession; rewards are a future blessing. Salvation is received on earth; rewards are to be received in heaven. "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (*Mat 5:12*). Salvation is based on the sufferings of the Savior; rewards are based upon the suffering of the saint. Salvation is the result of Christ's suffering for us; rewards are based upon our suffering for Him.

I have been both surprised and disappointed at the little literature on the subject of rewards. I searched here and there for some book in my library dealing with the subject and found practically nothing. I think first of all that we need the RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE SUBJECT of rewards. Some deny the doctrine, claiming all Christians will be equal in heaven. One will have no more than another. But this is to flatly deny the scriptures. If rewards are based on works, and they are, then the works of all would be the same if there is no difference in rewards. If rewards are based on works and suffering, what believer is there today who can expect the reward of the apostle Paul?

Some ignore the doctrine, do not deal with it, simply neglect to say anything about it. This is evident from the small amount of literature on the subject. Some despise the doctrine, having no interest in rewards. Salvation is all they want. Keeping out of hell is as far as their interest goes. They will be satisfied to be saved by the skin of their teeth.

Others say the doctrine of rewards is inconsistent with the motive of love in our works. They say we should work from love and not for pay. But if our Lord promises pay or reward we would not love Him much if we did not appreciate and strive for the reward he offers. Is it inconsistent with love for its father, for the child to appreciate and strive for reward offered by its father? I think not. Is the father afraid the child will not love him if he offers reward for faithful service? I think not.

÷03-23 REWARDS POSSIBLE FOR EVERY SAINT

We need not be afraid that the doctrine of rewards will give some people advantage over others, the rich over the poor or the strong over the weak. God's rewards are such that the poorest and weakest of His children may secure rewards. God's rewards are based upon faithfulness and not upon wealth and strength. There is reward for secret prayer. "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (*Mat 6:6*). And for giving a cup of cold water. "And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" (*Mat 10:42*).

**MUST BE DONE IN THE NAME OF CHRIST**

There are many institutions in the world that are doing good. They help the poor and relieve the afflicted. I have no fight to make against them for so doing. I would rather commend them, various fraternal organizations like the Masons, IOOF, and others. Our American Legion boys sent baskets of fruit and other food to the sick and afflicted, and all this was good in itself considering that it brought happiness to the recipients. But there will be no reward in heaven for all the good done by these various institutions. And of course the lost people in these organizations would not argue the question. The man who will not take Christ to be his Savior and Lord will not want any reward or expect any reward from Christ. Every man will first have to be accepted in Christ before he can be rewarded in Christ. It is only those saved by Christ who will be rewarded by Christ. If the saved in these various organizations think they ought to be rewarded in heaven by Christ for what they do through these organizations, they need to be told in words of scripture that Christ is to get the glory in His church. That His church is the institution He founded through which His people are to honor Him and work for rewards. "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" (*Mat 10:40-42*).

How can we do good in the name of a disciple? First, you must be a disciple of Christ. None but disciples can do the work of a disciple.

Then, he must do it through the church. If I give something in my own name, I will get the praise for it. If I do something through a lodge, the lodge will get the praise for it. If I do good through the church, then the church will get the praise for it. And if the church gets the praise for it, Christ is being honored, for He is head of the church. Here are two questions of great importance: What place has Christ in your hope of salvation? He must have the preeminence here. He must be the one and only hope of salvation. Then what place has Christ in your hope of rewards? Whatever good you do must be done in His name as His disciple if you are to get any rewards for it.

**THE NATURE, TIME, AND PLACE OF REWARDS**

As to the nature of rewards, there is not much that can be definitely stated. Whatever they are we will be pleased with them. Whatever they are, they will be worth working for. It may be only a "well done, thou good and faithful servant: ...enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (*Mat 25:21*). But whatever it is I want it. It will not be something to be snickered at, and to lose it will be a great loss.

The time of rewards will be when Christ comes. "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (*Rev 22:12*). If we have to have our rewards today for the good we do, we can do them to get human praise and that will be our only reward. That will end it and there will be no further reward when Christ comes. It is a blessed thing to work for pay if we are willing to wait for our pay until He comes. The place of rewards will be in heaven. "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (*Mat 5:12*). The only place we can put our treasure where it will be safe is in heaven.

Conclusion: Brethren, let us not live and act as if we are wasting our time in the service of God. Let us not live and act as if Christ's rewards for faithfulness were of small value. Let us not live and act as if His promises were mere sound.

÷03-24 THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A TEACHER

*Mat 28:19-20*; *Jas 3:1*

Introduction: The church has a teaching program as well as a program of evangelism. I would not say there is too much emphasis on evangelism, but I do say there is too little emphasis put on teaching. It is common to cry up evangelism and cry down doctrine or teaching. Evangelism has for its aim salvation of the soul; teaching has for its purpose the salvation of a life. Evangelism thinks of human need; teaching thinks of the glory of God. Evangelism seeks to get men saved; teaching seeks to get men to honor God. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" (*Mat 28:19*). Paul worked at both tasks. He pioneered along both lines. He would go through a country evangelizing the people and making disciples, and then he would later visit those places again to confirm and indoctrinate.

The divine and human classification of the human race differs. Man discriminates between his fellows on the ground of birth, of natural ability, of wealth, of race, and of culture. A professor of Ethnology would classify men according to color; as Caucasian, Negroid, Mongolian, Polynesian, etc. A psychologist would class men as extroverts or introverts. French used to divide the race into men, women, and clergymen. Our Sunday School experts divide them into many groups according to age. But God's classification of humanity is different. He looks on the heart and not on outward appearance. God divides men into two general classes: the natural and the spiritual; those who have had one birth and those who have had two births; the saved and the lost. The great command speaks of teaching the saved. First word for teach means disciple. This is evangelism. The church is to make disciples and then teach those disciples. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (*Mat 28:20*).

The Bible speaks of two teachers: the divine and the human. The divine teaching must precede the human teaching if there are to be results. Men must first be taught of God before they can be saved or taught. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (*1Co 2:14*); "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (*2Co 4:4*); "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (*Joh 6:45*); "They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error" (*1Jn 4:5-6*). Until God teaches in calling and regeneration we can only teach the historical things of the Bible.

For this teaching program, God endowed the church with pastor and teachers. "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers" (*Eph 4:11*).   
James speaks of the responsibilities of teachers: "My brethren, be not many masters (teachers), knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation" (*Jas 3:1*).

Paul: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (*1Co 9:27*).

Everyone of us who speaks for God should shudder at our responsibility.   
**A. Who are to teach?**

In choosing teachers we should certainly select the most godly and spiritual among us and this is no easy task. What I know of the lives of our members would not make it easy for me to select a teacher. I dare say that nobody can be selected that there might not be some objection to. I do not live with you. I do not know your home life. I do not know much about your social life. I do not shadow any of you to see where you go or what you do. But certainly no teacher of God's word ought to mix and mingle with people of this world in their sinful amusements. I do not believe that any Christian ought to go to a show. If I thought they should I would go. And how unspeakably bad that one should desecrate the Lord's Day by such conduct. I do not see how many Sunday School teachers live with themselves, those who live as the world lives. Unspeakably sad is the very thought that a Sunday School teacher should be found in juke joints, night clubs, and the like. Teachers have a responsibility to practice what they preach. The teacher should be an example for his class to follow. How can a teacher warn against worldliness if he himself is worldly? How can a teacher teach liberal giving if he himself is covetous? How can any teacher warn against sin if he himself is living in either secret or open sin? How can a teacher emphasize honesty if he himself ignores his obligations and fails to provide things honest in the sight of all men?

**B. What to teach?**

Teach the word of God. The church as such has no Bible program for teaching arts and sciences. The command says teach them to observe all things Christ commanded. Nothing about physics or science.

**C. How to teach?**

I would not pretend to lay down any method of teaching as imperative. Our Savior taught by lecture method. His lectures were in the nature of parable and story and quiz. He did not ask many questions, but His disciples put many questions to Him. Our teaching ought to provoke questions and arouse interest in Bible subjects.

**D. When to teach?**

The teacher teaches all the time. What we teach on Sunday should not be discounted by what we teach on Monday through Saturday.

÷03-25 THE OFFICE OF DEACON

*Php 1:1*; *1Ti 3:1-16*

In our English Bible the word deacon occurs in only five places: "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons" (*Php 1:1*); "Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre" (*1Ti 3:8*); "And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless...Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus" (*1Ti 3:10*; *1Ti 3:12-13*). But in the Greek New Testament the word occurs many times and is translated minister or servant. And the word is applied to all kinds of ministers or servants: political, ecclesiastical, angelic, and Divine.

In *Rom 13:4*, it is applied to the civil magistrate who is called "the minister" or "deacon of God to thee for good". The apostles are often called ministers, the very word used for deacon. In *Act 1:1-26*, Peter says in speaking of Judas, that "he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry" or deaconship (*Act 1:17*). And in electing Matthias to succeed Judas, the disciples prayed thus: "Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two men thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this ministry" or deaconship (*Act 1:24-25*). Paul, speaking of himself and Apollos says, that they were ministers or deacons by whom the Corinthians believed the gospel. In *Eph 6:21-22* Tychicus is called "a beloved brother and faithful minister" or deacon. The angels of God are declared to be deacons in *Heb 1:14* : "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister" or to deacon "for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" And our Lord Jesus Christ is called a deacon in *Rom 15:8* where Paul says "that Jesus Christ was a minister" or deacon "of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises."

So you see the word itself has no religious connotation; it simply means a minister or one who serves. It is the context in every case which determines the application.

Now this word of general use and varied application is applied to a specified class of officers in the church. And our English version translates the word "deacon" to designate this class of officers. In *1Ti 3:1-16*, they are mentioned along with the pastors or bishops and their qualifications are given. In the Philippian letter they are addressed along with the bishops, indicating that they hold office in the same church with the pastors or bishops.

In the letter to Timothy the duties of deacons are not given but only their qualifications. And this must be because their duties were already well known. Paul is simply telling Timothy what kind of men to ordain to the office. To discover their duties, we must go back to the beginning of the office and see why they were appointed. And this takes us back to Acts Sixth chapter, where a division of labor was necessary.

**A. THE ORIGIN OF THE OFFICE. Note,**

1. It did not originate with the founding of the church. The church at Jerusalem existed some time before the office of deacon was instituted. A church can exist without deacons but it cannot function properly without them.

2. It originated in a crisis. The days of persecution for the early church were naturally days of poverty. There were a few well to do but most of the members were poor. In the interest of the whole body a common fund was created to which contributions were voluntarily made by those able to contribute. Barnabas sold a piece of property on Cyprus and put the proceeds into this common fund. Ananias and Sapphira sold some property and kept back part of the price, pretending and claiming they had placed all of it at the apostle's feet. And for lying to the Holy Spirit, they were killed on the spot.

This liberality on the part of the rich greatly increased the labors of the apostles who were giving out rations daily to those in need. The foreign born Jews complained that their widows were being neglected in this daily ministration. They charged that the apostles were showing partiality to the home born members. When the apostles heard of the complaint, they neither admitted or denied the charge. They suddenly realized the need of a division of labor, and recommended that the church search "out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business" of feeding the poor. To use their own words, they said, "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables" (*Act 6:2*). And the word "serve" here is the word for deacon. "But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry" or deaconship "of the word." In other words, they said, We will deacon or minister the word while these seven men deacon or serve tables. Here is a clear distinction between two kinds of official service or ministry, the one in spiritual matters and the other in material things.

Look at the results of this division of labor: "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (*Act 6:7*).

The church of Christ is a spiritual institution in a material or physical world. And while in the physical world it will have material or physical needs. We have many needs today the Jerusalem church did not have and its one major need is a minor need today. They had a multitude of poor people to be fed, while we have a comparable few. They had no church house to build and maintain, for they still used the synagogue as a place of worship and when they were put out of the synagogue, for many years they met in the homes of their people. Today we have church buildings for which there is no direct Scriptural sanction. But it is reason that we should have them. So this matter of serving tables covers all the material needs of a church: feeding the poor, feeding the pastor, feeding the janitor, feeding the furnace, feeding the light meter, and what not. Some things are left to sanctified human reason.

The reason given for deacons in the Jerusalem church was the necessity of a division of labor so the ministers of the word should not be hampered and encumbered with the material side of the church's life. God calls His spiritual servants to a spiritual ministry, and this is to be a life of prayer and preaching the word.

**B. It is interesting to see how other denominations regard this office.**

The Roman Catholic and Episcopal denominations make deacons a lower rank of the clergy who may preach and baptize. Baptists are not supposed to have any ranks in the ministry. The title "Assistant Pastor" is to be objected to because it is practically a recognition of rank. The early churches had a plurality of elders and were paid according to their work and not rank. "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine" (*1Ti 5:17*).

"Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things" (*1Ti 3:11*). Does this justify women deacons or deaconnesses, or is the reference to the wives of the deacons. This is a mooted point. Dr. Carroll thinks it justifies deaconnesses and in his church in Waco, Texas, he used women as deaconnesses to look after certain matters that deacons could not well attend to, such as preparing women candidates for baptism, making inquiries into the homes, etc.

It is also thought by some that Phoebe was a deaconness in the church at Cenchrea. The Williams translation renders the word deaconness. It is exactly the same word rendered deacon in *Php 1:1* and *1Ti 3:1-16*, gender and all.

A literal translation of *1Ti 3:11* reads thus: "Women in like manner grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things." It is argued that this could not refer to women generally, nor to the wives of the deacons because the pronoun "their" is not in the Greek. And also because the context is dealing with official classes in the church. But the next verse says when literally translated, "Let those who serve or deacon be men of one woman."

**C. Duties of Deacons:**   
1. Not a board of directors to run the church.   
2. Not a jury to discipline members.   
3. Not a pulpit committee to hire and fire the pastor.

Deacons may serve on the pulpit committee as individuals when the church is without a pastor. Nobody has any authority over the pastor but the church acting under the Lord. Let the deacons stick to their work which is that of serving tables, looking after the temporal and material affairs of the church.

**D. Qualifications of deacons:**   
1. Men of good report men with a good name in the community.   
2. Full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom. Spiritually minded men and men of judgment.

3. Grave or serious minded men not given to levity and frivolity. This is not to be taken as being grouchy or mean and sour faced.

4. Sincere in speech, not double tongued, saying one thing to one person and another thing to someone else.   
5. Not given to much wine. In the light of the present distress, I would say, a total abstainer.   
6. Not covetous, not greedy of filthy lucre.

7. Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. Sound in the faith with conviction. Not official teachers but have opportunity for private witnessing.   
8. Men who have proved themselves faithful as members of the church.

**E. Reward of Deacons:**

"Purchase to themselves a good degree and great boldness in the faith" (*1Ti 3:13*). "For those who render good service win a good standing for themselves in their faith in Christ Jesus." (Williams).

÷03-26 THE MEANING OF BAPTISM

Introduction: Christendom seems to be hopelessly split over the ordinances. It is split over ordinances because split over the way of salvation. The ordinances are closely related to the gospel and the way of salvation. Christendom not even agreed on how many ordinances there are. Some say three, some two and some none. To me it is obviously true there are two, baptism and the Lord's supper. Not the gospel, but picture or represent the gospel. Do not save, but testify to what does save.

Baptism is not an empty ceremony. It has a deep and blessed meaning. It was given for a purpose and when we find the purpose, we find the mode or act. The mode was changed because the design or purpose was perverted. This is easy to see: when men began to think that baptism saves they naturally changed the mode. Here is a lost man; he is sick and can not be immersed but he must be baptized to be saved, so he is sprinkled. Novatian, 250 A. D.

In most of our English translations of the Bible, the word for baptize is not translated, it is anglicised. King James I ordered the translators to keep the old ecclesiastical words without translating them. Baptize is not a translation. The Greek verb is baptizo. It is anglicised by changing the last letter from o to e. The Greek word for sprinkle is rhantizo and it is rightly translated sprinkle. If they had dealt with that word like they did baptizo they would have anglicised it and call it rhantize. Those who have been sprinkled have been rhantized, not baptized.

John Calvin: "But whether the person who is baptized be wholly immersed, and whether thrice or once, or whether water be only poured or sprinkled upon him, is of no importance; churches ought to be left at liberty, in this respect, to act according to the differences of countries. The very word baptize, however, signifies to immerse; and it is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church."

**WHAT BAPTISM IS NOT FOR:**

It is not for the purpose of saving the sinner. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, but baptism is not any part of the Gospel. The three gospel facts are the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Paul: "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect" ( *1Co 1:17*); "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:" (*1Pe 3:21*); "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (*Act 22:16*).

**WHAT BAPTISM IS FOR:**

1. Baptism is to commemorate the death and burial of Christ. It commemorates by symbol the three facts of Gospel. Baptism testifies to the death of Christ. To commemorate His death we take a sinner who is dead to sin and plant him in the likeness of Christ's death and raise him up in likeness of his resurrection. We take a sinner trusting in Christ and bury him in the liquid grave and then lift him out of it.   
2. Baptism illustrates the believer's position before the law of God. What is the believer's legal status or station? He is dead to sin and alive unto God through Jesus Christ. It is not something to be felt but to be reckoned. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (*Rom 6:11*). I must take this by faith. I do not feel as if I am dead to sin, but God says I am, and I take it on faith. Now if I am dead I must be buried and then raised up out of the grave. I must symbolize my own burial and resurrection. As a believer in Christ I have been crucified, buried and raised, and this is what is symbolized in my baptism. I did not know this when I was baptized. You believers here tonight have this advantage over me. I can see the meaning of my baptism now, but I did not see it then. You have a new life to walk in, and this new life is symbolized by the resurrection part of baptism.

So your baptism testifies to the faith you have in Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. By faith you are united to Him and occupy His position before God in the legal sense. As the old man you have sinned and the sentence of death has been executed on your surety Jesus Christ. And now before the law as a new man you are to walk in the new life. This new life is to be lived by faith, faith that you have been crucified with Christ, faith "that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (*Php 1:6*).

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (*Col 3:1*). Baptism anticipates the believer's bodily resurrection from the dead. "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him" (*Rom 6:8*); "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?" (*1Co 15:29*). Conclusion: Baptism commemorates the resurrection of Christ. It illustrates the believer's death to sin and resurrection to walk in a new life he has in Christ. It anticipates the resurrection of His people.

÷03-27 SACRAMENTALISM AND BAPTISM

*Mat 3:11*; *Mat 12:41*; *Act 2:38*; *1Pe 3:21*

It is the glory of Baptists that we have preached a nonsacramental gospel. We are about the only great denomination in the world that holds that baptism neither saves, helps save, or keeps us saved. We have consistently held to the symbolism of the ordinances over against the sacramental idea. Baptism symbolizes a salvation already obtained through faith and sets forth in beautiful picture the great redemptive acts which are its objective causes.

Catholics have seven sacraments, Protestants have two, and Baptists have none. W. C. Taylor says that sacrament is a word of pagan militarism, alien to the New Testament and to apostolic Christianity. It took centuries to get the false translation of the word out of the printed Bibles, but the idea has outlived the word, and many religionists have no other concept of the ordinances.

And the idea is still expressed in the sacramental translation of the preposition eis. Sacramentalists make the preposition look only to the future, expressing purpose and never backwards, expressing cause. It can look either way and the context determines whether it looks forward in the sense of purpose or backwards in the sense of cause. Dr. Robertson says that it is not Greek grammar that determines the translations, but whether a man is evangelical or not. The general idea of the preposition eis is with reference to the context determining what the reference is "I indeed baptize you with water unto (eis) repentance" (*Mat 3:11*). Phillips, an Anglican, translates *Mat 3:11* : "I baptize you as a sign that your hearts are changed." Baptism is with reference to repentance; not in order to get a man to repent, but because he has repented.

Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah; not in order to get Jonah to preach but because of his preaching.

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (*Act 2:38*):etc. C. B. W.: "You must repent and, as expression of it, let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ that you may have your sins forgiven." W. C. Taylor: "Be baptized on the basis of the remission of sins previously obtained by repentance."

"The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (*1Pe 3:21*). R. S. V.: "Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience." In the Greek, the word for body is sarx, meaning the old sinful nature and the word for dirt is the word that means moral defilement. What Peter is saying is that Baptism saves only in figure and is not the washing away of the moral turpitude of depravity. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still" (*Rev 22:11*); "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (*Jas 1:21*): James is not prescribing a physical bath for salvation. He is speaking of moral filth.

Sacrament: "In classical usage means an oath, especially a military oath, and also a gauge in money laid down by two contending parties in court, is not strictly a Scriptural term, but occurs repeatedly in the Latin Vulgate as a translation of the Greek mysterion (mystery). It was first loosely employed for all sacred doctrines and ceremonies, and then more particularly for baptism and the Eucharist, and a few other solemn rites connected with Christian worship." Schaff Hyphen Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge.

"The word was used in two senses (1) as a legal term to denote the sum of money deposited by two parties to a suit which was forfeited by the loser and appropriated to sacred uses; (2) as a military term to designate the oath of obedience taken by newly enlisted soldiers." The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia.

÷03-28 BAPTISM

*Mat 3:15*

Baptism is one of the most familiar subjects to Baptists and we may come to think that we have learned all about it. Many Baptists think they have graduated in this one subject if in no other. But the word of God is so wonderful that we never learn all there is to learn on any subject. Just the last few days I have seen things in the Scriptures on Baptism that I had never seen and understood before. The Bible uses baptism in a literal and figurative way. Literally baptism is the plunging of a person in water and then raising him out of the water. It is both an immersion and an emersion. Figuratively, it is used of suffering and of joy as well. John said that he could only baptize in water but that Christ would baptize in the Holy Spirit and in fire. Christ would perform two kinds of baptism. He would baptize in the Holy Spirit. The first time He baptized in the Holy Spirit was on the day of Pentecost. All the lost who have died physically are in a baptism of fire and after the day of judgment all the wicked will be baptized in the lake of fire.

**THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST**

Why was Christ baptized? Why did John at first refuse to baptize Him? What does it mean to fulfill all righteousness? In what way did His baptism fulfill all righteousness? Only in a typical way. It was His pledge to go to the cross and actually provide for sinners the righteousness they so much need. Christ had another baptism. "But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able" (*Mat 20:22*); "But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (*Luk 12:50*). This baptism was essential to our salvation. A baptism of suffering.

**THE BAPTISM OF BELIEVERS**   
1. Symbolizes faith in the righteousness He provided in His baptism of suffering.   
2. It is like putting on a uniform. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (*Gal 3:27*).

3. It ought to be submitted to promptly and gladly. "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan (sixty miles) unto John, to be baptized of him" (*Mat 3:13*).

4. Washes away sin pictorially. **THE BAPTISM OF UNBELIEVERS**   
1. Baptism of fire.

2. Begins immediately after death. "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom" (*Luk 16:23*).

3. Continues forever in the lake of fire. "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death" (Rev  
20:14).

÷03-29 THE BAPTISM THAT SAVES

*Mat 3:13-15*

At a banquet honoring some athletic celebrities, Helen Wills Moody was called on for a speech. She said something like this: "To be seen one has to stand; to be understood one has to speak distinctly; and to be appreciated one has to sit down."

In this message I want to affirm something and then support that affirmation. I affirm that there is a baptism that saves. In this message we shall discover that baptism. What is baptism?

**NEGATIVELY:**   
*A. THE BAPTISM THAT SAVES IS NOT THE BAPTISM OF THE SINNER IN WATER.*

It is not denied that water baptism saves figuratively and symbolically. Saul was already saved when he was told by Ananias to arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins. He was converted and called into the ministry when he met Jesus on the Damascus road. Water has cleansing properties and is a fit emblem of the blood of Christ that actually cleanses from all sin. It is also an emblem of the Holy Spirit and of the word of God.

ARGUMENT: 1. The contention that water baptism saves is unreasonable as well as unscriptural. If water baptism is essential to salvation, then all who are unbaptized are in their sins and lost, regardless of how much evidence they may give of a birth from above. This theory shuts out all Quakers who do not believe in water baptism at all, but among whom can be found many people of evident spirituality. It also shuts out of heaven all unimmersed Presbyterians and Methodists. This view limits the number of the saved to a small denomination of professing Christians. The implication is narrow, carnal, and cruel.

2. Passages that may seem to teach baptismal remission can be fairly, honestly, and intelligently interpreted in the figurative sense. "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (*Joh 3:5*). Water is here made by some to mean baptism. But it is a false and dangerous scheme of interpretation to make water and baptism interchangeable terms. Water is often used where there can be no possible allusion to baptism. "Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again" (*Joh 4:13*); "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (*Joh 7:38*); "Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me" (*Joh 13:8*); Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (*Joh 15:3*). All through the gospel of John water is used in a figurative and spiritual sense to make *Joh 3:5* refer to literal water of baptism is to use the word water in a different sense in which it is used in all the other places. And besides, the word baptism is not in *Joh 3:5* and to introduce baptism here is to violate the meaning of water in the gospel of John.   
3. Water baptism cannot save because of the subject to be baptized. Baptism is for believers only and the believer is a saved person. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (*Joh 3:16*); "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (*Joh 3:36*); "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (*Joh 20:31*); "And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (*Act 16:31*). The pastor is looking for people to baptize; where will he find them among the saved or lost? The answer is obvious.

4. Water baptism cannot save because baptism is no part of the gospel which is the power of God unto salvation. "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (*1Co 15:3-4*). Paul thanked God that he had not baptized many of the Corinthians. "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;" (1 Cor. l:14). "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel" (*1Co 4:15*).

5. Water baptism cannot save because of the design of baptism. Baptism is not a saving sacrament but a symbol of what does save; namely the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. Baptism speaks of the legal union between Christ and the believer. The believer is dead to the guilt of sin and alive unto God and to this, baptism testifies. Baptism is a burial and a burial testifies to the death of a person. Our old man was crucified with Christ. Old man does not mean our old nature, our old nature is still very much alive. The old man is the man of old the person I once was under law and cursed by it and awaiting the day of execution. As a believer in Christ I can look back at the cross and see the sentence of death against me executed in the death of Christ. Christ had my guilt upon Himself and died under it, then rose again, and as my Surety and substitute, I died and rose again in His death and resurrection. Now the purpose of baptism is to symbolize all this, to put it before our eyes in visible symbol.

This death and resurrection is not something to be felt, but something to be reckoned as so because God says so. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (*Rom 6:11*). Reason may argue, but I do not feel dead to sin. But feeling has nothing to do with it. What God says is the important thing. And God says that what Christ did on the cross and in coming out of the tomb is what saves us. The believer is declared to be dead to the guilt of sin and alive unto God on the ground of the death and resurrection of Christ.

*B. THE BAPTISM THAT SAVES IS NOT THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.*   
ARGUMENT:

1. Because of the design of Spiritual baptism. Spiritual baptism was not for salvation but for power. Holy Spirit baptism was associated with the miraculous. The disciples (who were already saved) were told to tarry in Jerusalem until the coming of the Holy Spirit who would empower them for witnessing. Holy Spirit baptism at Pentecost enabled the disciples to speak in tongues or languages they did not know. "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel" (*Act 2:16*). In *Act 8:1-40* the Samaritans who had been converted under Philip's preaching and had been baptized in water received the Spiritual baptism through the laying on of the hands of Peter and John. "Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost" (*Act 8:17*). In *Act 10:1-48*, Cornelius and others heard Peter say that whoever believed in Christ should receive remission of sins. And as Peter spake they believed and the Spirit fell on them and they spake in tongues. "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God" (*Act 10:43-46*). I do not believe we have Holy Spirit Baptism today; else we would have people speaking in languages unknown to them as well as performing other miracles as they did in the early church. "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" (*Eph 5:18*).

And so the baptism that saves is neither water baptism nor Spiritual baptism. It is not the baptism of the sinner in anything. The baptism that saves is the baptism of the Savior at Calvary. The Bible speaks of baptism in water, in the Holy Spirit, in fire, and in suffering. And the way to be saved is to trust in what Christ suffered on the cross.

John the Baptist was baptizing in the Jordan River. He was baptizing people who came to him confessing their sins. He refused to baptize anyone else. He turned down the Jews who wanted to be baptized as descendants of Abraham. Jesus walked from Galilee to the Jordan and asked John to baptize Him. John demurred, saying, "I have need to be baptized of thee and comest thou to me?" (*Mat 3:14*). John was baptizing self confessed sinners and he could not think of Jesus as a sinner. But Jesus prevailed by saying. "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness" (*Mat 3:15*). John then baptized Him. Jesus was not a sinner but He was in the sinner's place and to save sinners He must work out a perfect righteousness for them. "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (*Php 2:8*). And so John's baptism of Jesus fulfilled all righteousness only typically and figuratively. It pointed to another baptism of Jesus when He would be baptized in suffering and thus provide righteousness for sinners. The baptism of Jesus was a prophecy and pledge of the cross.

And so the baptism that saves was the baptism of Christ at Calvary. We find Christ speaking of another baptism after His water baptism. On His last trip to Jerusalem He told His disciples of His approaching death under the figure of a baptism. "Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able" (*Mat 20:20-22*); "But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (*Luk 12:50*).

On the cross our dear Savior was immersed in suffering. Hear Him in the prophetic word: "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me" (*Psa 18:4-5*).

The cross is the place to look for salvation. The way of the cross leads home. The water baptism of Christ typified His baptism of suffering; and our baptism in water symbolizes what He did in his death and resurrection. His water baptism looked forward to the cross and our water baptism looks back to the cross. The baptismal pool that actually washes away sin was filled at Calvary, filled with the blood of Christ.

"There is a fountain filled with blood, Drawn from Emanuel's veins;   
And sinners plunged beneath that flood Lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see, That fountain in his day;   
And there may I, though vile as he, Wash all my sins away.

"Ere since by faith, I saw the stream Thy flowing wounds supply,   
Redeeming love has been my theme, And shall be till I die." --Cowper.

÷03-30 THE LORD'S SUPPER

*Mat 26:26-30*; *Mar 14:22-26*; *Luk 22:14-20*; *1Co 10:16-17*; *1Co 10:20-21*; *1Co 11:17-34*

The Old Covenant religion was characterized by ceremonies and the priest was the important person. He offered sacrifices for his own sins and then for the sins of the people. These ceremonies were typical and found their fulfillment in Christ. This made them temporary. They passed away with the coming of Christ and the one sacrifice He made. In the New Covenant religion there are but two ceremonies or ordinances: baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism symbolizes the work of Christ in death and resurrection; and also our legal union with Him in death and resurrection. In Him we are dead to sin and alive unto God. The Lord's Supper symbolizes our participation of the benefits of Christ's death and resurrection.

Baptism says that the believer is in Christ; the Lord's Supper says that Christ is in the believer. These two ordinances gave us a full picture to the eye of the whole gospel. Do not save but give us a picture of what saves.

We will try to answer some pertinent questions concerning the Lord's Supper. 1. What is it? 2. Why observe it? 3. How should we observe it?

**A. WHAT IS THE LORD'S SUPPER?**   
1. It is a memorial supper. It is to be done in memory of Christ.

2. It is a church ordinance, a church act. The church must act in concert. Christ is one bread or loaf and the church is one body. At Corinth it was observed individually or in groups or parties. One group would come and bring their basket and eat, then another group, and so on. The rich would have a big meal and get drunk; the poor would have nothing and go away hungry. Paul says tarry one for another. Thinking of it as a church ordinance, we might ask, Who is to come to the table? What are the steps to take to get to the table?

(1) Salvation- one must be a believer.   
(2) Baptism-all Christians say that baptism must precede the Lord's Supper.   
(3) Church membership.   
(4) Self examination. **B. WHY OBSERVE IT?**

1. Because Christ commanded it. "And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me" (*1Co 11:24*).

2. It is to help us remember His blood shed for us. "And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many" (*Mar 14:24*).

**C. HOW SHOULD WE OBSERVE IT?**

1. It is to be done worthily. That is, in a worthy manner. Not a question of personal worthiness. It is not to honor ourselves as if we were worthy. He is to be honored as the one altogether worthy.

2. What is the worthy manner of observing it? Answer: There must be the exercise of three faculties: memory, faith, and hope.

(1) Our memory must work. Memory looks back. We are to remember Christ, not father or mother or wife, or any other human being. And we are to remember Christ on the cross dying for our sins. Christ said: "This do in remembrance of me". We are not to remember Jesus lying in the cradle or Jesus going about doing good. We are to remember Him as He hung on the cross.

(2) Faith must be exercised. What does faith do? It discerns is body. In partaking of the emblems of the body and blood of Christ we are symbolizing our faith. Just as eating is appropriating food for the body; so faith is appropriating the benefits of His shed blood.

(3) Our hope is exercised. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (*1Co 11:26*). In observing the Lord's Supper we should look back at the cross and look forward to the future when we will have all the benefits of the cross in glorification.

Communion is a misunderstood word. We talk about communing with one another at the Lord's table. It is not communing with one another but with Christ. We commune with one another only in the sense that we are physically together, but we all participate together as a unit of His blood by means of the symbol. We participate symbolically occasionally while we participate by faith continually.

The Corinthians perverted the Lord's Supper:

1. By mixing with heathen ceremonies, "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils" (*1Co 10:21*).

2. By making it a common meal to satisfy hunger. "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (I Cor.   
11:31).

3. By failure to discern the Lord's body. "Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" (*1Co 11:27*).

4. The order and meaning of the Lord's table. "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come" (*1Co 11:23-34*).

÷03-31 THE MINISTRY

*1Co 4:1-21* th Chapter

Paul tells how ministers are to be regarded, what account is be taken of them, what attitude people should have toward them. We should not be too hasty in criticizing them or passing judgment upon their work.

1. They are ministers of Christ and stewards of the mystery of God. They belong to Christ. They are stewards of mysteries. A steward was a house manager, a slave under his lord, but a master over the other slaves in the same family. The gospel is here called mysteries. Mystery is something known only to the initiated. "He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given" (*Mat 13:11*). The man who never preaches anything that everybody can't understand is not preaching mysteries.

2. "It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (*1Co 4:2*). Plain honesty is what is required of a steward. This is what is expected of bank clerks and others in positions of trust, like public officials.

3. Human judgment does not count in appraising the work of preachers. The preacher cannot judge his own ministry. Paul was not justified by what he thought of his work. He placed little importance to what the Corinthians' thought of it. The Lord is the only one who has the right or ability to judge. Failure to be conscious of one's own sin does not mean that he is innocent. Most prisoners plead "not guilty".

4. "Judge nothing before the time" (*1Co 4:5*). Stop passing judgment, quit criticizing. The censorious habit was ruining the Corinthian church. Wait and let the Lord judge when He comes. He alone can judge the secret things of a man's ministry. He will turn on the light and reveal it all. Wait and get His praise.

5. These principles are to be applied in their thoughts about Paul and Ananias. Apply these principles and you will not be puffed up for one against another.

6. It is God who makes ministers to differ. He speaks only of true God called ministers.

Preachers are to have no credit for their difference in gifts. But at Corinth they were making their different gifts ground for division. Different gifts are a great blessing. They are sovereignly bestowed. No preacher is the best example on all points. In calling and qualifying preachers, God does not imitate the candle maker who brings a tub full of tallow and pours it into one mold. All candles come out of candle molds just alike. We have diversity of gifts and divisions of labor. Exhortation, exposition, interpretation, tactfulness in visiting the sick and strangers.

Paul contrasts between the Corinthians and the apostles and uses sarcasm and irony. They were satisfied and having an easy time; the apostles were having a hard time.

÷03-32 "FEED MY SHEEP"

*Joh 21:16*

Introduction: This conversation between our Lord and Peter is one of the most beautiful and interesting stories of the New Testament. Our Lord excelled in conversation for in all things He has the preeminence. Whenever He conversed with anyone there was a sermon rich in truth. Think of His talk with Nicodemus, the fallen woman at Jacob's well, the pharisees, His disciples.

These words of our Lord to Peter were designed to administer reproof and also to communicate forgiveness. Peter had behaved badly as a disciple of Christ. Along with the other disciples he had forsaken and fled but he had done worse than that. He had denied with cursing that he even knew the Lord. Christ had died and had been buried, but Peter had been to the grave and found it empty. More than that he had seen the risen Christ and was convinced that He was alive. But even so, Peter did not expect the Lord to have any further use for him and so one day he said to the other disciples, "I go a fishing" (*Joh 21:3*). And they were in the same mood and said "We also go with thee." But after a night of so called fisherman's luck, the Lord appears to them and turns failure into success. He apparently ignores the others and says to Peter, "Lovest thou me more than these?" (*Joh 21:15*). This cutting question thrice spoken hurt and humbled Peter. It was like a dagger in his heart. But the command, "Feed my sheep" (*Joh 21:16*) also thrice spoken was the way of forgiveness and restoration. Peter had lost his office only temporarily; the Lord would fulfill His promise to wash Peter's feet and give him a part with Him. He forgave his conduct and recommissioned him. Peter and Judas both fell from an office, the office of apostleship. But with this difference: Judas, as a lost man, lost his office forever; Peter as a saved man lost his only temporarily. Judas was an apostate; Peter was a backslider. Judas was an unbeliever and a devil; Peter was a sheep and a believer. Judas had remorse of conscience; Peter had godly sorrow. Peter came back to Christ with humility and penitence; Judas went away by the suicide route. Judas died at his own hands; Peter died as a martyr.

From this story I have gathered some thoughts that by the Spirit's blessing may prove helpful.   
**A. THIS CHARGE TO PETER REVEALS THE LOVE OF CHRIST FOR HIS PEOPLE.**

As the Good Shepherd, Christ had just laid down His life for the sheep. He had taken His life again and was about to leave them in the world. But He still loves them. "Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end" (*Joh 13:1*). And in His love He commits them to an under shepherd. This command to feed the sheep causes Peter to think of preachers as under shepherds with Christ as the chief shepherd who will reward them for faithful care of His sheep. "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (*1Pe 5:4*). Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (*Act 20:28*).   
1. The interest He claims in them: "My sheep," "My lambs." They were His (1) by a gift from the Father. "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine" (*Joh 17:9*). (2) By purchase. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (*Act 20:28*); (3) By reward for His travail of soul. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities" (*Isa 53:11*).

2. The qualifications required in the pastors, or shepherd. There are several but only one mentioned here: Love to Christ. It was on this question of love that Christ examined and cross examined Peter. He would not trust them to one who did not love Him. It is not love for people but love for Christ that is needed. If we love Him we will love His sheep for His sake. If we love Him we will feed His sheep. If we do not love Him our service will be that of a hireling. "But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep" (*Joh 10:12-13*). A hireling would starve them or poison them and forsake them. A hireling will fleece them and flog them. He will fleece them for his own interest, or flog them to get something off his chest. I heard of a preacher who boasted of his "sucker list."

3. Provision of pasture. The word of God is the pasture of the sheep. As pastors we must lead them into the pasture.   
**B. DUTY OF THE PASTOR TO HIS PEOPLE.**

There are two words translated "feed". The word in our text is different from the word in the 15th and 17th verses. In those two verses the word means "give food to," but in our text it has a wider meaning and means shepherd or take care of. It includes feeding, but includes all that a shepherd is to do for sheep; feed, protect, govern. Requirements:

1. Unselfishness. "Woe to the idol shepherd who leaveth the flock!" (*Zec 11:17*). "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?" (*Eze 34:2*).

2. Knowledge of the word. The sheep's food is in this book. We are not to feed the flesh but the best principles the graces of faith, hope, love. Our preaching must not give men faith in themselves but in Christ. Hope is the grace that looks to something better in the future. We are feeding this grace when we preach that this earth has nothing for the saint; that the heavenly country is his fatherland. We nourish the grace of love by preaching the sovereign and gracious love of Christ.

**C. WHAT YOU MUST BE TO THRIVE ON THE WORD.**

1. You must be a sheep or you will not know His voice in His word. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" ( *Joh 10:26*).

2. You must be a sheep or else you will not relish the food of the Word.   
3. You must be a sheep or else you will listen to false teachers who are thieves and robbers. "All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them" (*Joh 10:8*).

4. You must be a sheep or else you will not enter by the door into salvation. Christ is the door. "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture" (*Joh 10:9*).

C. D. Cole