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**The**

**FAMILY**

**OF GOD**

**And Other Studies**

**By**

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**CONTENTS Page 2**

**CONTENTS**

**All subjects are in memory**

The Family of God Page3

How Moses' Grandson Went Wrong Page16

Why Do the Wicked Prosper and the Godly Suffer? Page21

The Virgin Birth Page26

Born to Die Page29

A Cripple's Healing Page33

The Peril of the Lord's Supper Page 36

Why The Son of God Became The Son of Man Page38

The Vine and The Branches Page 42

The Two Righteousness’s Page 53

Our Unfading; Inheritances Page63

How Christians Should Give Page 70

The Light of The Knowledge of The Glory of God Page 72

The Truth About The Holy Spirit Page 78

Salvation, Plumb and Plain Page81

Once Saved, Always Saved Page 83

Peter's Backsliding and Restoration Page 86

Unbelief is Unscientific Page 89

The Two Resurrections Page 94

Who is This? Page 104

Micah's Great Message Page 109

**The Family of God**

**Its Position, Its Calling, Its Destiny, Its Food and Its Raiment**

In the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, which chapter is Messianic throughout, a question concerning Messiah is raised in the 8th verse: "Who shall declare His generation?" The reference is to the fact that the Messiah, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, left no descendants, no family, This is the usual Scripture meaning of "generation." The Bible seldom uses this word in the modern sense as pertaining to the people living on earth at the same time, or as relating to the lifetime of the average mortal. When the Bible speaks of "the generations of Adam" or of some other man it refers to his family. "Generation" comes from a word meaning that which is born or generated. When our Lord said in **Matthew 23:36**, "All these things shall come upon this generation," and in **Matthew 24:34**, "This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled," He was speaking of the nation of Israel, the family of Jacob, and declaring that it should not cease from being a nation, that it should not pass away from God's Elect Family the earth, till all the things He had been predicting concerning that nation had been accomplished.

"Who shall declare His generation?" The Messiah's generation as to the past, that is His ancestry, is often declared and described in the Book; but in the physical realm He was the last of His line, and therefore, as to His descendants, no one is able to declare His generation: "for He was cut off out of the land of the living," says the prophet; "for the transgression of my people was He stricken."

The question raised in **Isaiah 53:8** is not answered in that chapter. The language of verses 10, 11 "He shall see His seed,….He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied" -- doubtless refers to the Father's contemplation of His Son and His satisfaction in Him.

But a complete answer to the question of **Isaiah 53:8** is found in **Psalm 22**, "The Psalm of Sobs," in which the agonies of the cross are so vividly portrayed. At the 30th verse it is written: "A seed shall serve Him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation." In the spiritual realm He has a large family,gathered out from among the sons of men and born again into the family of God. These belong to Christ; they are His; and since they are Christ's they are "Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (**Gal. 3:29**).

When, “in due time," the eternal Son of God was leaving His heavenly home to become incarnate in order that through death He might save us from death, He outlined His purpose in words recorded for us in the **40th Psalm**, as is shown by the use of these words in **Hebrews 10:4-7**. It was "not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou would not, but a body hast thou prepared Me: in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou have had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me.) to do Thy will, O God. And His ministry throughout was characterized by His delight in doing the will of God. Of all who have ever lived on earth He alone did always those things which were pleasing in God's sight. "It is My meat," said He, "to do the will of Him that sent Me."

**Bringing Many Sons Unto Glory**

The will of God for His Son included the thirty-three years from Bethlehem to Calvary, with the contradiction of sinners against Himself to be endured all the way; it meant the shame, and the cross. But the end and aim of it all was to gather out from the world a people for His name, which people were to constitute the generation, the family of God. Thus it is written that "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. For both He that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, “I will declare Thy name unto My brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee. And again, I will put My trust in Him. And again, Behold “I and the children which God has given Me" (**Heb. 2:10-13**; compare **Psalm 22:22**; **Isa. 8:18**).

**Declaring God's Name to the Family**

It was on the day of His resurrection that our Lord, revealing Himself to Mary of Magdala, forbade her to touch Him until he had gone into His Father's presence. "But" said He, ‘go’to My **brethren**, and say unto them, I ascend unto My **Father**, and your **Father**; and to My God and your God" (**John 20:17, 18**).

Thus He was fulfilling the promise of **Psalm 22:22**, quoted in **Hebrews 2:12**; He was declaring God's name to His brethren. Never before had He in this sense called His disciples His brethren. But now that He had begotten them unto a lively hope by His resurrection from the dead, they were in the new family, and from thenceforth God was to them the God and Father of their Lord Jesus Christ and therefore their God and Father.

Leaving Mary, He ascended into His Father's presence, and the Father greeted His Son with the words of **Psalm 2:7**, so often quoted in the New Testament and applied to our Lord: "Thou are My Son; this day have I begotten Thee." He had just come forth from the grave as the first-begotten from the dead (**Acts 13:33**). "Ask of Me, and I shall give The nations for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts the of the earth for Thy possession" (**Psalm 2:8**).

**"O Joy!"**

But His work was not yet done. It was that same day that He returned to earth and showed Himself to His disciples, greeting them with the gladsome exclamation, "O joy!" And He allowed them to come and hold Him by the feet and worship Him (**Matt. 28:9**, Scofield margin). Then, after forty days of many infallible proofs in which He showed Himself alive after His passion, He commissioned His disciple -now His brethren- to go out into the world and find the rest of the family, that the Father's house might be full.

**Leading the Children Home**

When our Lord left the earth and "ascended up on high," He "led captivity captive." He went not alone into His heavenly home, but He took with Him the spirits and souls of all the redeemed of all the past ages, releasing them from their temporary abode, and moving the paradise section of hades into the third heaven (**Ps. 68:18**; **Eph. 4:8-10**; **II Cor. 12:2-4**). What a wonderful day was that! Surely the battlements of the celestial city were thronged by the innumerable angels of God to welcome the Victorious One as He swept upward through the heavens at the head of His redeemed hosts. On and on He goes, upward and up­ward He leads them, even to the place "far above all heavens" (**Eph. 4:10**) where the throne of God. His Triumphant shout is recorded for us in **Isa. 8:18**, though we could not have recognized it but for **Heb. 2:13**: "**Behold! I and the children which God has given Me!**" Ever since that day the children have been going up from earth to heaven. Down here we are sad at their departure and hang crape on the door and wear weeds of mourning; but up there they are glad at their arrival and rejoice over them with singing.

**The Expectant One**

It was upon our Lord's final arrival in heaven that He was greeted by His Father with the words of the **110th Psalm**, "Sit Thou at My right hand till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool" (Compare **Matt. 22:41-45**; **Mk. 12:35-37**; **Lk. 20:41-44**; **Acts 2:34**, **35**; **Heb. 1:13**; **10:12**, **13**). Now He sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high, as the Firstborn among many brethren, eagerly expecting and awaiting the time when all the family shall be brought home, each child in the family presented without fault before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.

**The Family Described**

In **I Peter 2:9** the children are described. They are **(1)** a **generation**-that is, a family, the family of God. They are **(2)** a **chosen generation**-that is, an elect family, each child chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world. They are **(3)** a **priesthood** - each member of the family is a priest, having imme­diate access to God and immediate relation to Him as Father. This gives us the right to pray, and the right to make an acceptable offering to God. These are the Christian's exclusive prerogatives. No one else has a right to pray or to offer anything to God. They are **(4)** a **royal priesthood** - that is, a company of kingly priests, priests who are to reign with the High Priest when He shall sit upon His own throne, ruling the world as King of kings and Lord of lords. It is a mistake to suppose that He is now gathering out a company of subjects for the future kingdom. Rather He is gathering out a company of co-rulers to reign with Him over the kingdom. They are **(5)** a **nation**. In the Parable of the Vineyard the Lord Jesus warned Israel's leaders that the kingdom of God should be taken from them and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof (**Matt. 21:43**). That nation is the church of God, every member of which is a citizen of heaven. The nation is scattered now but it will one day be brought together in the Father's house. They are **(6)** a **holy nation**. There is no other such nation, nor is any other nation occupying such a place in the counsels of God. "Holy" means to be set apart, and the church which is the body of Christ is set apart in the mind and heart of God, gathered out from all other nations and made one in Christ. They are **(7)** a **peculiar people**-or, rather, as in the Revision, a people for His own possession, a people gathered not only **from** but also **unto**. A people, separated unto God, a people peculiarly His, a people for Himself.

**Wonderful**

How wonderful! **Children** of God; "and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and **joint heirs with Christ**" (**Rom. 8:17**). Born again; begotten unto a living hope, and "unto an inheritance **incorruptible**, and **undefiled**, and that **fades not away**" (**I Pet. 1:3**, **4**). "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this cause the world knows us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we **children of God,** and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is. And everyone that has this hope set on him purifies himself, even as He *is* pure" (**I John 3:1-3**, R.V.).

"'Children of God,' oh, glorious calling!

Surely His grace will keep us from falling.

Passing from death to life at His call:

Blessed salvation! Once for all!"

May God enable us to live in the power of this blessed truth! "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light."

**The Children's Food**

The family of God must have food, and food is provided. The same Christ Who is our life (**Col. 3:4**) is "also our food. In the 6th chapter of John He tells us about it. Says He: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world ... Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eats My flesh, and drinks My blood, has eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eats My flesh, and drinks My blood, dwells in Me and I in him. As the living Father has sent Me, and I live by the Father; so he that eats Me, even he shall live by Me" (vs. 51-57),

From this Scripture the ritualists get their doctrine of the "real presence," whether in the form of transubstantiation, consubstantiation or impanation; hold­ing that in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper there is the actual presence of our Lord's flesh and blood, and that in partaking of these elements the communicant is feeding upon Christ.

On the other hand, the non-ritualist usually goes to the other extreme, teaching that, while the flesh and blood of Christ are not really present in the eucharist, we are nevertheless feeding upon Him when we partake of the bread and wine, though this feeding on Him is only in a symbolical sense.

The truth lies in neither of these two positions. It is not enough to feed upon Christ symbolically; nor are we called upon to look for the real presence of His flesh and blood in the bread and wine of the memorial feast He instituted; but we are called upon to feed upon Him really, and in a far deeper sense than can be done at the breaking of bread in the Supper. We have His own solemn word for it that unless we eat His flesh and drink His blood we are dead. We therefore must eat His flesh, we must drink His blood, we must eat Him. He Himself says it: "He that eatsMe, even he shall live by Me.

Moreover, since those who do not thus eat Him are dead, having in them no life, it follows that all who have life in them are already, whether they realize it or not, eating Him. If we are truly born again, then we have life in us, and He declares that all such are feeding upon Him. It is entirely possible, as we know, in the physical realm, for a child to be feeding without realizing what he is doing. And even so it must be in the spiritual realm. Let us follow the analogy thus suggested.

**Life and Food**

All life comes from life. All life comes from a living seed. The physical life, since it comes from corruptible seed, is itself corruptible. The spiritual life, since it comes from the incorruptible seed of the Word of God, is itself incorruptible and therefore abides forever (**I Pet. 1:22-25**).

And all life must be fed. The natural life, coming from corruptible seed and therefore itself corruptible, feeds upon corruptible food. The supernatural life, coming from incorruptible seed and therefore itself incorruptible, feeds upon incorruptible food.

Food, to be food, must have life in it. Even the corruptible food for the nourishment of the natural life must have life in it when it is eaten, else it will poison instead of nourish, and destroy instead of build-up. It is true that the food animal from which our beefsteak and other flesh food come is killed before it reaches our tables, but nevertheless the flesh must have life remaining in it if it is to benefit us. This is why we insist upon fresh meats, vegetables, fruits, etc. We must eat them while the life is still in them. If a long interval is to come between the killing of the animal, or the reaping of the vegetables or fruit, and the eating of the food obtained from them, the meat or vegetable or fruit is artificially preserved during that interval. This is to retain the life of the food until we are ready to eat it. And it is even so concerning the food for the supernatural life. It is living food-living bread, the bread of life.

**From Beneath and from Above**

All the food for the natural life grows up, directly or indirectly, out of the dirt. This shows that as to our flesh we are dust, as the Scripture tells us-"Dust thou art." But all the food for the supernatural life comes down from above; nothing earthly can nourish or sustain the new life that comes through the new birth.

**The Mysterious Change**

When we feed upon natural food it is changed within us into human flesh. Whether we eat the flesh of cattle or sheep, or fruits or vegetables, all is, by the mysterious process of digestion and assimilation, transmuted into human flesh and blood, brawn and bones, etc. But it is not so with the food which comes down from above; this is not changed into anything human, but by it Christ is reproduced in us. This is because it is not the human in us that is feeding upon the heavenly food; it is the new man within us, which is created in righteousness and true holiness. The old life cannot feed upon heavenly food, any more than the new life can feed upon that which is "of the earth earthy."

In the natural life, when a child is born into the world he is a sort of animated appetite, and food must be immediately forthcoming. And the food provided by nature for the natural life in its beginning is milk---milk from the mother's breast. But what is milk? The question is not easy to answer, but if we trace the milk and see what the child does with it we may find what it is. What becomes of the milk after it enters the child's stomach'! No one can explain the process through which it passes, but we all know that the milk is changed into flesh and blood. And does not that prove that the milk was flesh and blood all the time, and that as the child drew the milk from the mother's breast he was eating the flesh and drinking the blood of his mother? Milk is flesh and blood in solution fresh and blood reduced to a form suitable for food which when passed through the processes of digestion and appropriation becomes flesh and blood again.

**The Word of God in Two Forms**

This study in analogy will help us to understand our Lord's teaching about Himself as our food. The Bible is the Word of God, and Christ also is the Word of God. Peter tells us "as newborn babes" to "desire the sincere milk of the Word that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious" (**I Peter 2:2, 3**). Observe the relation between the two phrases, "**the Word**" and "**the Lord**". The **word written** and the **Word incarnate** are the same. Just as in the natural realm milk is flesh and blood in solution, so in the spiritual realm the Scriptures are the flesh and blood of Christ, so to speak, in solution, or in a form in which He may be apprehended and assimilated. When we feed upon His Word we are feeding upon Him. This is evidently the key to His utterance in **John 6:63**- "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

**The Fullness of Him**

Of course it will be understood that we could not eat the flesh and drink the blood of that body of Christ in which He walked during the days of His earthly mission; nor yet of that body now glorified in which He sits on the right hand of the Majesty on high. But there is another body of Christ. The church is "His body, the fullness" of Him that fills all in all." All the born-again ones are joined to Him in that body -"members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones" (**Eph. 1:23**; **5:30**). It is from Him as the Head that "the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, makes the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love" (**Eph. 4:15**, **16**). The Word of God warns us against turning away, "and not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having It; nourishment ministered, and knit together, increases, with the increase of God" (**Col. 2:19**).

**Food for Grown-ups**

But milk is only the simplest form of food. In the natural life the child passes on from milk, having grown thereby, and cuts teeth, in order that he may eat solid food. Mere growing is not enough; growing strong is necessary; and for this the solid foods are provided through nature. The use of solid foods involves more labor than the use of milk, but the labor is well worth while.

There is much of milk in the Bible-that is, spiritual food in simple form, easy of understanding and requiring but little study for its comprehension. But here is also an abundant storehouse of solid food, the strong meat" of the Word, which demands hard work forits finding and enjoyment. It is God's plan that His children should go on from infancy in spiritual things to "full growth;" but this is impossible on an exclusively milk diet. In **Hebrews 5:11** to **6:1** those addressed are rebuked for their failure at this point. The writer had much to tell them of the Lord Jesus Christ, but he finds it difficult to teach them. He says:

"Ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For everyone that uses milk is unskillful in the Word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age (growth), even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection (full growth)."

It is not meant by this that we should entirely give up drinking milk. Simple truth is always refreshing and helpful, even to spiritual grown-ups, but solid food is also necessary.

**Appetite**

What is eating? Just what is included in the process? By tracing this process we may find rich instruction relating to our privilege of feeding upon Christ. First, there must be an appetite. How true this is in the natural realm! There may be an abundant supply of wholesome and nutritious food, but if appetite is lacking eating is impossible. Just here, perhaps, is the point of breakdown in many a Christian life. Every young convert loves his Bible; but, alas! how many older Christians must confess that their first love for the Word of God is gone! The probable explanation is that at some point they have failed to obey the Word, and thus have lost their taste for it. How we need to pray for the holy relish for the Word voiced by God's servants of old! "I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food" (**Job 23:12**). "How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey a my mouth" (**Psa. 119:103**). "Thy words were found, and I did eat them: and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by Thy name, O Jehovah God of hosts" (**Jer. 15:16**).

There is rich instruction on our subject in the words of **I Peter 2:1-3**: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings." These things are like garbage that must be put aside if we are to enjoy the food provided for the children of God. Only as these things are thus disposed of may we "as newborn babes earnestly desire the sincere milk of the Word," or have any real appetite for it.

**Mastication**

Given food to eat, and a desire for it, the next step in the process is mastication: the food must be chewed. A dog would bolt it without chewing; but we are not talking of dogs. We are speaking of the sheep of Christ, and how they should eat.

Under the Jewish law all "clean" animals-that is, animals which might be eaten or offered in sacrifice, including sheep of course-were ruminants or cud-chewers. We may learn from this that we who have become presentable to God should also be ruminants, or cud-chewers. The dictionary shows that the two words "meditate" and "ruminate" are radically the same. When we are meditating upon the Word of *God* we are chewing the cud. "O how love I thy law!" said the Psalmist; "it is my **meditation** all the day" (**Psa. 119:97**).

The purpose of mastication is twofold: first, it reduces the food to fine particles, making it easy to swallow and preparing it the better for the action of the gastric fluids of the stomach; and secondly, it mixes it with saliva, which further assists the digestive process. In **Hebrews 4:2** we are told of certain who were not profited by the preaching of the gospel because it was not "mixed with faith in them that heard it." Food properly masticated will be mixed with saliva and will "go down smoothly," and be welcomed into the stomach. Just so, the Word of God thoroughly ruminated or meditated upon is likely to be mixed with faith and thus made acceptable to the mind, the organ of spiritual digestion.

**Digestion**

After mastication and swallowing comes digestion. By a wonderful process, of which we are very ignorant except that we know that certain causes produce certain results, the strange laboratory called the stomach analyzes the food introduced into it, and prepares it for various uses as the body has need. This answers to the "rightly dividing" of the Word of Truth which is enjoined upon us in **2 Timothy 2:15**.

**Assimilation**

After digestion comes assimilation. The Word of God must be laid hold upon, appropriated, and made part of our very selves. This will come from intensive study, of which God's people know far too little in these days. There is a tremendous difference between a careless reading of the Bible and its careful and earnest study.

**Exercise**

And, finally, there must be exercise. We eat to live, but it is not enough merely to live; we should eat in order to work. The Word of God brings to us the strength of God, that by it we might be "strengthened with all might according to his glorious power." It is monstrous that any child of God should be feeding upon His Word merely for the enjoyment of it. The rule of the Book is that if any will not work, neither shall he eat; and this may apply in spiritual things as well as in the natural world (**II Thess. 3:10**).

May God show us how true it is that "man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of Jehovah doth man live" (**Deut. 8:3**; **Matt. 4:4**; **Luke 4:4**). "But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholds himself, and goes his way, and straightway forgets what manner of man he was. But whoso looks into the perfect law of liberty, and continues therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (**Jas. 1:22-25**).

**The Children's Clothing**

The winter season in northern countries brings to the fore the question of how to keep warm. Our homes must be heated, and also our places of employment; and, too, there is the matter of raiment; "wherewithal shall we be clothed?" (**Matt. 6:31**). For this our Father has made abundant provision of wood, coal, oil, etc., so that His creatures may be comfortable. Not only for those who love Him has He done this, but also for those who hate Him. He who "makes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (**Matt. 5:45**), giving to all "rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (**Acts 14:17**), has also taken thought for our need of raiment, and has encouraged us to trust Him for this. "Your heavenly Father knows that ye have need of all these things" (**Matt. 5:28-32**), and so He has caused to grow the wool, the cotton, the linen and the silk. And in addition to the sheep with its fleece, the silkworm with its wondrous product, the flax for the linen, and the plant for the cotton cloth, there are the fur-bearing animals, all ministering to the physical needs of man, who alone among God's creatures is in need of artificial clothing. It was sin that stripped us and made us naked, and it is by the grace of God that our nakedness is covered, not by anything we have produced for who among us could produce a single sheep, or silkworm, or a bit of flax, or a cotton plant? Had it not been for His gracious care for us, we all must have perished.

Let it not be forgotten that man's first garments, after sin had stripped him, were produced through blood shedding. A substitute had to die that the sinning pair might be saved from death by exposure. "Unto Adam also and to his wife did Jehovah make coats of skins, and clothed them" (**Gen. 3:21**). The typical significance of this incident is inescapable. It points to Christ, made unto us righteousness - "a divinely provided garment, that the first sinners might be made fit for God's presence" (Scofield).

This brings before our minds the idea of **spiritual** clothing. And the Scriptures have much to say of spiritual raiment, and give full and rich instruction to the children of God as to what should be their spiritual dress.

Clothes, when referred to symbolically in the Book, are often a type and figure of conduct-that is to say, manner of life, habits. It may be remembered that sometimes a suit of clothes is actually called a habit, as for example a "riding habit."

And consider for a moment how apt this symbol is. For habits, like clothing, are the things seen upon us by those amongst whom we live and move. We wear them, and we are judged by the things we thus wear, and by the way we wear them.

Early training has much to do with our habits-our spiritual raiment. Dr. Martin B. Anderson, the famous president of what is now the University of Rochester, used to say of his students that each of them came to college bringing with him "a segment of his home;" and that before he had been there long they all knew what kind of a home he had left. Surely; and how did they know these things but by observing his clothes - the things he wore. Physical and spiritual clothes indeed, but for the more part spiritual-habits.

A personal friend of this writer, who was for a time employed as salesman in a men's clothing store, was one day waiting on a young man evidently from the rural districts, a farmer boy. Selecting a suit from stock the salesman asked the lad to take off the coat he was wearing, in order to try on the new one. Presently he said to his customer:

"Young man, I never saw you before, nor heard of you; but I think I know where you live."

"How could you know that if you never before saw nor heard of me?" asked the farmer boy.

"Well, never mind how I know, but I think I know where you live."

"Where do you think I live?"

"I think you live in Cecil County, Maryland, somewhere in the neighborhood of Zion or the Brick Meeting House."

"Why, man, I live just halfway between Zion and the Brick Meeting House! Now how did you know that?"

Well, boy, it was on account of that coat you just took off. When you are at home, it hangs in the kitchen, doesn't it?"

"Yes, it does."

"'And you burn wood in the kitchen stove?" "Yes."

"Oak wood, from the farm?" "Yes."

"And does the stove sometimes smoke?" “It surely does.”

"That's how I knew. I myself was born on a farm near yours. We also burned oak wood from the farm. There's no smoke in the world that smells just like that particular oak-wood smoke. I haven't smelled that odor since I was a youngster, but I knew it when I smelled it on your coat."

The moral to be gathered from this little story is that we should have a care how our clothing may smell particularly our spiritual clothing, our habits, our doings, our conduct. It is written of our adorable Lord that all His "garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces" (**Psa. 45:8**; compare verses **6**, **7** with **Hebrews 1:8**, **9**). All that He is and does smells of heaven and the heavenly wardrobes. Not to His enemies indeed is the odor pleasant, but in Him is the Father "well pleased," and forth from Him there always goes up to the Father the odor of "a sweet smelling savor." To be thus well pleasing to God is the true Christian's highest ambition, even to be "unto God a sweet savor of Christ."

And let it be remembered for our comfort and encouragement that those servants of God who are faithful in their testimony are a sweet savor to God, not only in those who are saved through their ministry, but also in those who reject their testimony and are lost. As it is put in **II Cor. 2:14-16**: "Now thanks be unto God, which always causes us to triumph in Christ, and makes manifest the savor of His know Hi knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet say of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor of life unto life."

From the natural point of view, Noah would not be considered a successful preacher. He got only seven saved besides himself, and by his preaching the whole race was condemned and died in the flood. But he smelled good to God, being a sweet savor to Him, equally in saving his house and in condemning the world (**Heb. 11:7**).

The glorious Son of God is always "quick of scent in the fear of Jehovah" (**Isa. 11:3**, literally); and cannot be deceived by even the cleverest attempts of the enemy. When Simon Peter sought to turn Him from the way of the cross, "He turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind Me, Satan: thou art an offence unto Me: for thou savor not the things that be of God, but those that be of men" (**Matt. 16:22**, **23**). Peter had only just been born again and had not yet got rid of his old clothes!

Under the Law of Moses Israel was told what to wear (**Num. 15:38**, **39**; **Deut. 22:11**, **12**). This was in order that they might be known as a people separated unto God; but this finally degenerated into an empty form, and was therefore hateful to God, who looks not upon the outward appearance but upon the heart (**Matt. 23:5**). His desire is that we should "clothed with humility" our adorning being not the "putting on of apparel, 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" (**I Pet. 5:5**, **3:3**, **4**). Of course, this "hidden man of the heart" is none other than "the Man Christ Jesus," and when He has His proper place in our lives and hearts we shall be properly clothed. "Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness"-our old clothes, belonging to the old life-"and put on the armor of light," even putting on "the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (**Rom. 13:12-14**).

In **Col. 3:5** we are exhorted to mortify our "members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and cov­etousness, which is idolatry." These are hidden and secret things. And then in verses 8-10 the matter of raiment is taken up and we are told what not to wear: we are to "put off" such things as "anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication" and lying, seeing that we "have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man." And where is the man whose heart God has touched that desires any more to wear the filthy rags of the old life? The longing of the believer's heart is to walk with him in white; and he says: "I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?" (**Song 5:3**)

Clothing is provided, too, to fit the various needs of God's children. For son-ship there is the toga viril is befitting the place of son-ship; for the athletic in the race there is the garment suitable with every weight laid aside; and for the warrior there is "the whole armor of God" fitting the soldier for offense and defense (**Eph. 6:11-18**). In this full panoply the Christian man of war is irresistible and invincible.

When the family of God, the "chosen generation" (**I Peter 2:9**), is finally manifested with its Lord and Head in glory, each member thereof will be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white (**Rev. 19:8, 14**). For this the whole creation waits, even the unveiling (apocalypse) of the sons of God (**Rom. 8:19**). "Then shall the righteous shine forth in the kingdom of their Father"(**Matt. 13:43**).

Israel as a nation will in that day rejoice in the fulfilment of the promise of **Isa. 61:3**: "to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, that He might be glorified."

"Now unto Him who 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 Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen" (**Jude 24**, **25**).

**HOW MOSES' GRANDSON WENT WRONG**

"And the children of Dan set up for themselves the graven image; and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of the Danites until the day of the captivity of the **Judges 18:30**. R. V.

The King James translation calls Jonathan "the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh," but the revisers have changed it to "the son of Gershom, the son of Moses." We know that Moses had a son named Gershom (**Ex. 2:22**), and undoubtedly this Jonathan was Moses' grandson. According to Ussher's chro­nology, only about eighty-five years elapsed between Moses' return from Midian to Egypt (**Ex. 4**) and the incidents recorded in **Judges 17**, **18**.

This tragic record illustrates the danger of turning from the Word of God. In this story we read, first, of the apostasy of two men in Israel; second, the apostasy of a tribe in Israel, and third, of the setting up of a religious system in the name of God though utterly opposed to His Word.

**I. The Apostasy of Micah - (Judg. 17:1·6)**

**1.** "And there was a man of mount Ephraim, whose name was Micah. And he said unto his mother, The eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from thee, about which thou curse, and spoke of also in mine ears, behold, the silver is with me; I took it" (vv. 1, 2). This mother had saved this money; then she had lost it, and had cursed about it. Now her son confessed that he had stolen it from her.

**2.** "And his mother said, Blessed be thou of Jehovah, my son" (v. 2). "Confession is good for the soul." The mother was pleased with her son's frankness.

**3.** "And when he had restored the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother, his mother said, I had wholly dedicated the silver unto Jehovah from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image: now therefore I will restore it unto thee" (v. 3). Here is an amazing thing. This woman actually proposed to spend money "dedicated unto Jehovah" for the purpose of doing the very thing God had expressly forbidden in His Word (**Ex. 20:4-6**).

**4.** "Yet he restored the money unto his mother; and his mother took two hundred shekels of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image and a molten image: and they were in the house of Micah" (v. 4). The woman was evidently sincere and thought she was doing God a service. It is possible to go on in a religious program with the notion that God is pleased, even though His Word is not obeyed or even consulted.

**5.** "And the man Micah had an house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest" (v. 5). Thus the apostasy, begun in the mother, went on in her son. The whole program was unscriptural. Think of "an house of gods" in the worship of Jehovah! And think of an Ephraimite consecrating one of his own sons to be his priest!

**6.** "In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (v. 6). The Word of God would have told them what was right in the eyes of God, but no one even thought of that, for the Word of God was forgotten.

**II. The Apostasy of Jonathan - (Judg. 17:7-13)**

**1.** "And there was a young man out of Bethlehem-Judah of the family of Judah, who was a Levite, and he sojourned there" (v. 7). This was "Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Moses."

**2.** "And the man departed out of the city from Bethlehem-Judah to sojourn where he could find a place: and he came to mount Ephraim to the house of Micah, as he journeyed. And Micah said unto him, Whence come thou? And he said unto him, I am a Levite of Bethlehem-Judah, and I go to sojourn where I may find a place" (vv. 8, 9). He was seeking a place of service. If the Word of God had prevailed, he would have had a place assigned to him in the service of the tabernacle (**Num. 3:5-9**); but since the Word of God was set at naught, this servant of God was hunting a job. Being out of God's place for him, he sought to find a place for himself.

**3.** "And Micah said unto him, Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest, and I will give thee ten shekels of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals" (v. 10). So he had a "call." He had been looking for a place and he found it. All was quite definite, including his stipend. He was to receive his board and keep, and ten shekels of silver annually.

**4.** "So the Levite went in" (vv. 10-13). The call was accepted and the Levite was properly and duly installed. Everything was very nice and comfortable. "And the Levite was content to dwell with the man; and the young man was unto him as one of his sons. And Micah consecrated the Levite; and the young man became his priest, and was in the house of Micah. Then said Micah, Now know I that Jehovah will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest." Micah knew it was not enough that the young man was a Levite. The priesthood was confined to the descendants of Aaron, and this man was descended from Moses. Micah also knew that he had no authority to consecrate a priest, and yet he felt very comfortable about it all. "Now," he said, quite complacently, "know I that Jehovah will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest." "The whole incident is a striking illustration of all apostasy. With his entire departure from the revealed will of God concerning worship and priesthood, there is yet an exaltation of false priesthood. Saying, 'Blessed be thou of Jehovah,' Micah's mother makes an idol; and Micah expects the blessing of Jehovah because he has linked 'his idolatry to the ancient Levitical order" (Scofield).

**III The Apostasy of the Danites - (Judg. 18:1-31)**

**1.** "In those days there was no king in Israel" (v. 1). Again we are reminded that there was no ruler, and therefore no rule. All standards were gone, there was general anarchy, and "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (**Judg. 17:6**).

**2.** "And in those days the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in; for unto that day all their inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel" (v. 1). But why had their inheritance not fallen to them? Was it not because they had been slack to possess the land which God had given them (**Josh. 18:3**)? They had found their coast too little for them, and they took Leshem, changing its name to Dan (**Josh. 19:47**). But it is also evident that they had failed to occupy all the land allocated to them. They had been slow to possess their possessions. so now they were wandering about seeking "an inheritance to dwell in."

**3.** "And the children of Dan sent of their family five men (v. 2). These five men were to spy out the land and to search it.

**4.** "They came to ... the house of Micah" (vv.2-4), Here they found "the young man the Levite"; that is, Jonathan, the grandson of Moses, who informed them, saying, "Thus and thus deals Micah with me, and .has hired me, and I am his priest."

**5.** "Ask .... of God .... whether our way .... shall be prosperous" (v. 5). They were out of God's place, and out of God's will; they were walking contrary to God's Word; and yet thy would have this apostate priest pray for them!

**6.** Go in peace" (v. 6). Thus he "pronounced the benediction" upon them, assuring them that "before the Lord is your way wherein ye go." But it was not so for God's way was not their way ..

**7.** "What say ye?" (vv. 7, 8). The five spies had now returned with their report.

**8.** "Arise .... for God has given it into your hand" (vv. 9, 10). They proposed to steal the land from the people residing there, and yet they brought in God as a party to their crime.

**9.** "And there went up .... six hundred men"…(vv. 11-13). These were armed men, and they went on until. they "came unto the house of Micah."

**10.** "And these went to Micah's house, and fetched the carved image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image" (vv. 14-18). They came into Micah's "pantheon" and stole everything they found, and went away with it, in the name of Jehovah!

**11.** "Then said the priest unto them, What do ye?" (v. 18). This was the same Jonathan who had "pronounced the benediction" upon the robbers, saying, Before the Lord is your way where in ye go."

**12.** "Hold thy peace, lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and go with us, and be to us a father and a priest: is it better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel?" (v. 19). So Jonathan had another call to a larger field, greater opportunities. Very at­tractive!

**13.** "And the priest's heart was glad" (v. 20). The call was accepted; and then the priest joined in the theft of Micah's property. "He took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the people."

**14.** "What ails thee?" (vv. 21-23). Micah and his neighbors had pursued the thieves, to recover the stolen goods; and when he had caught up with them he was greeted with this question, "What ails thee, that thou come with such a company?"

**15.** "And he said, Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and ye are gone away: and what have I more? and what is this that ye say unto me, What ails thee?" (v. 24). Poor fellow! From his point of view there was plenty that ails him.

**16.** "And the children of Dan said unto him, Let not thy voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows run upon thee, and thou lose thy life, with the lives of thy household. And the children of Dan went their way: and when Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back unto his house" (vv. 25, 26). Indeed, there was nothing left for Micah to do but to go "back unto his house."

**17.** "And they .... came unto Laish" (vv. 27-29). Here they found "a people that were at quiet and secure; and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and burnt the city with fire. And there was no deliverer .... And they built a city and dwelt therein. And, they called the name of the city Dan."

**18.** "And the children of Dan set up for themselves the graven image; and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of the Danites until the day of the captivity of the land. So they set them up Micah's graven image which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh" (vv. 30, 31, R.V.). Thus there was founded an utterly false religious system, conducted in the name of Jehovah; first, through the apostasy of Micah the Ephraimite, then of Jonathan the grandson of Moses, and then of a tribe in Israel. This false religious system, founded about 1400 B. C., continued "until the day of the captivity." If this refers to the Assyrian captivity in 743 B.C., then the false religious system endured about 660 years; and if it refers to the Babylonian captivity about 600 B.C., it endured for 800 years.

There may be a connection between this apostasy and the omission of the tribe of Dan from the sealed remnant (**Rev. 7:1-8**); but ultimately Dan will be restored and "judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel" (**Gen. 49:16**).

Jonathan, the false priest, was the son of Gershom, the son of Moses. Gershom was brought up in a divided household, which may account in part for his son's departure from the way of truth. We read that when Moses started from Midian to lead the exodus from Egypt, "it came to pass by the way in the inn, that Jehovah sought to kill him. Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband are thou to me. So he let him go; then she said, A bloody husband thou are, because of the circumcision" (**Ex. 4:24-26**).

From this strange story we gather that Moses' wife Zipporah until then had opposed the circumcision which should have taken place when Gershom was eight days old. Only when her husband's life was threatened did she yield, and then reluctantly. Here we may find a reason, or at least a partial explanation, for Jonathan the son of Gershom going astray.

The only safe way for God's people is to walk according to His written Word. "This is the way, walk ye in it" (**Isa. 30:21**). \*Reprinted from Moody Monthly

**WHY DO THE WICKED PROSPER AND THE GODLY SUFFER?**

Much has been said and written on this subject, and yet it is ever confronting us. The problem is by no means a new one.

The book of Job which is probably the oldest literature in existence consists chiefly of a discussion of this question. Job, who was perfect and upright and one who feared God and eschewed evil, was a great sufferer. His friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite, insisted that there must be some hidden sin in Job's life for which he was suffering. Job knew better than that, but he was unable to explain the mystery; and in the 21st chapter of the book he himself discusses at length our problem: "Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power? Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. Their bull genders, and fails not; their cow calves, and casts not her calf. They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. Therefore they say unto God. Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve Him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto Him?" (verses 7-15).

And yet, Job reflects, "how oft is the candle of the wicked put out! and how oft comes their destruction upon them! God distributes sorrows in His anger. They are as stubble before the wind, and as chaff that the storm carries away. God lays up His iniquity for His children: He rewards him, and he shall know it. His eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty. For what pleasure hath he in his house after him, when the number of his months is cut off in the midst?" (vv. 17-21).

We who have been permitted to look behind the scenes in Job's case know that his sufferings were at the hands of Satan by the permission of God. The adversary had challenged God concerning Job, and God's answer was to show that He is able to sustain His people through every trail.

But not always are we permitted to look behind the scenes, and to tell why in specific cases the wicked prosper and the godly suffer.

It is often pointed out in the Word of God that the end of the wicked is so terrible, and the end of the righteous so glorious as to provide a sufficient incentive to the righteous: "I have seen the wicked in great power," says the Psalmist, "and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, 10, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off. But the salvation of the righteous is of Jehovah: He is their strength in the time of trouble. And Jehovah shall help them, and deliver them: He shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in Him" (**Psalm 37:35-40**).

The 73rd Psalm is devoted entirely to our problem. "Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well-nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride compasses them about as a chain; violence covers them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish. They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walks through the earth. Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them. And they say, How does God know? and is there knowledge in the most High? Behold these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocence For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning" (verses 1-14).

But while the Psalmist's "feet were almost gone," and his "steps had well nigh slipped," he did not altogether fall into the way of misjudging God concerning the prosperity of the wicked. For he goes on as follows: “If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children. When I thought to know this it was too painful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou caste them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awake; so, O Lord, when thou awake, thou shalt despise their image. Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins. So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee" (vv. 15-22).

I heard of a woman, the godly wife of an ungodly husband, who surprised her husband and his ungodly friends, as well as her own godly friends, by her pa­tience and kindness to her husband and his wicked partners in sin. It is said that her husband was in the habit of coming home at almost any time of day or night with a crowd of his friends and ordering her to prepare them an elaborate meal. She always responded patiently and cheerfully without a word of complaint. Finally one of her friends asked her how she could do that? And she answered: "You see, he is my husband, and the Word of God tells me to reverence my husband (**Eph. 5:33**). And my husband is a lost man. He will not be here very many years, and after that, unless he is saved meanwhile. he will have an eternity of woe with no one to minister to him. I am his wife, and I feel that I must make the time here for him as pleasant as possible, in view of the awful suffering witch awaits him." This came to the ears of her husband and when he questioned her about it she confirmed what he had heard, with the result that his heart was touched, and he was brought to God, and walked with God some years before his death.

This may let us into the secret of God's dealings with the wicked. "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" (**2 Peter 3:9**).

But why do the godly suffer? As a Christian woman put it to me recently: "The Lord knows that I am not questioning His wisdom nor His love nor His power; but can you give me any light upon the mystery concerning the sufferings of God's own dear people?"

"Yes," I replied, "I think I can. For one of these sufferers has written about it. His name is Paul. And he says in **Col. 1**: ‘I Paul ... now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church’” (vv. 23, 24).

This does not mean that there is anything lacking in the atoning work of our Lord Jesus on the cross of Calvary. That was all sufficient for the purpose; and every man who takes his place under the shelter of the shed blood of the Son of God is saved and, for ever safe.

But "for his body's sake, which is the church," it appears that much suffering is necessary on the part of His people in order that the church may be completed and made ready for its presentation unto 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**).

Nothing is more clearly set forth in the Word of God than the necessity of this ministry of suffering on the part of God's people. Yet we are assured that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (**Rom. 8:18**).

"For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (**2 Cor. 4:16-18**). Sometimes we are perplexed in the midst of suffering and wondering whether the trials through which we are just now passing are the kind of trials that God would have us to endure. As one Christian put it:

"I should be glad to pass through any kind of suffering; but somehow it doesn't seem to me that the kind of sufferings I am passing through are the kind that will accomplish anything. And I cannot understand why God would desire me to suffer, when I am doing the very best I can to serve and please Him."

But this is just the kind of suffering appointed for us of God: "For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps: who did not sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judges righteously: who His own self bear 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. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (**1 Pet. 2:19-25**).

And again: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings: that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you: on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" (**1 Pet. 4:12-16**)

Again it will be seen by the this passage that this suffering on the part of the Christian has to do with the building up of the church: "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator" (**I Pet. 4:17-19**).

We are all familiar with the effect of suffering in our own lives and in the lives of others, and we know that suffering is necessary for our own development in the Christian life. Tribulation works patience, and without tribulation there could be no patience. What kind of a Christian life would that be in which there was no suffering and no patience? It is only as we are willing to endure hardship as good soldiers of Jesus Christ that we learn how to carryon in the good fight of faith.

But the effect upon others is perhaps even greater, as they behold the fruit of the Spirit-love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness and self-control-abounding in the lives of God's people.

It falls to my lot to travel a great deal, and as I go from place to place my attention is often called to some conspicuous example of a suffering saint. And it so happens that the greatest sufferer I ever knew was the most joyful person I have ever met. Out from her bedroom, where she was prostrated for twenty years, in utter blindness and constant pain, there flowed rivers of living water of blessing to the uttermost part of the world. And so with many others whom I have been privileged to meet and who are enduring constant suffering in a ministry obviously appointed of God. There is always evident the abundant fruitage of their suffering in the building up of the body of Christ which is the church of God.

Let us then not shrink from whatever suffering may be appointed unto us. "For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. For Christ also has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (**1 Pet. 3:17**, **18**).

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon Him; for He cares for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (**1 Pet. 5:6-11**).

**OUR LORD'S VIRGIN BIRTH**

To be a Christian, must one believe in the virgin birth? Absolutely!

No one who denies the virgin birth of our Lord is a Christian.

There is a certain body of doctrine which is believed by all Christians; that is, by all born-again persons; and this body of doctrine includes the doctrine of the virgin birth.

**Our Guide and Guard**

The Holy Spirit sees to this. He is the Unction, the Anointing, the infallible Teacher, received "from the Holy One," guiding God's "little children," in order that they might "know all things" (**1 John 2:20-27**). Therefore, all God's children are guided into all truth, in fulfilment of the Promise of the Lord Himself in **John 16:13**-"When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." It is on this account that every child of God is constantly and effectually guarded from apostasy. None of God's children can be deceived concerning any vital doctrine of the faith once delivered unto the saints. And the doctrine of the virgin birth of our Lord is an integral part of the faith thus delivered. It is predicted and demanded in the Old Testament, and it is announced and emphasized in the New Testament.

**The Virgin Birth Prophesied**

The prophecy of the virgin birth is written in **Isa. 7:14**, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel." It has been objected that this sign was never fulfilled to King Ahaz during his lifetime. But it will be observed that the sign was not for Ahaz at all, but for the House of David. Isaiah had offered the king a sign, "either in the depth, or in the height above" (v. 11); but Ahaz had, with a pretense of piety, refused it. Thereupon, the prophet said: "Hear ye now, O House of David; is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? Therefore the Lord Himself shall give **you** a sign." Then follows the sign of the virgin birth, which was fulfilled in due time to and within the House of David. Both Mary and Joseph were descendants of David.

Of course, the virgin birth was intimated in Scripture long before Isaiah predicted it. The virgin birth of Messiah was necessary in order that He might be peculiarly the Seed of the woman of **Gen. 3: 15**. Augustine, and indeed most of the early Christian fathers, saw in **Jer. 31:22** a reference to the virgin birth of Christ: "Jehovah hath created a new thing in the earth. A woman shall compass (encompass, R. V.) a man." Matthew Henry favors this view also, though there is room for difference of opinion on the point.

**The Prophecy Fulfilled**

In the first chapter of Matthew we have the most detailed and unmistakable narrative of the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by (or, more literally, spoken by the Lord through) the prophet, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife and knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born son: and he (Joseph, in obedience to the word of verse 21) called his name Jesus" (**Matt. 1:18-25**). The meaning of "Jesus" is Jehovah the Savior. Thus we have Emmanuel, God with us, in the person of Jehovah the Savior. And, what a Savior!

According to Luke's record, Mary said to the angel who had come to announce the birth of the Son of God as Son of Man: "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" To this the angel replied: "The Holy Spirit 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" (**Luke 1:26-38**).

It has been urged against the doctrine of the virgin birth that Paul never mentions it or refers to it in any way. It is true that the Holy Spirit, in writing through Paul the Epistles to the churches, has not been pleased to speak in detail of the virgin birth; but that he refers to it in **Galatians 4:4** can hardly be doubted. This is what gives point to his phrase used there, "made of a woman."

**The Virgin Birth Essential to Christ's Ascending the Throne of David**

The virgin birth of our Lord is essential In connection with the succession and title to the throne of David. The promise is absolute that one day "the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David" (**Luke 1:31-33**); but the fulfillment of this promise would be impossible if Joseph were really Jesus' father in the flesh. Joseph was descended from David indeed, but his line comes through Coniah, and the seed of Coniah is forever .inhibited from sitting upon David's throne. Coniah is the Jechonias of **Matt. 1:11-12**, and of him it is written in **Jer. 22:29**, **30** "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of Jehovah. Thus saith Jehovah, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah." Then, a few verses later, in **Jer. 23:5, 6**, God promises to "raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His name whereby He shall be called, Jehovah Our Righteousness."

In **Ezekiel 21:27**, God says of the throne of David: "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more, until He come, Whose right it is; and I will give it Him." Let these words be linked with "the Lord shall give unto Him the throne of His father David" in **Luke 1:31-33**, and the connection is complete. Mary came from David through his son Nathan, and thus escaped the stigma attaching to the name of Coniah and his heirs. Her son, therefore, since He is descended from David and not through Coniah, is Heir Apparent, and all rights to David's throne meet in Him. In due time He will return to earth to take up His claim, ascending the throne of David, and filling the earth with the knowledge and glory of the lord as the waters cover the sea. .

Before this, however, in order to have His co-heirs with Him, He will one day and it may be any day now appear in the air over the earth, and catch away to Himself all those who have made a covenant with Him by blood. These He will receive unto Himself, that where He is they may be also; and when He appears, they will appear in glory with Him. "Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus!"

**BORN TO DIE**

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was the only man who was ever born into the world for the express purpose of dying. It is by His death, followed by His resurrection, that we who have received Him receive eternal life, and not by His perfect life while He sojourned here.

Many attempts were made by Satan to prevent our Lord from reaching Calvary. The Old Testament Scriptures repeatedly predicted the manner of His death; it was to be by crucifixion; and if this could have been prevented, the Word of God would have been broken.

Through King Herod Satan sought to bring about the death of God's Son while He was yet an infant. Through storms at sea He was threatened. Even His dearest friends and closest followers unwittingly sought to turn Him from the path leading to Calvary's cross, saying, "Pity Thyself! This shall not be unto Thee"; 'but He recognized the source and significance of the suggestion, and He said: "Get thee behind Me, Satan! For thou savor not the things that be of God, but the things that be of man."

And now comes what was perhaps the most subtle of these efforts to divert Him from the path in which He trod toward Calvary. He had set His face as a flint to do His Father's will by laying down His life for men, dying, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. In the twelfth chapter of John's Gospel, beginning at verse twenty, we read that "there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast; the same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus." These Greeks were Gentiles.

It was an unusual request. These Gentiles doubtless knew that the Lord Jesus had always confined His ministry to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," for­bidding His disciples to go to the Gentiles at all. Perhaps it was because of this that they chose Philip, through whom to reach the Lord Jesus. Though Philip was an Israelite, he had a Gentile name, and he came from Bethsaida, up against the Gentile border.

But Philip did not know what to do. He hunted up his "buddy." I do not wonder that there is a Brotherhood of Andrew and Philip; for these two men seem always to have worked together instead of singly. "Philip comes and tells Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus."

Those who read carelessly here are apt to assume that, as a matter of course, these Gentiles were at once received by our Lord. But this is a mistake. He did not receive them. But why?

We do not know just who these Gentiles were, nor how many of them there were. There may have been only two or three; there may have been a dozen, or a score, or a hundred, or even a larger number. Or they may have constituted a delegation from some larger body. As to these things, we are not informed.

**The Great Decision**

But certain it is that their request had a strange, a startling effect, upon our Lord. Far from receiving the Gentiles, He did not even reply to them. Instead, He fell into a soliloquy which revealed that He was disturbed; He was agitated; He was strangely moved. Listen to Him:

"And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone: but if it die, it brings forth much fruit."

You see? He is likening Himself to a grain of wheat.

He must die, or abide alone; only through dying can He become fruitful. The temptation presented through the Gentiles to turn away from His purpose, to turn away from the cross, to live rather than die. He was a great Teacher, the greatest of all teachers, and the world needed teaching. Why not, then, go on living in the world and help the world through His teaching? Why did He need to die? He himself had said, "No man taketh My life from Me." He had no sin in Him, and therefore death, which is the wages of sin, had no claim upon Him, no dominion over Him. But listen again:

"He that loves his life shall lose it; and he that hates his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honor."

The next verse; the twenty-seventh, reveals most graphically what was passing through His mind:

"Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour?"

I am sure there should be the question mark there. The meaning is, What shall I say? Shall I say, Father save Me from this hour? "But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy Name!"

If was a solemn reiteration of His decision to go to the cross. He would not receive these Gentiles. He had no ministry for them except to die for them, and He was already on His way to do that.

And so pleased was the Father with this word from His Son that He spoke out of Heaven saying, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."

Three times during our Lord's ministry did the Father thus open the heavens to express His delight with His Son, and in every instance it was just when the Son had shown His determination to die for the sins of men. The first time was at the baptism in Jordan, the second time was on the Mount of Transfiguration, when He was discussing with Moses and Elijah His coming death; and now again the word of the Father's approval comes when His Son is again saying, "I will not seek to save My life, but rather I will lay it down. Father, glorify Thy Name!"

**The Great Crisis**

But now we have another mysterious statement from our Lord's lips. Look at verses thirty-one and thirty-two:

"Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."

The ordinary Greek word for "judgment" is used here, and it is "crisis." If might have been better to leave it without translation, for we have the word in our English by transliteration-"crisis."

Surely, it was a moment of crisis for all of us, for the fate of the race depended upon His momentous decision. Had He failed to go to the cross, none of us could have been saved, and those who already were in Heaven were there only on His covenant with the Father that one day He the divine Son should die the shameful death on the cross for them.

The prince of this world is Satan. His doom was sealed in that moment of crisis, and in due time the sentence there pronounced will be fully carried out.

But what is the meaning of the words, "And I, lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me?" It is strange that some should interpret them, as they so often do, as teaching that through the faithful preaching of His servants all men should be drawn unto Him. It never works out that way, for most men are not drawn to Him, no matter how faithfully He is thus "lifted up." No, this is not His meaning, and if we had carefully noted His words in the next verse we should have been guarded against falling into that error.

"This He said, signifying what death He should die."

The death He died was death by crucifixion: He was "lifted up from the earth" on the cross. Compare **John 3:14**, **15**; **8:28**; **18:31**, **32**.

But, even so, how then did He draw all men unto Him?

The answer is that He drew the whole human race unto Him, and, taking its sin upon Him, He became the propitiation for the sins of the world. He tasted death for every man.

If is not true that He died only for the elect. He is the Lamb of God Who took away the sin of the world. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, but imputing them unto Him. He is theSavior of all men, specially to them that believe indeed, but yet in a true sense the Savior of all men. What a tragedy, that, having such a Savior, the world should still be lost!

This is the basis of the salvation of little children.

They are saved, not for their goodness, for they have none. How could they be good since they are our children? They are not saved because they do no wrong for they do wrong, and they know they do wrong, long before they are old enough to accept Christ as their Savior intelligently. They are saved because Christ died for them and they have not rejected Him Who can save to the uttermost.

If you ask me how this effects the heathen who have never heard the Gospel, my answer is that God has given them a witness in the invisible things of Him as well as in the things that are seen, things which testify of His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse. (**Rom. 1:20**) There is no use asking what will happen to them if they die without hearing the Gospel; far better to consider what may happen to us if they die without hearing the Gospel which we might have given them.

It is a wonderful privilege to go to any man, anywhere, and tell him that Christ died for him, and that he may have salvation, not indeed for the asking, but for the taking. Whosoever will may come.

**A CRIPPLE'S HEALING** (**Acts 3:1-10**)

**1.** "Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour" (v. 1). These men were m n of prayer, and they were follow­ing their custom in gathering with others of God's people "at the hour of prayer." It is a good thing to maintain the habit of prayer, not only in private, but also in the gatherings of God's people at "the prayer meeting." There is an interesting story of a deacon who stopped attending prayer meeting, and his pastor was greatly distressed. He labored with the deacon, but to no avail. Week after week passed and the deacon did not come to prayer meeting. One cold night the deacon had again been absent from the prayer meeting and after the meeting was over the pastor went to the deacon's house. Through the window he could see the deacon sitting facing the fire in the grate, and with his back toward the window. Without ringing the bell or knocking, the pastor, as was his custom at that house, went in, and, without a word, sat down beside the deacon facing the fire. The pastor and deacon sat together for a time silently, and then the pastor took the tongs and, reaching into the heart of the fire, he removed therefrom a burning coal, took it over to the side of the grate and put it down by itself, away from the fire. Then he put the tongs back in place, and the two men again sat for a little time without speaking. They watched that coal growing cold and gray. And finally the deacon saw the point and said, "All right, pastor, I'll be there next week." We need to get together. We must not forsake "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.** "And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms" (vv. 2, 3). Like so many of the recorded happenings of Scrip­ture, this narrative is rich in typical teaching (**1 Cor. 10:11**). The lame man crippled from his birth is a good type of the natural man in his total disability to walk with God, or to know God, or to obey God, or to please God (**Rom. 8:9**). He thinks he knows what he needs, as this man thought his greatest need was money. As he saw these men of God going to prayer meeting, he "asked an alms." Incidentally it might be remarked that men who pray are usually the men who may be depend­ed upon to give. And so this cripple established his place of alms-seeking on the street leading to the place of prayer.

**How to Win Souls**

**3.** "And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us" (vv. 4-8). In verses 4 to 8 we have a splendid picture of instruction in soul-winning. There are seven steps in the process, and seven is the number of completeness. It was a complete work, well done by a man trained at the feet of Christ Himself, and energized and taught by the Holy Spirit of Truth.

**(1)** Peter fastened his eyes upon the man. Let us learn from this that if we are to engage in the work of soul-winning we must give our attention to it. It cannot be done incidentally. "He that wins souls is wise"

(**Prov. 11:30**); and "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (**Dan. 12:3**); and therefore let the soul-winner give to soul-winning the place in his program belonging to it.

"Uncle John Vassar" was a famous soul winner of a generation past. One day he found himself in a railroad station waiting room, alone with a young woman whose husband had stepped out for a while. When the husband returned he found his wife weeping, and she explained that the old man whom he had left there with her had talked with her about things she had not thought of for a long time.

"What things?" inquired the husband.

"Oh," she replied, "he talked to me about God and about sin and about salvation through the blood of Christ."

"Well," said the husband, "if I had been here I would have told him to mind his own business."

"My dear," said the wife, "if you had been here you would have known that he was minding his own business."

**(2)** Peter said, "Look on us." The soul winner must not only give his own attention to his work, but he must get the attention of the man whom he is seeking to win. Your man will be wanting to talk about the weather or politics or even religion, but you must not let him occupy the time with incidentals. Get him as soon as possible to the real thing in hand. Referring again to Uncle John Vassar, Dr. Gordon used to say that when Mr. Vassar was engaged by the Clarendon Street Church of Boston where Dr. Gordon was pastor, and sent to work from house to house among the aristocrats of the old Back Bay district, it was his habit to

**Life Manifested**

(**1**) He leaped up. Here is manifestation of life.

(**2**) He stood. That was hopeful. Sometimes they leap up and do not stand. Sometimes the emotions are stirred without any real life. The root of the matter is not there. But when those who leap up stand after leaping up, that is good. Compare **Acts 4:14**.

(**3**) He walked. Ah, that is even better. This man will get somewhere.

(**4**) He entered with them into the temple. Splendid! The new convert seeks fellowship with the people of God.

(**5**) He continued walking. Fine! Sometimes after they "join the church" the walking stops. But not so in this man's case.

(**6**) He continued leaping. Excellent! There is joy here, as well as life.

(**7**) He was praising God. Beautiful! This praising God should never cease in the life of the believer. "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name” (**Heb.13:15**).

**God's Message**

**6.** "And all the people saw him walking and praising God: and they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him" (9, 10). Now this was what was in the mind of God in performing this mighty miracle of healing at this particular time and place. He had a great and wonderful message for the people of Israel, and therefore He sought to gather them to hear the message, and He took this means of doing so. Now read on in the omitted verses. You find the lame man which was healed, being himself unable to preach as yet, merely "held Peter and John" until the people gathered together, "greatly wondering" and ready to listen. Then comes the wonderful message. Peter, telling forth the Word of God, charges the nation with killing "the Prince of life," Whom, however, God raised from the dead (v. 15). "And," said he, "His name through faith in his name has made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all" (v. 16). Peter admitted that this had been done in ignorance (v. 17), and declared that it had all been foretold in the Scriptures (v. 18). And now comes God's wonderful offer as He still stretches forth His hand to a gainsaying and disobedient people: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, Who before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (vv. 19-21). If they would not turn even though their hands were red with the blood of the crucified Christ--if now they would turn to God He would send Jesus Christ straight back to them. What a wonderful offer it was! But like these previous offers of grace and mercy it was rejected by the nation, and therefore the times of restitution of those things spoken by the prophets are deferred; but "yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (**Heb. 10:37**).

**THE PERIL OF THE LORD’S SUPPER** (**I** **Cor. 11:27-34**)

**1.** "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" (v. 27). The Revisers have done well in changing "unworthily" to "in an unworthy manner." For while the word and the phrase means the same thing it is not always so understood. And many dear children of God read the adverb "unworthily" as if it were the adjective "unworthy," and they withdraw when the Lord's Supper is about to be celebrated, because they consider themselves unworthy to partake of it. The question here is not the worthiness of those who partake of it, but the manner in which they should do it. It is a perilous thing to partake of the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner.

**2.** "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup" (v. 28). The Revision changes "examine" to "prove." The idea is to test ourselves before we come to the Lord's Supper, and to see to it that we approach this ordinance in a worthy manner.

**3.** "For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" (v. 29). "Damnation" is entirely wrong here, and "condemnation" would be just as wrong. For neither damnation nor condemnation is possible under any circumstances to a believer (**Rom. 8:1**, R. V.). We shall see how true this is as we go on with the lesson. The verse should read, as the Revisers have given it: "For he that eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body."

**4.** "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (v. 30). Here is a most amazing statement. "For this cause," that is, because these Corinthian Christians had been partaking of the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner, for this cause many of them were suffering from bodily weakness and sickness, and many of them had actually died under the chastening hand of God. There had been a mysterious epidemic in the Christian community of Corinth. The doctors were not able to understand it. It was confined to the Christian colony. There was a mysterious weakness of body, an indescribable illness which resulted often in death to the patient, leaving the physician unable to explain what had caused the weakness or sickness or death. The record here gives the cause of it. It was "for this cause." It was because these Christians had been careless and indifferent and disorderly in the observance of the Lord's Supper. They had refused to confess their sins and judge themselves and mend their ways, and therefore God had removed many of them from the scene and had taken them to be with Himself, leaving these matters to be taken up in due time and due form at the Judgment Seat of Christ (**1 Cor. 3:11-15**; **2 Cor. 5:10**).

**5.** "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" (v. 31, 32). You see? These believers were not condemned, as we have already pointed out. It is quite impossible that they should be condemned, for they had already been condemned in the person of their Substitute on the cross of Calvary, and were thereby delivered forever from further condemnation. They were chastened of the Lord, that they should not be condemned with the world. They did not go to Hell. Christians do not go to Hell. They went to Heaven. And that not because of any worthiness in themselves, but because of the worthiness alone of Him Who had died for them and risen again; Who had been delivered up for their offences, and raised again for their justification.

These Corinthian Christians were children of God, but they were out of fellowship with Him on account of their sin, and they had continued in their sin until it had become a sin' unto death, such as is mentioned in **1 John 5:16**, **17**. The death there referred to is physical death, and sometimes as in the case of the Corinthians, physical death is sent upon God's dear children on account of their sin and their failure to judge themselves for their sins. Moses at Meribah, Achan at Ai, and Ananias and Sapphira at Jerusalem, were all guilty in this regard. Each of them sinned a sin unto death.

How good it is to know that our salvation rests upon a far more secure foundation than that of our goodness or faithfulness! "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ," and there is no need for another, for "The foundation of God stands sure, having this (double) seal, The Lord knows them that are His. And, Let everyone that names the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (**1 Cor. 3:11-15**; **2 Tim. 2:19**).

**WHY THE SON OF GOD BECAME THE SON OF MAN**

When Nathaniel greeted the Lord Jesus as the Son of God, the Lord's reply was, "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man" (**John 1:47-51**).

This statement is our Lord's own exposition of Jacob's ladder dream of **Genesis 28**. He Himself is the ladder, the way into heaven and the only way; no one comes to the Father but by Him (**John 14:6**). He is the door, and the only door. By Him if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture (**John 10:9**). He who would climb up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber (**John 10:1**).

**From Earth to Heaven**

In his dream at Bethel, Jacob saw the ladder set up on the earth with its top reaching to heaven. It was not built in heaven, but on earth. And in both the dream of Jacob and our Lord's interpretation of the dream, the angels ascended before they descended; they first went up from earth to heaven, rather than descending first from heaven to earth. The ladder had first to be built and set up on the earth before communication between earth and heaven could be possible.

The Son of God as such could never have accomplished this communication. In order that the way to God might be opened unto man, the Son of God must become the Son of man. If the ladder was to be built upon the earth, the Son of God must lay aside the glory that was His before the world was (**John 17:5**), take upon Himself the likeness of sinful flesh, and become an offering for sin, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us (**Rom. 8:3, 4**), and the way unto God's presence opened unto us.

Job in his day longed for a mediator, through whom h might approach God. "For," he complained, "he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment. Neither is there any days-man betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both" (**Job 9:32**, **33**).

**A Glimpse of the Days-man**

In his terrible trials Job was true to God, saying, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (**Job 13: 15**); but he could not find Him. He wanted to write something, that God and man might see it. He cried out:

"Oh, that my words were now written! oh, that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever!" And then suddenly he got a glimpse of the Days-man, though it was only a glimpse by faith. "I know," he said, "that my Redeemer lives, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me" (**Job 19:23-27**).

This was a wonderful revelation, but Job was not satisfied. It should be remembered that Job had no Bible, for he lived before there was a Bible. He longed for further and fuller revelation. "Oh, that one would hear me!" he cried out in his anguish. "Behold, my desire is, that the Almighty would answer me, and that mine adversary had written a book." He thought of the Almighty as his enemy, his adversary; but he desired to know more about Him and wished He had written a book. Then he tells what he would do with God's book if he had it. "Surely I would take it upon my shoulder, and bind it as a crown to me" (**Job 31:35**, **36**).

Is it not wonderful to reflect that Job himself was already being used of God to write the book he so greatly desired? There is no doubt that the book of Job was the first part of the Bible to be written. And is it not still more wonderful to consider that the Days-man he so greatly desired was already, in God's reckoning, his Redeemer, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (**Rev. 13:8**)?

**How the Gulf Was Spanned**

In the wonderful passage of **Philippians 2:5-11**, the whole story is told in graphic language, showing the steps by which the Son of God became the Son of man, and how He then, as Son of man, took His seat at the right hand of God. We quote, translating literally:

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form (the place, the grade, the position, the rank) of God, counted not the being on an equality with God as a thing to be retained by grasping; but emptied himself, taking the form (the place, the grade, the position, the rank) of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross."

So far, we see the humiliation, the self-imposed humiliation, of the Son of God. Thus was the way prepared for Him to become the Way to God for all who would come through Him. The ladder could now be set up on the earth to reach unto heaven, and make communication, and communion also, possible between God and man. Now, let us read on:

"Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

But just whom did God thus exalt? Was it the Son of God as such? Would it be exaltation for Him to be received and restored to the place already His, and His from all eternity? That would be restoration, but not exaltation. It would be recognition, but not exaltation.

Who, then, was it that God thus exalted and placed at His right hand in the heavenlies? It was Jesus, the Son of man.

But is not Jesus the Son of God also?

Yes, indeed He is; but it was as Son of man rather than as Son of God that He was exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high.

"Jesus" is His human name; His name as Son of man. In His own Hebrew tongue it was "Jehoshua" -Jehovah the Savior- given to Him because He was sent to save His people from their sins; Jehovah incarnate; he Lord of glory dwelling in the virgin's Son that He might be the Savior of men.

Someone may ask how He could be called the Son of man since He was the Seed of the woman and born without a human father. The answer is that He was the Son of man in the generic sense; He was the Son of the race of men, the Son of mankind, the Son of humanity. In the four Gospels He applies the title of the Son of man to Himself eighty times.

**A Man in the Glory**

When Jesus of Nazareth was taken up from the Mount of Olives and seated at God's side, there was a Man sitting there for the first time. As Son of God He had occupied that place from times everlasting, but as Son of man He had never been there before. We may now rejoice that there is a Man in heaven. He sits there for us. He is our Representative as He sits there, and His session there is a pledge and guaranty to us that we ourselves who have taken our place under the shelter of His shed blood shall one day sit there also. Indeed, in God's reckoning, we are already there, seated together with the Son of man (**Eph. 2:6**). He is there as our Advocate (**1 John 2:1**, **2**), and He is there to keep us saved unto the end, ever living to make intercession for us (**Heb. 7:25**).

It is as Son of man that the Lord Jesus will one day judge the world (**John 5:22-27**; **Acts 17:31**), and in that judgment we shall be associated with Him (**1 Cor. 6:1-3**).

Let us rejoice in Him who thus humbled Himself to become our Redeemer, the Days-man betwixt God and man, that He might lay His hand upon us both. How thankful we are that as there is one God, there is "one mediator also between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all" (**1 Tim. 2:5**, **6**, R. V.). Blessed be His holy name forever!

**THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES**

An Exposition of the Fifteenth Chapter of the Gospel According to John.

That the doctrine of the believer's eternal security in Christ is confirmed rather than contradicted by the 15th Chapter of John is shown in this study.

This chapter consists of a portion of the discourse of our Lord given to His disciples on the night of His arrest. It begins in the 13th chapter of John, and includes four chapters, closing with the 16th, after which comes the high-priestly prayer of chapter 17.

**I. Conditions of Fruitfulness (1-11).**

**1.** "I am the true vine" (1). Here our Lord presents Himself in sharp contrast with the nation of Israel, which had proven to be "an empty vine," bringing forth fruit unto itself (**Hos. 10:1**). God brought this vine out of Egypt, making way for it by casting out the Gentile nations, and planting it. "Thou prepared room before it, and did cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river" (**Ps. 80:8-11**). Israel had become a great vineyard, reaching by her power from the Mediterranean on the west to the Euphrates on the east. But, alas! despite all the care given to the vineyard, it failed to bring forth fruit unto God. "He fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein; and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes" (**Isa. 5:2**; **Ezek. 15**; compare **Matt. 21:33-46**; **Mk. 12:1-9**; **Luke 20:9-19**).

**2.** "And my Father is the husbandman" (1). The time had come to take the work from the "wicked husbandmen" who had so miserably failed, and for God to take the work into His own hands. And, of course, the work is 'now to be broadened; it is no longer confined to Israel. It was to a Gentile church that Paul afterwards wrote, "Ye are God's husbandry" (**1 Cor. 3:9**).

**3.** "**Fruit**,…**more fruit**, ... **much fruit**" (1-8).

These are the three degrees of fruit Note theconditions:

**(1)** "Every branch in me that bears not fruit he taketh away." Utter fruitlessness ends in separation from Christ. Judas had just gone out in the night to betray Him Whom he had called Lord.

**(2)** "Every branch that bears fruit, he purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit." Fruit bearing leads to purging, pruning, cleansing. This, plainly enough, speaks of chastening; and all in order to increased fruitfulness.

**(3)** "Now ye are clean (purged, pruned, cleansed) through the word which I have spoken unto you." So, in **John 17:17**, he prays, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

**(4)** "Abide in me." Without Him we can do nothing. "To abide in Christ,'" says Dr. Scofield, "is, on the one hand, to have no known sin unjudged and unconfessed, no interest into which He is not brought, no life which He cannot share. On the other hand, the .abiding one takes all burdens to Him and draws all wisdom, life, and strength from Him. It is not unceasing consciousness of these things, and of Him, but that nothing is allowed in the life which separates from Him."

**(5)** "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." 'Pray and fruit-bearing are closely related. And there can be neither effectual prayer nor abounding fruit apart from abiding in Him.

**(6)** "Herein is my Father glorified." A fruitful Christian is an unanswerable argument for the reality and power of God. "So shall ye be my disciples."

**4.** "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you" (9). Further than this language could not go to assure His own dear ones of His love toward them. The Father so loved the world that He gave His Son; and the Son so loved that He gave Himself.

**5.** "Continue ye in my love" (9-11). It will help greatly in the understanding of this passage if we retain the same verb throughout, as in the Greek:

"Abide in my love. If yea keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might abide in you, and that your joy might be full."

**II. The New Family, in the World, but not of it (12-27).**

**1.** "Love one another" (12-17). This is the hallmark of the family of God. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (**1 John 3:14**). But this love would be impossible were it not for His love for us. He calls us not servants, but friends. "We love, because he first loved us" (**1 John 4: 19**, R. V.).

**2.** **If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you .... They hated me without a cause**" (18-25). The disciples of Christ are fully warned to expect nothing from the world but hatred and rejection. There is no occasion, therefore, to be surprised when such treatment is received from a world lying in the wicked one (**1 John 5:19**, R. V.).

**3.** "The Comforter ... shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness" (26, 27). And so it transpired that when, some years afterward, in the settlement. of controversy, the apostles and elders at Jerusalem "Communicated with their brethren in Antioch, it was deemed quite sufficient to write, “It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us" (**Acts 15:28**; compare **Acts 13:1-4**).

**The Chief Difficulty**

The chief difficulty in connection with this chapter will arise in connection with the words of our Lord in the early part of the chapter. He said: "Every branch in me that bears not fruit he taketh away. . . If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." This is a favorite passage with the Arminian commentators, for they insist that it proves the possibility of a truly saved man being lost. On the other hand, the Calvinists are much troubled by it, and among them there is no consensus of opinion.

Suppose we say that these words teach the possibility of a truly regenerate man being lost after all, what shall we then do with the great body of Scripture which teaches the exact opposite? No prophecy of Scripture is of any by-itself interpretation (**2 Pet. 1:10**). We must not interpret any single passage so as to make it flatly contradict all that Scripture elsewhere says upon the subject.

There is, for example, no room for doubt as to the meaning of our Lord Jesus' words in **John 10:27-30**. He declared that his sheep **have** eternal life, and that "they shall **never** perish."

Then, too, the whole fabric of the gospel rests upon the doctrine of grace, and grace is favor. Grace is often defined as "unmerited favor"; but favor to be favor, must be unmerited. Grace, as one little girl well said, is "everything for nothing." By it the whole thought of salvation by works is excluded. If a believer sins- and what believer does not sin?-his fellowship is suspended, his communication with God is interrupted, but his salvation is not jeopardized, nor is his restoration to God's fellowship by means of being "saved again". It is through confession. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (**I John 1:9**). But what if the sinning believer refuses to confess his sins, what then? The answer is in **1 Cor. 11:31**, **32**: "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." This chastening may take the form of weakness, or sickness, or even death, as shown by the context, but it is chastening, and not condemnation. "Whom the Lord loves he chastens," but condemnation is im­possible for the believer (**John 5:24**; **Rom. 8:1**, R. V.; **Heb.12:6**).

On the other hand, what shall we say to the words, "Every branch in me that bears not fruit he taketh away"? Some writers tell us that this taking away is the result of chastening, as in **1 Cor. 11:30** "many sleep;" that is, many in the Corinthian church had died on account of unconfessed sin. "They are taken away as branches, though not lost" (Malachi Taylor). This might be an acceptable explanation were it not for the terrible words of verse 6 of this chapter, "Men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."

Others, and this is a large class of writers, tell us that these branches were never really in the vine at all, except by outward appearance; that they are pro­fessing Christians. Dean Alford, for example, says that they "are made members of Christ by baptism," the vine being "the visible church here, of which Christ is the inclusive Head: the vine contains the branches; hence the unfruitful, as the fruitful, are 'in me,''' that is, in Christ. This is hardly satisfactory when one remembers that the words we are studying are words from the mouth of the Lord Himself, Who spoke as other men never speak, and all of Whose words are pure words.

Still other writers insist that the unfruitful branches are the people of Israel, who indeed are described in Rom. 11 as natural branches cut off from the good olive tree. But this interpretation also fails, for the dispensational cutting off is really national, rather than individual. Israel as a nation is cut off; "blindness in part is happened to Israel" for the time being, "until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in" (**Rom. 11:25-27**). Yet whenever an individual Jew believes in the Lord Jesus Christ he is received on the same footing as other believers. "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew" (**Rom. 11:2**).

By still other writers we are taught that what we have here is a parable of service, and that it is not to be interpreted as applying to salvation. These writers emphasize the words "as a branch" in the 6th verse, and they tell us that a man might be cast forth as a branch, that is, that he might be a rejected servant, without having his salvation endangered. But there is nothing said in the parable about service; the whole theme is fruit-bearing; and there is a vast difference between service and fruit-bearing, though no one will deny the real connection between them. Believers are "created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (**Eph. 2:10**), and this is service; but fruit is not works. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace," etc. (**Gal. 5:22**, **23**). These are not things that a Christian is called upon to **do**, nor are they things that he **can** do. They are the effect of yielding, rather than of working.

Great light is shed upon our problem when we consider the comprehensive scope of our Lord's atoning work. There is a sense in which Christ, by His work on the cross, displaced Adam as the federal head of the race. In God's reckoning Christ died for all, and in Him all died. The purpose of His death was "that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again" (**2 Cor. 5:15**, R. V.).

In this federal sense, the race is reckoned as in Him. In **1 Cor. 15:22** it is written, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." And this includes not only the saved, who are to "be raised incorruptible" (verse 52), but also "the rest of the dead," who must be raised to receive their final doom (**Rev. 20:5**, **12-15**). Through Adam's sin "judgment came unto all men to condemnation; even so through one act of **righteousness** (that is, by the righteous act of Christ on the cross) the free gift came unto all men to justi­fication of life. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made right­eous" (**Rom. 5:18**, **19**, R. V.).

Not all men are saved, and yet the sacrificial death of Jesus cannot be limited in its effect to believers. While the Scriptures do not teach universal salvation, they surely do teach universal redemption. Christ was "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of **the world**" (**John 1:29**). When He died on the cross, it was in the divine purpose "that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (**Heb. 2:9**). He "is the Savior of all men, especially of those that believe" (**1 Tim. 4:10**). "Those that believe" are saved, while those that reject are lost; but it remains true that even those who are lost have a Savior, for he "is the Savior of all men." He is truly "the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (**1 John 2:2**).

Mr. Spurgeon, preaching on this 2nd verse of John 15, says: "Both the persons described in the text were in Christ: in Christ in different senses it is plain, because the first persons were not so in Christ as to bring forth fruit. Consequently, as fruit is that by which we are to judge a man, they were not in Christ effectually, graciously, influentially, or so as to receive the fruit-creating sap. If they had brought forth fruit, their fruitfulness would have been a sign that they were in Christ **savingly**. Who will venture to say that a man who yields no fruit of righteousness can be really a Christian? Yet they were in Christ in some sense or other." He then goes on to express the opinion that the rejected branch had been in Christ only as a matter of outward profession. He is quite right in saying that they were "in Christ in some sense or other," but he is not clear as to their exact position. Hengstenberg well remarks that "what is spoken of is the unfruitful branches actually being in Christ the vine, and not their thinking themselves or others thinking them, to be so."

**Little Children**

Take the case of little children. We all believe that little children, until "the age of accountability," whenever that may be,--and only God knows when it comes,--are saved; but why are they saved? Surely it is not because they are good, for they are not good. They are sinners, and "by nature children of wrath;" and ye they are saved, because they are included in the redemptive work of Christ on the cross of Calvary. He died for them, because He died for all, and they are safe under the blood until they have reached the place where they are morally responsible before God. When "the age of accountability" arrives, then the individual must personally believe on the Lord Jesus Christ or be lost. If he believes, he abides in Christ, is born again, and becomes the possessor of eternal life, and he shall never perish. If, on the other hand, he rejects the Savior, "he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered." If he goes on rejecting and finally rejects, he will be cast into the fire and burned.

There are those who insist that a believer always retains freedom of the will to depart from the faith, just as he was free to accept or reject salvation in the beginning. But this is false reasoning. A child of God has no more “freedom of the will” to cease to be God's child than has the child of any other father to set aside such relationship. A child of God may be a disobedient child, but he remains a child, and for his disobedience he must reckon with a faithful Father who will deal with a son and not a bastard (**Heb. 12:8**).

**Universal Redemption**

In order to understand the true meaning of what we have referred to as "universal redemption," it is needful to comprehend the import of our Lord's words in **John 12:34**. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

Some Gentiles were seeking an interview with the Lord Jesus. The request reached him through Philip and Andrew. "And Jesus answered them, saying, the hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified." The reader's careful attention is drawn to what follows .now, The Lord Jesus was rarely so stirred as at this time. There was apparently some great significance attaching to this visit of the Gentiles which does not appear upon the surface. Let us follow carefully as the Spirit of truth leads us through these wonderful verses.

In verse 24 our Lord pictures himself as a grain of wheat. Gentiles are desiring to see Him. It was a crisis in His ministry. Apparently He did not show Himself to these Gentiles, and the reason was that He had no ministry for Gentiles, except to die for them. Like the corn of wheat which, unless it falls into the ground and dies, abides alone, but which if it dies, it brings forth fruit, so He must lay down His life. He must die for the world; men must be born again, and that could not be apart from His own death; the Son of man must be lifted up (compare **John 3:14**). The Lord Jesus here reaffirms his determination to yield up His life for the salvation of men. Christ according to the flesh could be of no benefit to the Gentiles; it IDUS be Christ crucified and risen again (compare **2 Cor. 5:16** with **1 Cor. 1:23**, **24**).

In verses 25 and 26 our Lord calls His disciples to a life of self-abnegation, and points out that this is the true path to glory. "Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (**1 John 3:16**, R. V.).

Notice, in verse 27, how our Lord is stirred. “Now,” says he, "is my soul troubled; and what shall I say?" The Revisers' margin is the best guide for us here. Our Lord is questioning Himself, so to speak. What shall He say? Shall He say, "Father, save me from this hour"? Not so, for "for this cause came I unto this hour." This rather would He say: "Father, glorify thy name." It was a solemn reiteration of His devotion to His Father's will. He would drink of His Father's cup to the dregs. He would go on to death, even the death of the cross (**Phil. 2:8**). And thus, instead of saving Himself, He would lead "many sons unto glory" (**Heb. 2:10**).

The supreme importance of our Lord's decision at this time is indicated from the audible answer of the Father speaking out of heaven: "Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."

The people did not understand the Father's voice.

They were not in communion with the Father. Some said it was thundering; others that an angel had spoken. The Lord Jesus said, "This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes." It was the Father's acceptance of His Son's devotion.

This was the third and last time, during our Lord's earthly ministry, that the heavens were thus opened for the Father to speak through them in approval of the Son. The first time was at the baptism in Jordan, when He said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (**Mt. 3:17**). The second time was at the transfiguration, when He said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (**Mt. 17:5**).

**The World's Crisis**

If we are to get the real meaning of this passage, we must be brought by the Holy Spirit into the very atmosphere of it. Hear the thrill in our Lord's voice as

He says: "Now is the judgment (Gr. crisis of this world: now shall the prince of this world (that is, Satan) be cast out" (verse 31).

And how was Satan to be cast out? Read the answer in verse 32: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

This word of Jesus is often misunderstood and misapplied, as if it referred to a certain manner of preaching the gospel. Men have understood our Lord to mean that if He Himself were exalted by His preachers, all men would be drawn to Him by the preaching. But it is not true that all men are drawn to Him by preaching, however faithful the preachers. The 33rd verse explains precisely the meaning *of* the 32nd: "This he said, signifying what death he should die."

By His death on the cross, then, our Lord in some way drew all men unto Himself. In what way did He do this? He did it in the sense that when His blood was poured out on Calvary He displaced the first Adam as the federal head of the race, drawing all men unto Himself. He died for all. As it is written in **2 Cor. 5:14**, R.V., "One died for all, therefore all died."

**Facing the Problem**

We have already referred to the salvation of irresponsible children as a part of our Lord's work of universal redemption. But someone objects-and a corre­spondent has indeed objected, saying:

“If children are in Christ, so that if they die before responsibility sets in, they are certainly saved because of the work of Christ-saved as certainly as the believer is saved-and if the believer can never perish, how is it possible for a child who is 'in Christ' to be lost? The believer must repent and confess, but there is always the possibility that he will fail to do so.

You have the same problem left. You have only pushed it a step further back. It seems more in harmony with the facts in the physical world that the fruitless branches once bore fruit, but had ceased to do so, and were removed, cast away, burned.

"You insist that the promise of **John 10:27-30** is unconditional. Jonah told the people of the city of Nineveh that in forty days the city would be destroyed. There was no condition stated, but there was one understood, at least in the minds of the king and the people: If they would repent, the city would not be destroyed.

"In **2 Sam. 7:13** Solomon's kingdom was to be established forever. But the Jews have had no national government for hundreds of years. And yet God has not failed in His promise."

It is one thing to be saved, as irresponsible children are saved, and it is another thing to be a member of the church of Christ, which is His body (**Eph. 1:22**, **23**). When the child becomes responsible and believes, he continues to be saved indeed, but he is far more than saved; he is brought into the exalted position of a son of God through faith, and becomes the possessor of everlasting life, which, it may be remarked, is everlasting; it lasts forever.

The promise of **John 10:27-30** is not only unconditional, but true. And it would still be true even if the promise had never been put into words. Eternal life is eternal because it is a gift. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Of course there was an implied condition in Jonah's message; for otherwise there would be no object in sending him. The case is in no sense parallel.

As for the last Scripture cited, **2 Sam. 7:13**, it is shown by **Heb. 1:5** that the "Son" referred to **in 2 Sam. 7** was primarily not Solomon at all but Jesus. His ever­lasting kingdom is unconditionally promised, and is yet to be "established for ever."

In the 11th chapter of 1 Corinthians we find a company of Christians who were sinning so grievously as to bring upon themselves the chastening hand of God, some of them becoming "weak and sickly," and some of them actually died under chastisement, as it is written, "many sleep." And yet they were not lost, but saved; for it goes on to say, “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" (verses 31, 32).

Two brethren who differed on the question of the believer's safety in Christ were discussing the question, and one said to the other:

"I tell you, a child of God is safe only so long as he stays in the life boat. He may jump out, and if he jumps out he is lost."

Tothis the other replied, saying: "You remind me of an incident in my own life. I took my little son out with me in a boat. I realized, as he did not, the danger of his falling, or even jumping, into the water. So I sat with him all the time, and all the time I held him fast, so he could neither fall out, nor jump out, of the boat."

"But," said the first speaker, "he could have wriggled out of his coat and got away in spite of you."

"Oh," said the other, "you misunderstood me if you supposed I was holding his coat; I was not holding his coat; I was holding him."

**If They Shall Fall Away**

Another correspondent has written, asking an explanation of **Heb. 6:4-6**.exhorting the Hebrews to go on unto Christ, to whom all these doctrines pointed.

"And this will we do, if God permit. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened (as the Hebrews had been) and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of (literally companions, those who go along with) the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God (this had come to them through the ages by the prophets), and the powers of the coming age (these were the miracles they had witnessed), if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

There is nothing here which speaks of a born-again person losing his salvation. If it referred to such, then it would prove that one who had thus lost his salvation could never again be saved. "It is impossible (not difficult, not improbable, but impossible) ... to renew them again unto repentance." This proves too much for those who would use it to set aside the doctrine of the believer's security, but when it is applied to Hebrews, and especially to those Hebrews living at the time the Epistle was written, it all becomes perfectly clear. It-teaches that there is no salvation for any unless they receive the Lord Jesus Christ and put themselves under the shelter of his shed blood.

**If We Sin Willfully**

Still another friend has asked for an explanation of **Heb. 10:26**, **27**. The question is like unto the one preceding it. Please look at the context. In the 16th and 17th verses the new covenant is referred to, in which God had promised, saying, "and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Then in the 18th verse the apostle writes, "Now where remission of these is, there is no more a sin-offering." The temple was yet standing and the so-called sin-offering was still being presented, but it had lost its efficacy, and indeed all need for it had disappeared, since the "one offering for sins" had been accomplished on the cross. The Hebrews were under temptation to turn from that cross and still seek for remission of sins by means of the old sin-offering of the temple.

Verses 19 to 25 are addressed to those who knew the way, exhorting them to draw near by the blood of Jesus into the Holy of Holies. Then follows the message of verses 26 and 27. If they refused to come to God by the blood-sprinkled way consecrated for them, then the dreadful alternative was clear:

"For if we sin willfully after that we have received (not 'salvation,' but) the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more a sin-offering, but a certain looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries."

To sin willfully after this fashion is to tread underfoot the n of God, counting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing and insulting the Spirit of grace (v. 29). The teaching here again, as in the passage referred to above, is that out of Christ there is no salvation. The blood-sprinkled way is the only way to God.

**Worse Than the Beginning**

A similar passage, in its import, is **2 Peter 2:20-22**. There is such a thing as "Christian civilization," by which many "have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." They have heard of Christ and have benefited from contact with Christ's people. They see the way before them, and they temporarily escape in great measure the pollutions of the present world-system; but, failing to walk in the way, and refusing to acknowledge Christ as their own personal Savior, they are not born again, and therefore they are easily entrapped, and, being overcome, "the latter end is worse with them than the beginning." The mere knowledge of the way is of no avail to those who refuse to walk therein.

"For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them."

The holy commandment delivered unto them is that they should believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. This they have refused to do, and therefore "it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (Compare **Prov. 26:11**).

Why does a dog eat its own vomit? The answer is, because it is a dog, and to do this filthy thing is according to a dog's nature. The mere ejection of the mass from its stomach works no change in its nature. And so with the sow. Washing a hog works no change within. A sheep would not wallow in the mire. It might fall in, but it would be miserable and unhappy until it was cleansed. Not so with a hog; and the only conceivable way by which a dog or a hog might become a sheep would be for the dog or the hog to be born again. All that which the Father gives me shall come unto me; and him that comes to me I WILL IN NO WISE CAST OUT. For I am come down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the will of him that sent me, that of all that which he has given me I SHOULD LOSE NOTHING but should raise it up at the last day. And this is he will of him that sent me, that everyone that beholds the Son, and believes on him, should have ETERNAL LIFE; and I will raise him up at the last day. (**John 6:37-40** R.V.)

**THE TWO RIGHTEOUSN****ESSES**

"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 everyone that believes.

"For Moses describes **the righteousness which is of the Law**. That the man which does those things shall live by them. But **the righteousness** **which is of faith** speaks on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above), or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead). But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy **mouth**, and in thy **heart**; that is, the word of faith which we preach; That if thou shall confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thine heart that God has raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the **heart** man believes unto **righteousness**; and with the **mouth** confession is made unto salvation."-**Rom. 10:1-10**.

The Holy Spirit, in the Scripture quoted, brings into sharp contrast The Two Righteousnesses. One is God's righteousness and the other is man's righteousness. One is divine and the other is human. One is by works; it comes to the man who does. The other is by grace through faith-to everyone that believes. One is called the righteousness which is of the Law. The other is called the righteousness which is of faith. One is the result of man's own efforts. The other is the gift of God in Christ to any man who will receive it.

The failure of Israel is the matter under discussion. **They**, being ignorant of **God's righteousness**, went about seeking to establish their own righteousness; and when Christ, the end of the Law for **righteousness**, came and offered Himself to them, they refused to submit themselves unto Him.

The principle involved, however, is applicable not only to Jews. It is general, and applies to all men, Jews and Gentiles alike. Seven fundamental propositions may be drawn from this passage of Scripture:

I. Man by nature is unrighteous.

**II.** He is also ignorant of God's righteousness.

**III.** Because of this ignorance, he seeks to establish a righteousness of his own.

**IV.** The only conceivable way to thus establish his own righteousness is by means of his own works.

**V.** But it is impossible for any man thus to establish his own righteousness.

**VI.** On the other hand, to obtain the gift of God's righteousness in Christ is possible for every man.

**VII.** God's way of bestowing His righteousness upon unrighteous man is by grace through faith.

This is the Gospel of God. In this sevenfold statement He gives us a complete unfolding of the Way of Life. In the midst of the awful confusion of these last days it is refreshing to get back to first principles and examine the foundations upon which we are building. May God deliver His people from error, and ever show us His way more perfectly!

Nothing is more strongly emphasized than this in the Word of God. Humiliating to the flesh though it be, it is nevertheless true that man is naturally corrupt. Theologians may quarrel over questions of "original sin" and "total depravity," but God has been faithful in pointing out that "the heart is **deceitful** above all things and **desperately wicked**." (**Jer. 17:9**.) Out of the heart are the issues of life, and "from within out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come **from within**." (**Mark 7:21-23**.)

Man, apart from God, is unrighteous and only unrighteous. This is shown in the terrible history of the race, as given by the Holy Spirit of Truth in Romans When God "gave them up," it was "unto vile affections." When He "gave them over," it was "to a **reprobate mind**," and they were found to be "**filled with all unrighteousness**." (Vs. 26, 28, 29.)

It is easy for men to "compare themselves with themselves," and derive satisfaction from the comparison; but God declares that "there is **none righteous**, **no, not one**." (**Rom. 3:10**.) "There is no difference, for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (**Rom. 3:22**, **23**.) As for the Jews, "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through them." (**Rom. 2:24**.) And the Gentiles themselves are "without Christ, having no hope, and without God in the world." They walk "in the vanity of their mind, 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." They are "dead in trespasses and sins," and "past feeling." (**Eph. 2:1**, **12; 4:17- 19**.)

The Scriptures declare that the natural man "is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (**Eph. 4:22**); that his mind is "**enmity** against God," that it is not and cannot be subject to God's Law; and that he "**cannot please God**." (**Rom. 8:7**, **8**.) They further assert that he cannot receive "the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (**I Cor. 2:14**.)

Such, according to the Scriptures of God, is the helpless, hopeless, undone condition of the natural man. And in this we are all alike-we are "by nature he children of wrath, even as others." (**Eph. 2:3**.)

**Man by nature is unrighteous**.

II. **Man by Nature is Ignorant of God's Righteousness**.

Man is corrupt, and he has a corrupt mind. Therefore, his view of righteousness is **distorted**. He has his own "ideas of right and wrong," and they are **false** ideas.

For as a matter of simple fact, the **righteousness of GOD** is the only kind of righteousness there is. In this discussion we have spoken of two righteousnesses, but we shall find on examination that the human righteousness here spoken of is not righteousness at all. Righteousness is simple rightness, and if a thing is right it cannot be more. On the other hand if it be not right it is of necessity **wrong**.

And the **standard** of righteousness is **God's** righteousness. He is absolutely righteous. The ways of the Lord are right. God is **light**, and in Him is no darkness at all. In Him there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. God cannot lie, because He is righteous. He cannot repudiate a promise, because He is **righteous**. He cannot forget His word, because He is **righteous**.

But God's standard is not man's standard. The chara teristic distinction between God and man is that "**God is not a man that He should lie**." (Num. 23:19.) Man's "ideas of right and wrong" are low ideas, corrupt ideas, evil ideas, because they are conceived in corrupt and evil minds. Man's conception of God is distorted. It is written that "when they knew God, they glorified Him not **as God**." They conceived that God was like themselves. They "changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made **like to corruptible man**." (**Rom. 1:21-23**.) Havingtherefore corrupted their very conception of the character of God, they of course lost the true view of His **righteousness**.

What is the natural man's idea of the righteous requirements of a holy God? Ask the first man you meet, and he will probably tell you that "if a man tries to do right, that is all that will be expected of him." Or perhaps he will say, “If I do the best I can, God will be satisfied.”

Does it never occur to the natural man that in these very words he speaks there is an implied admission of his corrupt nature? For according to these replies, he can only try to do right: he rarely **succeeds**. He may do the best he can, but of course what he does is not **perfect**.

But the point here is that man who is so complacent about his own **trying** and **doing**, has an idea that God is complacent, too. Man says, "Of course, we are all sinners, and all we can do is to do the best we can." This satisfies his perverted conscience, and he thinks it also satisfies **God**.

This is all wrong. God's demands areinflexible. He says to man, "Walk before Me, and be thou **perfect**."

He says, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." And His declaration is most explicit that without holiness shall no man see the Lord. And though holiness and righteousness are not the same thing, yet there cannot be the one without the other. God's new creation is "in righteousness and true holiness." (**Eph. 4:24**.)

All this, however, is unintelligible to the natural man. For

**Man by nature is ignorant of God's righteousness.**

**III. Man by Nature, Because of this Ignorance, Goes About to Establish His Own Righteousness.**

Of course he would never try such a thing if he had any real appreciation of what he was attempting. If he realized how high **God's righteousness** is, and then realized how low his own "ideas of right and wrong" are, he would give up at once, and be ready to wait for the grace of God. But it is not so. From the days of Cain until now, the natural man has sought to make himself presentable to God. The carnal mind is proud, and it rebels against the truth of God. Even when the truth is apprehended, man "holds it down in unrighteousness." (**Rom. 1:18**, R. V.). The Scriptures declare that "that which may be known of God (i. e., to the natural man) is manifest in them, ... so that they are without excuse." God has not left Himself without witness even among unregenerate men, but they have turned from Him: "They did not like to retain God in their knowl­edge." (**Rom. 1:19**, **20**, **28**.)

So it is that men, having "rejected the counsel of God against themselves," are continually seeking to establish a righteousness of their own. Instead of consulting the Word of the living God, they consult their own consciences-i.e., their own corrupt "ideas of right and wrong." The unenlightened conscience is a most elastic thing, besides being corrupt, and the more it is listened to, apart from the testimony of the Word of God, the more accommodating it becomes; until finally, instead of accusing, it excuses almost any act of evil. It becomes not only defiled and polluted-it is all that by nature-but it becomes also seared as with a hot iron. (**1 Tim. 4:2**.)

Man by nature, because he is ignorant of God's righteousness, goes about to establish his own righteousness.

**IV. The Only Conceivable Way for the Natural Man to Establish His Own Righteousness is by Means of his Own Works.**

This goes without saying. If I am to have a righteousness of my own "establishing," it must be the result of my own good works. This was the method put to the test in the case of Israel. **The righteousness which is of the Law** had only this word: "The man which **does** those things shall live by them."

Not **trying**, mark you! but doing. And not "doing the best we can," but **doing those things**.

The natural man has an idea that his good deeds and his evil deeds are to be weighed in a balance; and if the good weighs more than the evil, then "everything will be all right." His case would be bad enough even then; but that is not the method. Far from it!

In the Law, God said to Israel: "Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might," and, "Thou - shall love thy neighbor as thyself." This has been called "the concept of the mind of God." Well, at least it is the concept of the mind of God as to what man ought to be; it is God's "idea of right and wrong." It is a statement of God's righteousness, **the righteousness of God**.

There is nothing arbitrary about it. God demanded of Israel that which was right, or righteous. It was their duty, even before He issued the Law, to love God supremely, and their neighbors as themselves. It follows, therefore, that if the people of Israel were to establish their own righteousness, they could do it only by **doing** those things. There was no other possible way.

And the same principle obtains with men everywhere and always. The Gentiles, though they have not the Law, are yet bound by the same principle of righteousness as that contained in the Law. As it is written, "They show the work of the Law written in their hearts." (**Rom. 2:14, 15**.) It is their duty, as much as Israel's, to do **right**. And to do right means to do **righteously**. They, as well as Israel, are bound to love God supremely, and their neighbors as themselves. It they are to establish their own righteousness, this is the only way to do it. It is true universally that only he that **does** those things shall live by them.

**The only conceivable way for the natural man to establish his own righteousness is by means of his own works.**

**V. But it is Impossible for Any Man Thus to Establish His Own Righteousness.**

We have seen that the only conceivable way for the natural man to establish his own righteousness is by means of his own good works.

But what if he is incapable of good works? What, then? Ah, then is his case a hopeless one, indeed.

And is not this the true state of the case? If it be true that man by nature is unrighteous, how then can he do a righteous act? "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one!" (**Job 14:4**.) "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**.)

Man may do things which he considers righteous, but' God's sight "We are all as an unclean thing, and all **our righteousnesses** are as **filthy rags**." (**Isa. 64:6**.) "There is a way which **seems right unto a man**, but the end thereof are the ways of death." (**Prov. 14:12**.) "The Lord sees not as man sees; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." (**1 Sam. 16:7**.)

In the days before the flood, men supposed they Were making great progress. "There were giants in the earth in those days." There were "mighty men which were of old, men of renown." But what God thought of the matter was a far different thing. "God saw 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. 6:4**, **5**.)

The end of all flesh came before God in that day, and never to this present time has God put any confidence in the flesh. The flesh, corrupt then, is corrupt now, and its works-the doings of the natural man -are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellingsand such like." (**Gal. 5:19-21**.)

Now, how can righteousness come from such a source? When the fountain is poisoned, how can the stream be pure? What can the Law of God, which is **holy** and **righteous** and **good**, do for the natural man, who is unholy and unrighteous and evil? Surely, it cannot produce righteousness in him. It can only condemn him and show him his helplessness.

And this is the very purpose of the Law. When it speaks, every mouth is stopped, and all the world is brought in guilty before God. By the deeds of the Law no flesh is justified in God's sight: for by the Law is the knowledge of sin. (**Rom. 3:20**, **21**.) The Law of Moses, the Ten Commandments, "written and engraven in stones," is not a ministration of life, but of death. It is not a ministration of righteousness but of condemnation. (**2 Cor. 3**.)

Let us remember that the Law is an inflexible thing. It demands a flawless life of perfect obedience from the cradle to the grave. It brooks no slightest dis­obedience. If man keeps the whole Law and stumbles in one point, he is guilty of all. (**James 2:10**.) It is not enough to "try to be good." It will not do to "try to do right." It will not suffice to have done "the best we could." If a man is establishing his own righteousness, why, then, let him do it. But the Word of God will never call wrong by the name of right; it will never call evil good.

Now, where is our natural man? Is he justified? Far from it! He is cursed. As the Scripture saith, "As many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them. But that no man is justified by the Law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the Law is not of faith: but, The man that does them shall live in them." **Gal. 3:1 12**; Compare **Hab. 2:4** and **Lev. 18:5**). Thus it is seen that

It is impossible for any man to establish his own righteousness.

**VI. On the Other Hand, to Obtain the Gift of God's Righteousness in Christ is Possible for Every Man**

Whosoever will may come. The gift is for anyone who will have it. As there is no' difference in God's sight between sinners, so there is no difference in respect of those invited.

It is true that righteousness is not. attainable by Law-works, "but now **the righteousness of God** apart from the Law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets; 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. 3:21**, **22**.)

Not one member of the human race is excluded.

White or black, rich or poor; whatever you are, whoever you are, wherever you are; no matter how sinful, no matter how vile, no matter what you have done, no matter what your record-"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whosoever** believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (**John 3:16**.) He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. (**1 John 2:2**.) He is the living God, Who is **the Savior of all men**. (**1 Tim. 4:10**.) Hallelujah, what a Savior! "Behold, the Lamb of God, Which taketh away the sin of the world!"

Think of it! God's righteousness offered to **every man!** The Lord Jesus Christ, the end of the Law for righteousness, when He died on Calvary, tasted death for every man. (**Heb. 2:9**.) No man will be able to plead that he was omitted from the great provision of salvation. The Lamb of God is the Savior of all men.

"**All** we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." This text (**Isa, 53:6**) opens and closes with the big-little word "**all**." It is like a door, placed at each end of the text. If you are included in the former all, you are also included in the latter all. **All** includes everybody. As the little boy said of the like word, whosoever, "it means you, or me, or anybody else And He died for all. He died, then, for you, and me, and everybody else. He died for all; therefore all died: anti He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him Who died for them, and rose again. (**2 Cor. 5:14**, **15**.)

He died for **you**. Whoever **you** are, He died for **you**. True, He died for others, but He died for **you**. If He had not died in **your** room and stead; if He had not died for **you**- for **you**-then you must needs perish for your sins. But He died for you that He might bring you to God-the **living** God, the **giving** God, Who waits for **you** to come to Him, that you might not perish but have everlasting life. He died for **you**!

He died for **everybody** **else**! Everybody! Everybody! From Adam down to the last man in the human race, He died for them all. Before He died, many had been saved by faith in the Coming One; and since His death many have been saved by faith in the One Who came and died. He died for them all. But many were lost, before Calvary, and after. Yet He died for them. All their iniquities were laid upon Him. If they were lost, it was not His fault. If they went down to perdition, it was in spite of all He did for them. He died for them. He died for **you**, and **me**, and **everybody** else.

**To obtain the gift of God's righteousness in Christ is possible**

**for every man.**

**VII. God's Way of Bestowing His Righteousness Upon Unrighteous Man**

**Is by Grace Through Faith.**

We have seen man's helplessness to attain to righteousness by means of Law-works, The Law could show him the need of righteousness; it could show him what righteousness was. But it could go no further. It could not make him righteous; it could not produce righteousness in him.

But God, through the Gospel of Christ, has met man's need just here. "For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the 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." (**Rom. 8:3**, **4**.)

**What the Law could not do, God did.**

But it had to be by grace, and not by works. Man could never have earned such a boon as the righteousness of God. He could not have deserved it. He deserved death, for that is the wages of sin. "But God, was 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 show 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." (**Eph. 2:4-9**.)

And the gift by grace is through **faith**. As it is written, "it is of faith, that it might be by grace." (**Rom. 4:16**.) It is not a hard thing that is asked of man. No man may say in his heart, Christ must again be brought down from above, or up from the deep. The word is in us, even in our mouth and in our heart. We have to receive God's perfect salvation, already brought and finished. It is all very simple. "If thou shall confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shall believe in thy heart that God has raised him, from the dead, thou shall be saved." Nothing could be clearer; nothing more beautiful. "With the heart man believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

What a wonderful Gospel! "The **gift** of God is **eternal life**, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Eternal life, mind you! Not temporal, but eternal. Not temporary but perpetual. Eternal! Everlasting! Not something you get now and lose after a while. Not that but life" life, eternal life. The Good Shepherd, just before giving His life for the sheep, 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, neither shall anyone pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one." (**John 10:27-30**.)

There are many persons in the world who will tell you they were once Christians, "but not now." Surely, they could never have received the gift of God, which is eternal life. Eternal life is **everlasting**-it lasts **foreve**r! No, Christ does not suffer His sheep to perish. He is not a man that He should lie; and His own word "**they shall never perish**."

The gift is by **faith**. It is unto all and upon all that believe. And to **believe**, scripturally, is to **receive** the Jesus as one's personal Savior. "He came unto own, and His own **received** Him not. But as many as **received** Him, to them gave the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." (**John** **1:11**, **12**.) He that thus believes is not condemned: but he that believes not is condemned already, not because he is a sinner, but "because he has not believed in the only begotten Son of God." (**John. 3:18**.)

Do you ask what you are to believe. The answer is, You must believe God. “If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. He that believes on the Son of God has the witness in Himself. He that believes not God has made Him a liar; because he believes not the record that God gave of His Son. And this is the record: That God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that has the Son has life; and he that **has not** the Son of God **has not life**." (**1 John 5:9-12.**)

May God Himself help all who read these words to **believe Him**! For to **believe** Him is to obtain His gift of eternal life, which is in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**God's way of bestowing His righteousness upon unrighteous man is by grace through faith.**

**HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE IF WE NEGLECT**

**SO GREAT SALVATION?**

**OUR UNFADING INHERITANCE**

"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, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades 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" (**I Peter 1:3-5**).

This beatitude of Peter, consisting of but a single sentence though occupying three verses, is full of beauty, and full also of vitally important teaching.

The safety of the saved is its theme. Here the believers, the born-again ones, are seen as inheritors, inheritors by reason of the fact-and of necessity growing out of the fact-that they are born again. They inherit, because they are God's children, begotten of Him. As **Romans 8:17** puts it, being children, they are heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.

It is a truly precious relationship, and it is not a temporary one. The life we have received from our Father is eternal life, everlasting life, endless life.

The eternal, everlasting, endless character of this relationship is shown here in a sevenfold way: (**1**) It is according to God's mercy; (**2**) it is linked with the resurrection of Christ; (**3**) it is incorruptible; (**4**) it is undefiled; (**5**), it fades not away; (**6**) it is reserved for us; and (**7**) we are preserved for it.

**1.** God's children are eternally safe, because their salvation is according to mercy. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us." Salvation is by grace. Whenever I am asked whether a saved man can get lost, I always answer that it depends upon whether he got saved by grace. I know of no other way of salvation than by grace, that is by gift. No man earns his salvation, no man is saved because he deserves it, no man is saved by his own good works; but, in response to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as a personal Savior, God bestows upon the believer the priceless boon of salvation.

How then can it be supposed that the salvation thus bestowed is bestowed only upon condition that the saved man must deserve to keep it, or, *failing* to do so) he must forfeit it? As a matter of fact, no one deserves, either to get saved or to keep saved. If anyone is to be saved, or kept saved, it must be according to mercy; it must be by grace. "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace" (**Rom. 4: 16**); "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 grace: otherwise work is no more work" (**Rom. 11:6**). It was "after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared," that "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us" (**Titus 3:4**, **5**). "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**).

**2.** God's children are eternally safe, because their salvation is linked with the resurrection of Christ. "Blessed be the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, Which according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

Peter, who by the Spirit wrote these words, was well able to enter into the fullness of their meaning, for he had known the time when all hope had gone from him and left him in despair. His Lord, whom he had loved, was dead! And Peter, despite his love for his Lord, had shamefully denied Him. Repentance had come, but that repentance had come too late: the Lord, whom he, despite his base denial of him, had truly loved, was dead. All was lost, and all hope was gone. They had "trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel" (**Luke. 24:21**). But now, all that was past, for the Lord Jesus was dead.

Imagine, if you can what it meant to this man Peter, to see the same Lord Jesus alive again! From the open and empty tomb there came the message to "tell his disciples, and Peter!" See Peter, running, with John, to the place where that precious body had been laid. They tell us that it was because John was the younger of the two men that he got to the tomb first; I do not know; but we may well believe that, whatever it may have been that retarded Peter's progress, he got there as soon as he could. He found an empty tomb, but as yet he saw not the Lord; yet it was only a short time afterward, on that blessed day, that every­one among the Christians was saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon".

Simon Peter's despair disappeared with that resurrection of his Lord. He was begotten again unto a living hope. And we also, not less than he. But for the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, we should be yet in our sins, and of all men most miserable. He who "was delivered for our offences was raised again for (*because of*) our justification".

**3.** God's children are eternally safe, because their inheritance is incorruptible. There appeared in the newspapers the account of a man who had inherited an old family mansion. He was glad of the news of his supposed good fortune, until he looked the property over and found that the house was in such a state of decay as to render it worthless. It had originally been a perfectly good house, made of good materials, and built by skillful workmen; but the tooth of time had been at work, and there was nothing left that was salvable; and its new possessor was poorer with the property than he had been without it.

So it goes with the riches of this world; there is nothing here that is incorruptible. The Lord Jesus Christ, the adorable Son of God, hath brought life and incorruptibility to light. The foul breath of decay can never work its ravages with any of the things which God has prepared for them that love him; the taint of corruption can never reach the glorious inheritance of the children of God. Even their bodies shall one day be transfigured into the likeness of their Lord's glorified body, the dead being raised incorruptible, and the living, with the dead, being "changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump". And not only so, but the creation itself, now groaning and travailing in pain together, "shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God" (**I Cor. 15: 51-58**; **Rom. 8:21**).

**4.** God's children are eternally safe, because their inheritance is undefiled. What would you do if you fell heir to a large inheritance of "tainted money"? Such things have happened, and are happening. Men and women die daily who leave behind them accumulations of money to which they have no moral right. In some cases it is kept back by fraud from the laborers who have justly earned it; sometimes it is stolen by cunning or oppression in the world of commerce, sometimes it is acquired in the wicked traffic in liquor, sometime it is won by cheating in the great gambling schemes of Wall Street, and sometimes it is accumulated by catering to lust and uncleanness. What would you do with it? What ought to be done with it? Return it to its rightful owners if possible, but that is not always possible. I do not pretend to be able to answer the question I raise. But I am glad that our heavenly inheritance is undefiled. The one who handed it down to us did not obtain it by shedding the blood of others; nay, rather, it was by the shedding of His own blood.

The great primary element in the gospel of our salvation is righteousness. Not grace, but righteousness. It was grace that provided it, I grant you, but the thing provided is righteousness, and it is righteousness righteously provided. One of the reasons given by Paul for not being ashamed of the gospel, in **Romans 1**, is because "therein is revealed the righteousness of God". Not the grace of God, but the righteousness of God. In the great plan of salvation, wrought out in that dreadful transaction on Calvary, grace indeed reigns, but grace reigns "through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord" (**Rom. 5: 21**).

Many there are who suppose that in saving us God acted in mercy and grace at the expense of justice. Let no one go on supposing anything that would bring such a reproach upon the righteous Judge of all the earth. It is the marvel of the gospel that in it God has found a way to be just and the Justifier of believing sin­ners. He found a ransom, a righteous ransom. The Lord Jesus Christ, His Eternal Son, willingly offered Himself, through the Eternal Spirit, without spot to God, and as the Lamb of God He took away the sin of the world"

Thus it is that we may rejoice that our inheritance is free from defilement. It is not merely a gracious salvation that is ours; it is a righteous salvation.

Someone has defined the righteousness of the gospel as "that righteousness which the righteousness of God required Him to require". We may well praise God that the righteous requirement of the righteous God was fully met for us when on the cross "Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures," bearing "or sins in his own body on the tree".

**Poem**

**5.** **God's children are eternally safe, because their inheritance is unfading**. It is an inheritance "which is incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away". Earthly riches take to themselves wings and fly-away, and earthly inheritances frequently fade away, sometimes even before the heirs get their hands on them at all. "Labor not to be rich", says the Word of God. "An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning; but the end thereof shall not be blessed". A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that makes haste to be rich shall not be innocent". "Let not the rich man glory in his riches". "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth....but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven". "Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. They that will to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things". "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God". “If riches increase, set not your heart upon them".

"How much did he leave?" asked someone upon hearing of the death of a very rich man. ,"Why," came the reply, "he left it all". "To whom did he give it", was asked. "Give it!" was the reply. "He didn't give it to anyone. He **relinquished** it".

But, ah, the blessing of the Lord! The blessing of "the Lord, it makes rich. Riches are here that the world can neither give nor take away. The blessing of the Lord, it makes rich indeed, and without it the richest is poor indeed.

It "fades not away". Rather, it grows greater the more closely we approach it, the more closely we examine it. Here are hidden mines of wealth, beyond our dreams when first we came to know the Lord. The gold, and the silver, and the diamonds, and the rubies, the cash, the bonds and stocks, the "securities" of this world are not secure; they flyaway; they vanish; we pursue them eagerly, and when we finally grasp them, Io, we find our hands are empty.

"Real estate!" Certain forms of wealth in this world are called "real estate". But there is no real estate outside the realm where neither moth nor rust corrupt and where thieves do not break through nor steal.

The Scriptures give abundant assurance of the blessed fact that our inheritance is one that fades not away. It is well to examine these, for very many of God's dear children have never seen their security in Christ. The believer's eternal security in Christ rests upon seven pillars in the Scriptures, and "the Scriptures cannot be broken":

**(1)** The finished work of Christ (**Heb.** **9:26**; **I Pet. 3:18**; **Acts 13:38**, **39**; **Rom. 8:31-34**).

**(2)** The plain promises of the Word (**John 10:28-30**; **Rom. 8:29**, **30**; **Phil. 1:6**).

**(3)** The present work of Christ as Advocate (**I John 2:1**; **Heb. 7:25**).

**(4)** The believer's union, with Christ (**I Cor. 12:12, 13**; **Eph. 5:29, 30**).

**(5)** The terms of the New Covenant (**Heb. 8:10-13**; **10:16-18**).

**(6)** The faithfulness of God toward his Son (**John 17:11**; **Jude 1**, R.V.).

**(7)** The sealing of the Holy Spirit (**II Cor. 1:21, 22**; **Eph. 1:13; 4:30**).

**6.** God's children are eternally safe, because their inheritance is reserved in heaven for them. It is an inheritance "which is incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you". The inheritance is ours, but it is not given to us to keep. It is kept for us in the mighty keeping of our Father. We have the earnest of the inheritance in the person of the Holy Spirit, Who dwells in our bodies here to see that all our needs are supplied, God working in us "both to will and to do of his good pleasure"; but the inheritance itself is in the safety deposit vaults of the Bank of Heaven. Nothing can touch it there: of this we are assured. The child of God may say with a full heart, "I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep my deposit against that day". He may well sing,

"Since I can read my title clear

To mansions in the skies,

I'll bid farewell to every fear,

And wipe my weeping eyes".

7. **God's children are eternally safe, because, while their inheritance is reserved for them, they are preserved for it**. They are "kept by the power of God". There has been much contention in the theological world for and against the doctrine of "the perseverance of the saints". But what the Scriptures teach is the **preservation** of the saints by the **perseverance** **of God**. He has begun the good work in us, and He will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Our reliance is not upon ourselves, but upon Him Not even upon our continued faith, but upon His continued faithfulness. Though we be faithless, yet He abides faithful, for He cannot deny Himself. He is faithful that promised. He abides faithful. Our eyes are not turned within, but we are "looking away unto Jesus, the Author, and Finisher of our faith". All our springs are in Him, and all our dependence upon Him. He will keep our deposit. He will not fail, nor be discouraged.

It remains now to guard certain points connected with our theme. Children of God are saints, but they are not yet perfected as to their walk. To the end of the chapter, until their earthly walk shall end, they are sinners saved by grace. Now, it will be asked, what is the consequence of their sinning? If they do not, and cannot, lose their salvation, what do they lose when they fall into sin?

The answer is, they lose in fruitfulness, they lose in fellowship with God. When a child of God falls into sin, his intercourse with God, his communion with his heavenly Father, is interrupted.

How may this interrupted communion, this precious fellowship, which is truly "with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ", be restored?

The answer is clearly set forth in the first chapter of 1st John, the ninth verse: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness".

"But", says someone, "what if the sinning child of God does not confess his sins: what then? And, suppose he dies before he has confessed his sins, what then? What becomes of him? Where does he go?"

Again, the Scriptures give a plain and unequivocal answer. A case in point is furnished in the eleventh chapter of 1st Corinthians. Many of the Corinthian saints were sinning against God in connection with the observance of the Lord's Supper; eating and drinking unworthily, that is in an unworthy manner, not discerning the Lord's body. They refused to judge themselves, and compelled the faithful Father to deal with them in chastening, with the result that many of them were made sick, and many of them died. What then? What became of those who died? Where did they go? To hell? No. To heaven? Yes. Listen: I read from verses 30-32. "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".

Our condemnation took place, once for all, at Calvary, when, in the person of our Substitute, we died to sin. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" (**Rom. 8:1**, R.V.).

What about works? Have they no place in our salvation? Surely, they have a very large place; but their place is not among the causes of salvation, but rather among its effects. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has afore prepared that we should walk in them" (**Eph. 2:10**). We are exhorted in the Word of God to "be rich in good works". But let no one suppose that until he is born again he can do any good work which will pass muster in the sight of God and help to save him. Also, let no one suppose that, even after he is porn again, he can by his good works add to his acceptance before God. Our acceptance is in the Beloved (**Eph. 1:6**). And yet "faith without works is dead",

I will not work, my soul to save;

That work my Lord has done

But I will work like any slave

For love of God’s dear Son”

**HOW CHRISTIANS SHOULD GIVE**

The rule for giving under grace is different from that under law. The norm of the doctrine of Christian giving is found in chapters 8 and 9 of 2 Corinthians; and in these chapters there is nothing said about tithing. Tithing is an Old Testament law, rather than a New Testament rule of giving. Under the law the Israelites were commanded to give not merely one-tenth, but much more. First, there was the tithe (that is, one-tenth) of all produce as well as of all flocks and cattle, which was claimed by Jehovah, and which was paid in kind, or if redeemed one-fifth of its value was added. The Levites received this tithe, and they in turn paid one-tenth of it to the High Priest. Then there was a second additional tithe of field produce alone, used for celebrating the sacred feasts each first and second year at Shiloh or Jerusalem and every third year at home, with a feast to the Levites, the stranger, the fatherless and the widows. Some writers claim that there was also a third tithe for the support of the poor, though this is denied by others, who hold that the second tithe on every third year was shared by the Levites with the poor.

All this was required. It must be done to obey the law. These tithes included the Israelite's taxes. Whatever he desired to bring as freewill offerings must be added to these required offerings. It was the complaint of the Old Testament prophets that God's people robbed Him, not only in tithes, but also in offerings (**Mal. 3:8**).

The principles of Christian giving, as set forth in the 8th and 9th chapters of 2 Corinthians, are as follows:

1. The offerer, to have his offering accepted, must first give his own self to the Lord (8:5). There is no use in supposing that anyone may do anything to please God until he himself is right with God (**Rom. 8:8**).

2. Our great example in giving is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself Who, "though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich" (8:9).

3. The offering must come from a willing mind (8:10-12).

4. The offering is acceptable "according to that a man has, and not according to that he has not" (8:12).

5. The offerer will reap his reward in proportion to his giving. "He which sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which sows bountifully shall reap also bountifully" (9:6).

6. The offering must come out of a purpose of heart; "not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loves a cheerful giver" (9:6, 7). The Greek word for "cheerful" is "hilarious." God loves a hilarious giver. So do you. If someone were to go around and get up a birthday present for you, and give you a beautiful gift, and if you afterward learned that someone gave toward that gift grudgingly, or of necessity,because he felt he must, you would just want to give it back. But if you knew that everyone contributing toward the gift did so with a bubbling heart, how different that would be! Let us remember that God has some sensibilities too. How do you feel when you give? Do you give because the pastor lashes you from the pulpit? Or, because the finance committee comes around? Or, do you give to be seen of men? Such a thing smells to heaven. There are some churches that have a chart in the vestibule, with all the names of the members, and the chart is kept up every week, showing whether the member is paid up in his subscription. Such a thing is repugnant to God. Any scheme that presses people to give unwillingly is hateful.

But people say that is the only way that we can get the money, and unless we do these practical things we shall go into debt. All right, you bring in a method of your own that is "sensible" and "practical," and all that sort of thing, and see what God will do about it. He will let you work your own schemes. But if you put that all away, and put in God's "foolish" way and let Him work it, you will find He will work it.

Of course, giving ought to be systematic and proportionate and individual, as is said in **1 Corinthians 16:2**: "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God has prospered him, that there be no gatherings (collections) when I come." (This is a special offering for the poor Christians Jews in Jerusalem, not a regular Church offering RHL)

But the great thing is to remember this hilariousness in giving. The great motive for giving is love. Do you remember the joy with which you brought your first gift to your sweetheart? That is the way to give to God-the way you will give to God if you really love Him, if you are in love with God. He loves a hilarious giver. If that dear girl to whom you brought your gift did not see your eyes shining, her own eyes would not shine so much. What are the flowers? It is not the money. God can get along without your money. Some one man will give ten thousand times more than you can give. What He wants is not gifts, except those gifts testify to an abiding love and an overflowing affection, to an outpouring of the heart to Him. That is what He wants. It is easy enough to understand.

Sacrificial gifts are the gifts that really count. There was the woman with the two mites. The Lord Jesus said that she had given more than all the rest. A strange problem that in mathematics. Work it out if you can. And it might be possible even to do that. Supposing that that gospel tract that costs less than two mites should result in the salvation of some wealthy man who became a steward for God. The Lord Jesus was talking about the motive-sacrificial giving. “It is more blessed to give-than to receive."

**THE LIGHT OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GLORY OF GOD**

"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this age 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 we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, togive the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (**II Cor. 4:3-7**).

God is Light. And His first recorded word was: "Let there be light" (**I John 1:5**; **Gen. 1:3**).

Satan, whose original name, Lucifer, signifies "light-bearer" or "morning-star" (compare **Isa. 14:12**, R.V.), fell from his high estate through pride and became the Prince of Darkness, plunging the whole world into the darkness which had come upon him through his fall.

When the fullness of the time was come, the Mighty God became incarnate in the virgin's Son, a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel (**Gal. 4:4**; **Lk. 2:32**) His herald came before Him "for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lights every man that comes into the world" (**John 1:6-9**). “In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness; and the darkness overcame it not" (**John 1:4**, **5**, R. V., margin).

He Who is the Light gave testimony, saying, "Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: or 'he hat walks in darkness knows not whither he goes. While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light ... I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness" (**John 12:35**, **36**, **46**).

**The Conflict of Light and Darkness**

There came a day when He Who is the Light yielded Himself to the death of the cross, with the words, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness" (**Luke 22:53**). He needed not to do this, for He had said of His life: "No man takes 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" (**John 10:18**).

When He Who is the Light laid down His life on Calvary, "from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour" (**Matt. 27:45**).

This looked like a great victory for the Prince of Darkness, but God was working out His wonderful plan to redeem men from the power of darkness, "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God" (**Acts 26:18**).

After three days, He 'Who is the Light came forth out of the grave, for Satan was not able to hold Him there. Through death, the Son of God had overcome him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, in order that He might deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (**Heb. 2:14**, **15**).

A truly titanic struggle is constantly going on between the Kingdom of Light and the Power of Darkness. But there is no doubt concerning the issue, for "greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (**I John 4:4**). The Prince of Life and Light has come to grips with the Prince of Death and Darkness, and has defeated him. The world reached its crisis\* when He Who is the Light was lifted up on the Cross of Calvary, and in due time "shall the Prince of this World be cast out" (**John 12:31-33**). The Prince of Darkness is under sentence, and one day he will meet his doom in the lake of fire (**Rom. 16:20**; **Rev. 12:9**; **20:10**).

In the meantime all who take their place under the shelter of the shed blood of Him Who is the Light are immediately born again and delivered forever from the Power of Darkness and translated into the Kingdom of God's dear Son (**Col. 1:13**), and from that moment are appointed to show forth the virtues of Him Who has thus called them out of darkness into His marvelous light (**I Pet. 2:9**, R. V.).

**The Natural Man-Blind**

All this is set forth with clearness in the Word of God, but it is hidden from the natural man. He cannot receive, nor perceive, "the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual discerns all things, yet he himself is discerned of no man" (**I Cor. 2:14**, **15**, Gk.).

A young southern educator, himself a highly educated man, listened courteously to a friend who was repeating statements he had often made before, con­cerning these things. The young scholar was himself a professing Christian, but he was convinced that the world was to be saved by culture, while his friend was telling him again and again that the Gospel was God's power unto salvation, and that there was no other way. He declared also that, according to

\*''Now is the crisis of this world" (Gk.).

God's. plan as revealed in the Scriptures, the world was on its way to ruin, and that one day the Son of God would come and rescue the race and govern the world in person as King of kings and Lord of lords. The young man was really bored, though he listened attentively. Finally he thought to close the interview by saying, "Well, I can't see it."

"You can't see it?" asked his friend. "No," he replied, "I can't see it."

"Well," said his friend, "if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost."

"'Lost!' Do you mean to say that I am lost?"

"'If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this age has 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.'''

These words, quoted from **II Corinthians 4:3**, **4**, marked the turning point in the young educator's life. He is still an educator, and is at this writing President of a Christian college in a southern state, but he has a new program, the program of God.

**Blindness Removed**

The inability of the natural man to understand the Word of God is a fact but little comprehended, even among God's dear children. They often wonder why it is that educated men, cultured men, even brilliant men, cannot see things set forth in the Bible so plainly that it would seem that "the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein" (**Isa. 35:8**). But it is a fact that the world by wisdom knows not God (**I Cor. 1:21**), and that, apart from the illumination brought only through regeneration, the wisest man in the world is utterly helpless to grasp the true meaning of Scripture. The wisdom of God is "a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory; which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him (that is, the things contained in the Scriptures, the things between the two lids of the Book called the Bible). But God has revealed them I unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God" (**I Cor. 2:10**). When the princes of this world rejected Him Who is the Light, He 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 has revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight" (**Matt. 11:25**, **26**). Babes do not come through education or culture, but through birth. The most thoroughly educated, cultured, refined, intelligent man in the world must be born again if he would know the things of the Spirit of God. If you are a born-again one, even a babe in Christ, a child of God, you have abundant reason for thanksgiving.

**Paul and the Light**

Saul of Tarsus was a man of education, a man of culture, and a devoutly religious man; but like that other educated, cultured, religious man, Nicodemus. Saul needed to be born again. And when he was born again on the Damascus highway, he was transformed into a babe, and immediately he saw things which until that time had been hidden from him. He said: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" His new Lord sent a man to lead him by the hand, and he was brought out of darkness into light, and became Paul, the great Apostle to the Gentiles, used of God as no other man save the Man Christ Jesus, to change the face of the world.

Now, how was all this done? By what means. was it brought about? Let Paul answer this. He says: "We preach not ourselves, but . . . your slaves for Jesus' sake" (**II Cor. 4:5**, Gk.). Saul of Tarsus would never have said that. That proud Pharisee was nobody's slave. What was it that changed him? Listen. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts." That is! what did it. That is what transformed the blind Saul of Tarsus into the open-eyed Paul the Apostle. God had shined in his heart, "to give" unto him the light of the knowledge of the glory of God." And whence comes the light*,* this "light of the knowledge of the glory of God"? It proceeds from Him Who is. the Light; it is "in: the face of Jesus Christ."

**Light-Hidden and Manifested**

Science tells us that light, in itself, is invisible. "That which makes manifest is light," but light itself cannot be seen. What we see is that which the light reveals, but we do not see the light itself. Apart from the Son, "no man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he has made Him known" (**John 1:18**, Gk.). Apart from the Son, the Father is unknowable, "dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man has seen, nor can see" (**I Tim. 6:16**). The everlasting Son is the only way to God (**John 14:6**), and He is "the image of the invisible God" (**Col. 1:15**). He that has seen Him has seen the Father (**John 14:9**), but "whosoever denies the Son, the same has not the Father" (**I John 2:23**).

Men produce light from electricity, and since light and electricity travel at the same rate of speed, 186,000 miles per second, it is probable that electricity is just another form of light. Electricity is brought into a building by means of cables and wires. The wires are dark and cold, and the mysterious current remains dark and cold until it meets what the electrician calls a resistance coil, in some form or other. If the resistance coil be of a certain form the result is light, illuminating the rooms of the building. If it be of another form the result is heat, and the whole building may be made comfortable in the coldest weather. If it be of yet *t* another form the result is power, by which power the building, perchance a mill or factory, may utilize the electric current to operate its machinery.

The Son of God is “the light of the world”, and yet “the whole world is lost in the darkness of sin.” Why is this? It is because there are so few resistance coils. There are so few men and women who lay hold upon Him Who is the Light, and with appropriating faith receive from Him the light, the heat, and the power He is so ready to give.

And He Who is the Light one day said to His "friends: "Ye are the light of the world." We who receive of His light, ourselves become lights, and are ordained to "shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life" (**Phil. 2:15**, **16**). Centers of heat we should be also, to comfort, warm, and cheer those in need of our ministry. And as for power, there is no limit, for "the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe" is "according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places" (**Eph. 1:19**, **20**).

**Light Increasing**

And this way of light grows brighter and brighter as we go on in it, for "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shines more and more unto the perfect day" (**Prov. 4:18**). And when we reach the end of the road, we shall see Him as He is, and we shall be like Him Who is the Light--Him whose very eyes are as a flame of fire (**Rev. 1:14**). We shall see "His face. In the city whither we are bound, there will be no need of sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God lightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof (**Rev. 21:23**).

Have you ever noticed the contrast, in **Isaiah 60**, between "**the** sun" and "**thy** sun," and between "the moon" and "**thy** moon"? (vs. **19**, **20**). The picture is for Israel, but in these glories we also are to share, as we have already seen. "The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee." So much for that which is natural, as "the sun" and "the moon." "But Jehovah will be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun-notice, **thy** sun-shall no more go down, neither shall **thy** moon withdraw itself; for Jehovah will be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended" (R. V.).

He Who is the Light is sun and moon to His people, both His earthly people and His heavenly people. They who follow Him shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life (**John 8:12**). “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin" (**I John 1:6**, **7**).

**Light for the Path**

In the world we are appointed to suffer tribulation, but we can testify with God's servant of old, who said: "When his candle shined upon my head, . . . by his light I walked through darkness" (**Job 29:3**), or with another who said: "Jehovah is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" and, "With thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light," and, "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they walk, O Jehovah, in the light of thy countenance" (**Ps. 27:1**. R. V. **36:9**; **89:15**, R. V.).

It remains only to point out again the way into all this blessedness. It is through the Word of God. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"; "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it gives understanding unto the simple" (**Ps. 119:105**, **130**). This is the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, shining forth from the face of Jesus Christ, who Himself is the Word of God; and this *is* the light that leads us into the presence of a holy God and sustains us there in joyous fellowship. Thomas Binney's beautiful hymn expresses this thought perfectly:

"Eternal Light! Eternal Light!

How pure the soul must be,

When, placed within Thy searching sight,

It shrinks not, but, with calm delight,

Can live, and look on Thee!

"The spirits that surround Thy throne

May bear the burning bliss;

But that is surely theirs alone,

Since they have never, never known

A fallen world like this.

"But how shall I, whose native sphere

Is dark, whose mind is dim,

Before th' Ineffable appear,

And on my naked spirit bear

That uncreated beam?

"There is a way for man to rise

To that sublime abode:

An Offering, a Sacrifice,

A Holy Spirit's energies,

An Advocate with God.

“These, these prepare us for the sight,

Of Majesty above.

The sons of ignorance and night

Can stand in the Eternal Light

Through the Eternal Love!"

**THE TRUTH ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**in His relation to the New Testament Believer**

We must not take for our norm of Christian doctrine relating to the Holy Spirit the experience of those who believed before Pentecost and who were ushered through the period of transition from Judaism to Christianity. O Christian doctrine is completed in the Gospels and The Acts. The Apostles and other disciples of whom we read there were believers before the Pentecostal advent of the Holy Spirit and the natal day of the church. It was not so with us. When we came upon the scene the Holy Spirit was already here, as was also the church of God. Therefore our relation to the Holy Spirit is not patterned after theirs, but rather after the experience of Gentile Christians whose turning to the Lord was subsequent to the final setting aside of Israel for the age and the proclamation of the Gospel to the nations.

It will be noticed that in the message of Pentecost the gift of the Holy Spirit was preceded by water baptism (**Acts 2:38**). On the other hand, when the Gospel was preached to pure Gentiles water baptism awaited the reception of the Holy Spirit (**Acts 10:44-48**). And this is the order today. Water baptism still has its place, but it is not a condition of salvation, nor of the believer's reception of the Holy Spirit of God.

Remembering that when we speak of the Holy Spirit we are speaking of a Person and not of a power or influence, let us now summarize the teaching of the New Testament touching our relation to Him.

**1.** In this present dispensation every Christian is **born** of the Spirit. The new birth is as truly a birth as is the old birth. We are children of our earthly parents by generation; and we are children of our heavenly Father by regeneration. This work of regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit, Whose instrumentality in bringing about the new birth is "the incorruptible seed of the Word of God" (**John 3:1-7**; **1 Pet. 1:22-25**; **Jas. 1:18**; **John 1:11-13**).

2. Every Christian (by which is meant every born again person) becomes at the moment of his new birth a member of the body of Christ. "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (**Eph. 5:30**). This union with Christ is the result of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is not true, therefore, as some would have us believe, that this baptism of the Holy Spirit is "a second work of grace" separated from regeneration by an interval of time. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the experience not of some, but of all Christians. "For by (or, in) one Spirit are we **ALL** baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have **ALL** been made to drink into one Spirit" **1 Cor. 12:13**, R. V.; compare **Eph. 4:4**, **5**; **Rom. 6:3**; **Gal. 3:27**). The baptizer is the Lord Jesus Himself (**Matt. 3:11**; **Acts 1:5**; **2:2**).

**3.** Every born-again person at the moment of his new birth receives the Holy Spirit into his own body, and ever afterward is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. This abiding with us forever is continuous and without a moment's intermission. We may grieve Him, we may resist Him, we may quench Him; but we cannot grieve Him away, nor can we drive Him away. To the carnal Corinthian Christians the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul wrote, saying: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (**1 Cor. 6:19**; compare **1 Cor. 3:16**; **Rom. 8:8**, **9**).

**4.** The Holy Spirit thus indwelling the believer becomes the believers' Anointing; and as such He is our, infallible Teacher, and Guide into all truth. This is in fulfilment of our Lord's promise in **John 16:13**. Every one of God's "little children" is thus made absolutely safe from the danger of apostasy. "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall: come, even now are there many antichrists; ... But ye have an Unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie 'is *of* the truth .... These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the Anointing which ye have received of him, abides in you; and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same Anointing teaches you of all things, and is truth; and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him" (**I John 2:18-27**). The words "Unction" and "Anointed" represent the same word in the Greek (Chrisma), and it is easily seen that the reference is to the Holy Spirit, of Whom oil is a frequently employed symbol in the Word of God (compare **Zech. 4:1-6**). All the anointings of prophets, priests and kings in the Old Testament were typical of the enduement of the Holy Spirit. It is good to have such a Teacher, and to be assured that by His power the promise is certain of fulfilment that we shall be kept from falling and presented faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy (**Jude 24**).

**5.** The Holy Spirit Who is our Anointing is also our Seal. In **II Cor. 1:21**, **22**, it is written, “Now he which stablishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, is God; who has also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts” He is thus the token to .us of safety, and security, as well as of ownership and possession. We who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ were, upon believing, "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto praise of his glory" (**Eph. 1:13**, **14**; compare **4:30**).

**6.** Believers are exhorted to be **filled** with the Spirit (**Eph. 5:18**). Having been born of Him, and baptized into Christ in Him, having become in our bodies His temple, having received Him as our Anointing and Seal, it is fitting that we should yield ourselves unto Him (**Rom. 6:13**), presenting to Him our bodies "a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable unto God," which is indeed our "reasonable service" (**Rom. 12:1**). When we thus yield ourselves to Him and permit Him to fill us. He controls our lives and produces in us His own fruit, which is "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness and self-control" (**Gal. 5:22**, **23**).

This is the secret of effectiveness in the Christian life.

**SALVATION PLUMB AND PLAIN**

**The Truth About Salvation**

Let us begin by understanding each other. When we speak about Salvation we are not talking about Religion.

Many people suppose that Salvation and Religion are the same thing, but this is a mistake. Salvation and Religion are by no means identical. You may have a great deal of Religion without having a bit of Salvation.

It is true that the Bible speaks of a Religion which is "pure and undefiled," but even this Religion is not Salvation, but only a product of Salvation. The Bible frequently warns against Religion as a substitute for Salvation.

The dictionary will tell you that the word "Religion" is derived from a root meaning "to heed" or "to have care." It is the exact opposite of "neglect."

It is a good thing to take heed and have a care for the things of God, but even this will avail nothing unless it leads to Salvation.

Religion, by itself, is death. Salvation is life.

**How is Salvation Obtained?**

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ tells us how Salvation is obtained, in His words to Nicodemus: "Ye must be born again."

There is no other way.

No one gets Salvation by "getting Religion." Nor by "Joining the Church." Nor by "turning over a new leaf and trying to serve God." Nor by praying. Nor by confessing his sins (The promise of **I John 1:9** is for those already saved). Nor by sorrow for sin. Nor by asking God to forgive his sins. By none of these means is Salvation obtained.

Salvation is obtained through a definite receiving of the. Lord Jesus Christ as one's personal Savior. The instant this is really done Salvation is an accomplish- ed fact. This is shown by **John 1:11**, **12**:

"He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons' of God, even to them which believe on His name."

The next verse goes on to tell what happened to those who "received Him," that is, those who "believe on His name." They were at once born ... of God."

Just so it is to-day. As many as receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their own personal Savior, giving up all else and cleaving only to Him for Salvation, are instantly and forever saved. His own declaration of **John 5:24** stands good through all time:-

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that hears My Word, and believes on Him that sent Me, has everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."

**Salvation is in Three Tenses**

There is the past tense. When a man takes the Lord Jesus Christ as his own Savior, he may at once and ever after truly say, "I am saved." Putting the matter in the past tense as to the time, he may truly say, "Then and there I was saved!" This work is instantaneous; it is Salvation from the penalty of sin.

There is the **present tense**. When a man is born again, the Holy Spirit begins to work in him, both to will and do of God's good pleasure, and to conform him to the image of Christ. This work is **progressive**; it is Salvation from the **power** of sin.

There is the **future** tense. When the Lord Jesus comes again it will be "apart from sin, unto Salvation" (**Heb. 9:28**). It is then that we who are now the sons of God will be instantly changed into the image of Christ: "we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (**1 John 3:2**). This work is instantaneous; it is Salvation from the presence of sin.

This is the way. Walk ye in it.

**ONCE SAVED ALWAYS SAVED**

No one doubts the eternal security of the believer except those who have never yet laid hold upon the truth of Salvation by Grace. Grace is gift and the gifts and callings of God are without repentance or change of mind. God does not play at "Indian giving."

A good presentation of the truth that those who are once saved are always saved, is found in the opening paragraph of First Corinthians. Paul, writing as moved by the Holy Spirit, had more criticism for the Corinthian Church than for any other. There were many things to rebuke, and when he came to these things Paul did not spare; but before going into those things he addresses them as "saints" and describes them as "sanctified in Christ Jesus" (**I Cor. 1:12**). He brings them grace and peace from God as their Father and from Jesus Christ as their Lord (v. 3). He thanks God always on their behalf for the grace, that is, the gift of God bestowed upon them by Jesus Christ (v. 4), and assures them that in everything they are enriched by Him, in all utterance and in all knowledge, coming behind in no gift, waiting for the Lord's return (v. 5-7).

And then he makes the positive assertion that they will be confirmed unto the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ (v.8). Blameless they surely were not now. Far from it! They were guilty of disgraceful carnality and even positive uncleanness, as will be shown in the later chapters. Indeed the first chapter itself is not finished until this is shown. But blameless they will be one day, even "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ," when even "the secrets of men" shall be judged according to Paul's gospel (**Rom. 2:16**).

Blameless! "Conformed to the image of His Son" (**Rom. 8:29**)!

"Holy and without blame before Him in love" (**Eph. 1:4**)!

"Holy and un-blamable and un-reprovable in His sight" (**Col. 1:22**)!

"We shall be like Him" (**I John 3:2**)!

"Faultless before the presence of His glory" (**Jude 24**)!

"Then shall the righteous shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (**Matt. 13:43**)!

Now all this *was* true for the Corinthian believers, and it is true for every believer, every really born-again person.

But why is it true?

Is it because of the faithfulness of the believer? No. The Corinthian Christians were not faithful, nor is any other Christian sufficiently faithful to merit the wonderful things promised in the Word. If left to yourselves, or judged by our deservings, we should all be lost.

Why, then, may we be so sure of our eternal security?

It is because "**God is faithful**."

"God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (verse 9).

"Even if we be faithless, yet He abides faithful; He cannot deny Himself" (**II Tim. 2:13**, R. V.).

What then? Does this give us license to sin? Why should such a question be raised? What born-again one seeks license to sin? Believers do sin, and this cannot be denied; but no believer seeks liberty to sin, and when such a suggestion is made, his heart cries out with Paul's, "God forbid!" (**Rom. 6:1**, **2**, **14**, **15**).

But if sin will not forfeit his salvation, why should not the believer sin? The answer is that the believer has a new nature! along with, the old nature and that the new nature hates sin; and also that the Holy Spirit is. indwelling the believer, "lusting against the flesh."

But is there no penalty *for* the believer who sins?

Yes. By his sins his fellowship with the Father is interrupted, and his joy is gone, until he confesses his sins and is forgiven. The promise of **I John 1:9** is only for the believer who sins:

But supposing the believer dies before he has thus "confessed”?

There were such believers in the Corinthian Church. Indeed they sinned unto death (**I John 5:16-17**), which "'means that they were guilty of sin for which God took ,away their physical lives. Their sin was connected with the Lord's Supper; they **ate and drank** "in an unworthy, manner;" and for this cause many were "weak and sickly" among them and many slept or died. "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" **2Cor. 11:30-32**).

It is utterly impossible for a man, who is once "saved, ever to be lost. "Him that comes **I will in no wise cast out**"--these are our Lord's own words for “I Came down from Heaven not to do mine own will, the will of Him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which has sent me, that of all which He has 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 everyone which sees the Son, and believes on Him, may have **everlasting life**; and I will raise him up at the last day" (**John 6:37-40**).”Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!”

**PETER'S BACKSLIDING AND RESTORATION**

Simon Peter's backsliding was a fair example of all backsliding. There were seven steps in it, for it was complete. His restoration was also complete, con­sisting of seven steps upward, and it was as typical as his fall.

**The Seven Steps Downward**

First step: **Boastfulness** (**Matt. 26:33-35**). Peter claimed to love Jesus more than all others. Whenever a Christian boasts of his own love for the Lord, or of his own attainments in spiritual things, comparinghimself with others to their detriment, he is in a dangerous position; the backsliding has already begun.

Second step: **Unwatchfulness** (**Matt. 26:40**). Boastfulness leads logically to this second step, for the need of watchfulness does not appear to the boastful man. He is one who "thinks he stands," and fails to "take heed lest he fall."

Third step: **Prayerlessness** (**Matt. 26:41-45**). If there be no need to watch, neither is there need to pray. Watching and praying go together.

Fourth step: **Fleshly service** (**Matt. 26:51**; **John 18:10**). When a Christian is backslidden, and thus out of fellowship with God, he is very apt to try to make up for this lack by fleshly activity-by "doing something for the Lord." Of course, there can be no acceptable service which is not "in the Spirit," and so long as there is interrupted fellowship there can be no service except "in the flesh." No doubt, Peter drew his sword thinking he was doing God service. But it was not such service that God wanted of him, but rather the offering of a contrite heart. The prodigal son of **Luke 15** made the same mistake, thinking to ask his father to make him one of the hired servants, when what the father wanted was not another servant, but his son, back in the home again, and in sweet fellowship with him.

Fifth step: **Following afar off** (**Matt. 26:58**; compare **Eph. 2:13**). We were afar off, but we have been made nigh. When we are in fellowship with Him, walking in the light as He is in the light, our consciences are purged, and we are enabled to draw nigh, even to come boldly. To follow afar off is to take a place of separation from Him, whereas His purpose for us is that we should occupy a place of separation from all things lse, and unto Him.

Sixth step: **Fellowship with the Lord's enemies** (**Matt. 26:69**; **Luke 22:55**). Peter was uncomfortable, as every child of God in a backslidden condition is uncomfortable and unhappy, distressed and dissatisfied. And Peter made the usual mistake of seeking to obtain comfort among the enemies of his Lord. He sought to get warm by a fire they had kindled. Doubtless he heard there many things said against his Master, but his lips were sealed. The backslidden Christian is 'without a testimony for God, because he is not walking with God. And not only does he know it, but so also do his neighbors. His mouth is closed.

Seventh step: **Open denial** (**Matt. 26:70-75**). Three times, and with oaths and curses upon his lips, did this poor, unhappy child of God deny his Lord, even as He had forewarned him. Denial, in some measure, is the sure end of all backsliding. Indeed, it may almost be said that denial is the beginning of backsliding as well as its end, for a matter of fact, backsliding, in its essence, is denial of our Lord. If Peter had not begun with denying the Lord's testimony of the danger in his pathway, he might have been saved the bitterness at the end of that pathway.

**Deliverance**

But thanks be unto God, He is our Strong Deliverer. It was needful to let Peter have his own way until he should learn that his way was the wrong way. And yet, all the time, the Lord was at work restoring His sinning disciple, even before the outward signs of backsliding had begun. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate," and He knows the end from the beginning, and does not wait for our sins to appear: He began to pray for Peter before Peter had taken his first step downward, for He saw the danger ahead, which Peter refused to see. Notice the seven steps upward - the complete restoration.

**The Seven Steps Upward**

First step: **The intercession of Christ** (**Luke 22:31**, **32**). "I have prayed for thee."

Second step: **The look of Christ** (**Luke 22:61**). Oh, the pity of that look! Oh, the love in it! And oh, the power of it! It did much to restore unhappy Peter. "He went out and wept bitterly."

Third step: **The message from Christ** (**Mark 16:7**). "Tell His disciples-and Peter." He knows His own sheep by name-the sick ones as well as the others- and He is of great compassion. He had died for Peter: should He now let him go? He had been delivered for Peter's offences-and doubtless they were many-and He had been raised for Peter's justification: how could He let him go? He could not, and He did not. "And Peter!" What a gracious message for Simon's ears! The joy of it--that message from Christ!

Fourth step: **The interview with Christ** (**Luke 24:34**; **I Cor. 15:3-5**). It has to come to this sooner or later in the case of every backslidden saint-and the sooner, the better. There is nothing like a personal "talk with Jesus, to smooth the rugged road."

Fifth step: **Open Confession** (**John 21:15-17**). This was threefold, and corresponds to the threefold open denial. Peter had begun with a boast that he loved Jesus more than all the other disciples. And now the question must be answered-"Love thou Me more than these?" All boasting is excluded from Peter's answers, and fellowship is restored.

Sixth step: **Peter restored to his work** (**John 21:15-17**). "Feed My lambs . . . Tend My sheep ... Feed My sheep."

Seventh step: Back to the starting point (**John 21:18-19**). "Follow Me." Thus does He perfectly restore. “What a wonderful Savior!”

**UNBELIEF IS UNSCIENTIFIC**

Too often it is assumed by unbelievers and admitted by believers that there is necessary conflict between science and faith. The rationalist insists, and Christians frequently agree with him, that reason and revelation are two antagonistic principles which cannot be harmonized.

But this is not true. It is the fool, and not the scientist, who says in his heart, "There is no God" (**Ps. 14:1**).

It is true that revelation is extra-reasonable; it is above and beyond reason, but it is not contrary to reason; it is not opposed to reason; it is not unreasonable. Rather, it is unbelief that is unreasonable and unscientific.

Science is knowledge, and the true scientist is one who knows. But how does he know? It is not because he understands and can explain the phenomena with which he deals, for this, as he will always admit, is impossible. Rather, he has come to know because, in observing these phenomena, he has learned that certain causes always bring about certain results.

A physician was asked to explain just how and when food taken into the stomach is transmuted into flesh and blood, bones and brawn. "Now," said the doctor, "if you have more questions along that line, let me give you my answer to them all at once. The answer is, I do not know, and neither does anyone else. All we know is that certain effects always follow certain causes. Bread and butter and other food received into the human stomach are somehow consumed and appropriated by the human body and are changed into the tissues making up that body, but as to the how and why of it we are ignorant. We are able to observe the phenomena, but back of the phenomena there is a mystery into which we are unable to go."

It is just so in the spiritual realm. Certain causes are sure to bring forth certain effects, and conclusions based upon this fact in spiritual things are reasonable and scientific. On the other hand, to refuse credence to conclusions so based is to act unreasonably and unscientifically.

Now let us go to the Word of God.

**Examining the Record**

In the 17th chapter of The Acts we have the record of Paul's Mars Hill address in Athens. In verse 31 he lays down the following proposition: namely, that God "has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man Whom He has ordained; whereof He has given assurance unto all men, in that He has raised Him from the dead." In the margin of the King James Version, instead of "given assurance," it reads "offered faith." God has offered faith unto all men, and this faith offered by Him is based upon the fact that He raised His Son from among the dead. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is a thoroughly established fact of history. Experts in the laws of evidence agree that it is the best attested great fact in the history of the human race, and it is declared that, according to recognized rules of evidence, it is easier to prove that the Lord Jesus was raised from the dead than to prove that such men as George Washington and Abraham Lincoln ever lived.

In the light of these facts, unbelief is unreasonable and unscientific.

Again, let us look at the Word.

In the 7th chapter of the Gospel of John it is written that the Lord Jesus was teaching in the temple in Jerusalem and that upon hearing Him, "The Jew there­fore marveled, saying, How knows this man letters, having never learned?" (**John 7:14**, **15**.) Now, mark this answer: I am quoting from the Revised Version:

"Jesus therefore answered them, and said, My teaching is not Mine, but His that sent Me."

If He had stopped there we might have said, "Well, that is a mere assertion; it is easy for anyone to make such a claim." But He did not stop there: He went on:

“If any man wills to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from Myself."

Here is assertion with something added. He not only made a statement, but He also issued a challenge. And the proposition is in such a form that anyone who sincerely desires to know the truth can surely find it out. As a matter of fact there are thousands, and millions, of men and women who have taken this proposition into the laboratory of actual experience and have found it to be true. Beginning with a will to do the will of God, they have come to know concerning the teaching of Jesus, that it comes not merely from Himself but that it is of God. The proposition has been subjected to a demonstration in the crucible of rigid test, and the crystal of certitude has appeared. The proposition is reduced to a Q. E. D. It is scientifically accurate.

Unbelief, therefore, is unreasonable and unscientific.

**More Evidence Let us look further.**

Here come four men toward the Lord Jesus, bearing on a litter a fifth man who is a cripple from paralysis. The story is told in **Mark 2**. Hindered by the crown from entering through the door into the room where the Lord was, these men, dead in earnest, ripped open the roof and let their man down right in front of the Lord as He stood teaching. Now, watch carefully, and see what happened:

“When He saw their faith, He said unto the sick of the palsy. Son, thy sins be forgiven thee" (**Mark 2:5**).

In speaking thus, of course, Jesus was implying that He had the right to forgive sins.

"But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts."

They only reasoned in their hearts; they did not speak openly. In their hearts they said:

"Why does this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?"

The point is well taken. Jesus must be God indeed, or He is guilty of blasphemy. Notice, He did not evade the issue. Reading their hearts, He said:

"Which is easier, to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?"

Well, that would depend. Anybody might be bold enough to say, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." Every Romanist priest says that, or something like it, many times in a day. But no one knows whether it is so or not. It would be a different matter to say, "Arise and walk," for unless the cripple should get up and walk, the result would be embarrassing all around. But the Lord Jesus did not stop with mere claim, or assertion. He went on and said:

"But that ye may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins (He says to the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house."

The matter was to be tested on the spot. And what was the result?

"And he arose, and straightway took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion."

Obviously, it did not occur to them to doubt the evidence just now presented to them. How could they have doubted it? To discredit such evidence would have been absurd.

Unbelief is unreasonable. It is unscientific. It is absurd.

**Again the Word Once more, to the Word.**

In the 11th chapter of Matthew our Lord appears, with the clouds of rejection gathering around Him, and to all human appearances He seemed like a defeated man. Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum and the neighboring towns had turned a deaf ear to Him, thus proving themselves worthy of even severer judgment than that of Tyre, Sidon and Sodom.

But if He looked like a defeated man, He did not talk like one. Listen to Him, beginning with verse 25:

"At that season Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and did reveal them unto babes: yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in Thy sight."

And then, looking down the centuries, this wonderful Man of Galilee sounded forth an invitation which still reverberates through the ages:

"All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father: and no one knows the Son, save [except] the Father; neither does any know the Father, save [except] the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son wills to reveal Him.

"Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."

Here indeed is material for study. There are in this wonderful passage both statement and challenge. No one need accept the statement blindly, God does not ask men to trust Him blindly. He has "**offered faith**" to all men. And in this universal proclamation the Son of God **offers faith** to all men. He says, "I will give you rest." But that is not extraordinary. Other men and systems have said it. It was said by many before the Son of God visited the earth in His first advent and it has been said by many since that time. It is still said by Buddhism, Brahmanism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Shinto, Theosophy, Eddyism, Mohammedanism, Unity, New Thought and what not.

(NOTE) **“offers faith”:** I differ from Pettingill. Faith is not a gift, salvation is. **Eph. 2:8.** RHL

But Jesus more than said it. He alone has fulfilled the promise. And not only a few initiates here and there, but all the sons of men everywhere, laboring and heavy laden, who have come unto Him, have found the rest He offers. No one has ever tested His promise and come away disappointed. He satisfies the longing soul and fills the hungry soul with goodness.

All this in the present tense: He does these things here and now. Paganism promises rapturous bliss in the next world, and it may easily make the promise, for no one can test it until the next world is reached; but Jesus of Nazareth promises, here in this present world, rest and surcease for those who will respond to His call, and those who come find His promise true. Millions of men and women of every race and walk of life have tried it out and joyfully unite in witnessing to its truth. I count myself happy to be one of these witnesses For--

“I heard the voice of Jesus say,

Come unto Me and rest.

Lay down, thou weary one,

Lay down Thy head upon My breast.

"I came to Jesus as I was,

Weary, and worn, and sad;

I found in Him a resting place,

And He has made me glad.

"I heard the voice of Jesus say,

Behold, I freely give

The living water: thirsty one,

Stoop down, and drink, and live.

"I came to Jesus, and I drank

Of that life-giving stream;

My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,

And now I live in Him.

"I heard the voice of Jesus say,

I am this dark world's light;

Look unto Me, thy morn shall rise,

And all thy day be bright.

"I came to Jesus, and I found

In Him my Star, my Sun,

And in this light of life I'll walk

Till trav’ling days are done."

To discredit such a cloud of witnesses is ridiculous.

Unbelief in the face of such evidence is unreasonable. It is unscientific. It is absurd.

**Jehovah the Savior**

Jesus is God. He is Jehovah-the-Savior. That is why He was named Jesus, which in Hebrew is Jehoshua, meaning Jehovah-Savior, "because He shall save His people from their sins." By many infallible proofs He has demonstrated His deity, His Godhead. To deny it or to doubt it, in the face of these proofs, is unreasonable; it is unscientific; it is absurd; it is ridiculous.

But it is more. It is dangerous. It is perilous. Our life for all eternity depends upon the faith offered to all men that Jesus is the Anointed Savior, in Whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. It was to warn men of this awful danger that He said in **John 8:24**, "If ye believe not that I AM, ye shall die in your sins.” And again, in **verse 28**, referring to His approaching crucifixion, He said, "When we have lifted upthe Son of man, then shall ye know that I AM." He did not say, "I am He"; the pronoun is supplied by the translators. What He said was, "I AM"; which, as His enemies perfectly understood, was to claim that He Himself was the great I AM of **Exodus 3:14**, that is, God Himself in flesh. In **John 8:58**, He repeated the claim, saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM," and immediately His enemies took up stones to cast at Him, for death by stoning was the penalty under the Law of Moses for blasphemy.

Thus the matter stands. God has left nothing undone to convince men and to direct them to the Way of Life, even to His Son Jesus Christ, Who said, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me" (**John 14:6**). To refuse to come through the only Way, is to seal one's fate eter­nally. Unbelief is unreasonable, it is unscientific, it is absurd, it is ridiculous, and it is perilous.

**THE TWO RESURRECTIONS**

"The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (**John 5:28**, **29**).

There are, then, two resurrections. The resurrection of life is one, and the resurrection of damnation is another. The resurrection of life is the first resurrection, and the resurrection of damnation is the second resurrection.

True, it is here declared that both of these resurrections are to be included in a certain "how'." But the word "hour" as here used by no means indicates the limited period suggested by the word as ordinarily employed in modern usage. When we speak of an hour we usually mean a period of sixty minutes, but in the passage before us it is used for an indefinite period. This is seen by the use of the same word in the preceding verses. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear (hearken, R. V., margin) shall live" (v. 25). The dead here referred to are, as all agree, the dead in trespasses and sins. Whenever the gospel is preached to them they are hearing the voice of the Son of God, and they that hearken are born again, and thus brought out of death into life. The 25th verse is just another way of saying the same thing as is said in the 24th:

**"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that hears my word, and believeth him that sent me, has eternal life, and comes not into judgment, but has passed out of death into life" (R. V.).**

The word "hour" in verse 25 is the same as in verse 28, and it has exactly the same meaning. The "hour" of the 25th verse has already endured for nineteen hundred years. In both verses, the 25th and the 28th, it is as if our Lord has said, "The **time** comes," etc. Other Scriptures, which we shall consider, will show us that the resurrection of life and the resurrection of damnation are separated from each other by a thousand years.

**Spiritual Resurrection**

Incidentally, let it be remarked here that this passing out of death into life is, very definitely, a resurrection -- a spiritual resurrection. It is sometimes thoughtlessly said that there is no such thing as **spiritual** resurrection, but a spiritual resurrection is precisely what takes place whenever a person is born again. Our subject, "The two Resurrections," has in view two resurrections which are bodily, and there are two such resurrections. To try to dispose of the bodily resurrections by making either of them spiritual is one thing, but to deny the possibility of spiritual resurrection is another thing. Let us whom God has saved thank Him that we ourselves passed through the experience of spiritual resurrection when we were born from above, and let us thank God also for the glad assurance of bodily resurrection if we .should fall sleep in Jesus.

This doctrine of spiritual resurrection- the teaching that when one is born again he, actually comes to life from the dead- is of great importance. Many even of God's own dear children think of regeneration as nothing .more than a figure of speech, and so they fail to realize the joy of knowing that their new relation to God, is through actual birth and not through a mere symbol of birth. They need to be taught. that the new birth is as truly a birth as is the first birth, and that they have become children of God by generation as truly as they became children of their earthly; father by generation. They were dead, and are now alive; they "have passed out of death into life". This is true resurrection, spiritual resurrection.

**Bodily Resurrection**

Nor does this teaching by any means affect the other doctrine of bodily resurrection, by which the Scriptures teach that all men, whether saved or lost and whose bodies die, will come forth in their bodies. "Even so far back as Job it is written, "In my flesh shall I see God" (**Job 19:26**); and the prophet Isaiah (**26:19**) wrote: "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise"; or, as the Revision has it, "Thy dead shall live; my dead bodies shall arise" was the bodies, and not the spirits, of the resurrected saints that were seen in the holy city in connection with our Lord's own resurrection (**Matthew 27:52**, **53**).

Indeed, it is almost to insult one's intelligence to speak in this way of the "bodily resurrection" of the bodily dead. Only that which is dead can come to life. "In physical death the body is the only part of man that -dies. Even the soul-sleepers and annihilationists would agree to this. And since only that which is dead can be raised to life, it follows that the only resurrection possible to the bodily dead in bodily resurrection.

That our Lord's own resurrection was bodily is beyond question for those who regard the Scriptures as authoritative. His bodily resurrection has often been declared the best authenticated event in all history. By the accepted rules of evidence it is easier to prove "that the Lord Jesus rose from the dead in His body than that Napoleon Bonaparte or George Washington ever-lived.

Then, too, we have His own testimony, given before the event, that He would rise from the dead, and that in His body. "Destroy this temple", said He, ,"and in three days I will raise it up". And the record says -that "he spake of the temple of his body" (**John 2:19**-**21**).

**I. The First Resurrection**

That all the dead should be raised was a truth well known and understood in Israel. The apostle Paul, in his defense before Felix, remarked that even those who were persecuting him allowed "that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" (**Acts 24:15**). The resurrection **of** the dead was a doctrine insisted upon by the Pharisees. But when our Lord began to speak of a resurrection **from the, dead** no one understood what He meant. In **Mark 9:9**, **10** it is recorded that as the Lord Jesus and His disciples were coming own from the Mount of Transfiguration

"He charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead.

"And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean."

They were familiar with the doctrine of the resurrection **of** the dead, but they wondered what was meant by the resurrection from (or, **out from among)** the dead. Daniel had written of a time when

"Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (**Dan. 12:2**), but so far as his language indicated, all this might take ::place simultaneously. The idea of a separate resurrection of saved and lost, "an out-resurrection from among the dead ones" (the exact language afterward employed by Paul in **Phil. 3:11**, was new to the first disciples. In **Luke 14:14** the Lord Jesus spoke of this first resurrection as "the resurrection of the just".

The order of the resurrection is given in **I Cor. 15:22-24**: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

But every man in his own order:

Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father".

The first resurrection is not complete in one event; it is, so to speak, in instalments. It includes.

1. Christ Himself, "the first-fruits".
2. "They that are Christ's at His coming."
3. The Tribulation Saints.

I do not attempt to classify here those saints whose bodies arose and appeared in the holy city immediately after our Lord's resurrection (**Matt. 27:52**, **53**), since we know nothing as to what became of them-whether they returned to the graves whence they came or went into heaven with the Lord.

**Christ the First-fruits**

The resurrection of Christ Himself should be included in the first resurrection, for He is the antitype of the wave sheaf which was part and parcel of the harvest. His resurrection is the pledge and token of our own. Not only He Himself in His own person is "the first-fruits", but in **James 1:18** we also are called "a kind of first-fruits of his creatures". Because He lives we shall live also. "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 dwells in you" (**Rom. 8:11**). “If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him" (**I Thess. 4:14**). His own resurrection is not complete without ours, for "we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones" (**Eph. 5:30**). Indeed, the resurrection of Christ, including His body the church, is seen in **Rev. 12:5**:

"And she brought forth a Man Child, Who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron; and her Child was caught up unto God, and to His throne".

The catching up of the Man Child has not yet taken place. He is not yet fully born. The church is the body of Christ, and until the church is complete His body will be in the process of birth. At the moment of its completion the Rapture will take place. This·is the reason for including Christ Himself in the first resurrection. The Head of the body is already raised from the dead, but the complete resurrection of the whole Man Child is yet future.

**They that are Christ's**

And who will be included in the first resurrection besides "Christ the first-fruits"? The record has it, "they that are Christ's at His coming". The language of **I Thess. 4: 13-18** is very explicit:

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (or precede) 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".

The meaning of "these words" is unmistakable. Those who sleep in Jesus -the dead in Christ- include the saved of all the ages, from Adam and Eve down to the moment of the rapture. Jesus died for them all of them; for those who lived on earth before His first advent, as well as for those who have lived since. He died "for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the, first testament" (**Heb. 9:15**), as well as for those that are under the second testament. He died to show the righteousness of God in the passing over of sins that were done aforetime in the forbearance of God (**Rom. 3:25**), as well as for the salvation or us sinners who were born in the present dispensation.

So then, when our Lord Himself shall step down into the air from the Father's throne He will catch up to Himself all His redeemed ones, from the beginning of the word, all who sleep in Jesus, and all the saved who are alive and remaining at HIS corning. The rapture will include not only the New Testament "church which is His body," but the Old Testament saints as well. The church which is His body is also His bride, and as such she will have the most exalted position, but together with her in the rapture there will be the friends of the Bridegroom, the redeemed of all the ages.

**The Tribulation Saints**

And not only so, but there is yet another company included in the first resurrection, the tribulation saints. After the church is caught away and before her return with the Lord to set up the kingdom, the terrible scenes of the great tribulation will be enacted upon the earth, and a great multitude will turn to the Lord, refusing to worship the beast king of Revelation 13, or to receive his mark upon their foreheads or hands. The innumerable company of palm bearers seen in **Rev. 7** are tribulation saints who will suffer martyrdom in that awful time. "These are they who come out of the great tribulation" (**Rev. 7:14**, R. V.). In the 19th chapter of The Revelation the Second Coming to earth of our Lord is pictured, as He is revealed from heaven in power and great glory, corning to judge and to make war. With Him are "the armies which were in heaven," meaning His redeemed ones where to be associated with Him in reigning over the earth. Then in the 20th chapter these armies out of heaven are seen again. I begin reading at the fourth verse:

"And I saw thrones and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them".

But with them there is another company:

"And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands".

These, clearly enough, are the tribulation saints.

They had turned to the Lord during persecutions of that terrible time and had laid down their lives for their faith. Now see:

"And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years".

They lived. That is, they lived again, they were brought to life from the dead, and were associated with Christ and His Church (though not themselves a part of the Church) in His millennial reign over the earth. Let us read on:

"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. “**This is the first resurrection**.”

This, then, is the third and final instalment of the first resurrection. Christ in His own person came first, "Christ the first-fruits." The second instalment includes those caught up at the rapture, all "the dead in Christ" up to that time. And the third instalment is seen here. The tribulation saints are the third instalment and they are included in the first resurrection.

Christ was the wave sheaf, the first-fruits. The "dead in Christ" and all the living saints, are tobe caught up at the rapture, constitute the harvest proper. The tribulation saints are the gleanings of the harvest. Compare **Lev. 23rd** chapter.

"Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection: on such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years".

**A Thrilling Picture**

In **I Cor. 15:51-54** the first resurrection is pictured in vivid terms:

"Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption (literally, incor­ruptibility), and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption (incorruptibility), and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to victory".

A remarkable parallelism may be seen between this passage and the words of our Lord to Martha just before the raising of Lazarus; the record is in **John 11:25**, **26**:

"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever lives and believes in Me shall never die".

Obviously, our Lord had in mind the events of the first resurrection. In that time He will manifest Himself as the resurrection to those who have fallen asleep in Him. He will raise them from the dead in incorruptibility. To those who are alive and remaining, believing in Him, he will show Himself as the life, changing their mortal bodies into immortality, thus swallowing up death in victory.

Paul points to the first resurrection in the words of **Phil. 3:20**, **21**; I quote from the Revision:

"For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subject all things unto Himself".

In **I John 3:1-3** the practical power of this wonderful truth is set forth in these words; again quoting from the Revised Version:

"Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this cause the world knows us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is. And everyone that has this hope set on Him purifies himself, even as He is pure."

**II. The Second Resurrection**

We have already seen that the second resurrection is a resurrection of judgment, a resurrection of damnation, a resurrection unto shame and everlasting contempt. Its description is most graphically portrayed in **Revelation 20:11-15**, R. V.:

"And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat upon it, from Whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire. And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire".

This brief paragraph out of the Word of God is at once perhaps the most majestic and the most terrible passage to be found in all literature. How could words be set together to go beyond that 11th verse in its sweeping majesty and grandeur?

"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them".

Since the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment unto the Son (**John 5:22**), it will be the Son before whose face the earth and heavens shall flee away on that day of the Great Assize. Before Him must stand those who are to be judged. They are the lost dead. All the saved have been accounted for in the first part of the chapter. These who now hear their doom are those who in their day of opportunity trod underfoot the Son of God, making the blood of the covenant a common thing, and heaping insult upon the Spirit of grace. A sore punishment indeed awaits them. Let us look upon them:

"And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne".

There they are--"the great and the small"--all reduced now to a common level.

Books are here, and they are now opened. They contain the life record of those now arraigned for judgment-the record of what they have done, their works.

It is said to be the custom in France for the police department to have a record carefully prepared for every man of prominence in the republica record of his acts so far as they can be discovered. This record is called a **dossier.** And it is said that upon the election of a new head of the police department his first act after assuming office is to send for his own **dossier** and destroy it.

How gladly might we all be to have our own **dossiers** destroyed! Well, that is precisely what has come to pass for some of us. We have, come to God through the blood-sprinkled Way, and our life records have been blotted out, the whole black record washed clean by the precious blood of the Lamb of God. But these--these who stand before the Great White Throne --have refused to take their places as lost sinners; they have spurned the Son of God Who died to save them; and now, since they would not have Him as their Savior, they must face Him as their Judge. Perhaps the most terrible clause in the whole Bible is "the wrath of the Lamb". These who trembled not at the Word of God written or spoken, must now tremble before the Word Incarnate!

It will be a righteous judgment. The books will be opened, and those standing before the throne will be judged out of the books, according to their works. There will be degrees of punishment for the lost, as there will be degrees of reward for the saved; and therefore the books are necessary in order to determine the degree in each case. Some of these prisoners at the bar have had greater opportunities than the others, and that fact must be brought out. It is the work of God to believe on Him Whom He has sent, and some of these wretched ones had known that and had gone on rejecting Him; the records: will show all that. The books were opened.

And another book was opened, which is the book of life. This, too, must be scanned, in order to show that it does not contain the names of these guilty ones. I cannot see any hope for any of these who are judged in this final judgment of the Great White Throne. They are the lost dead. They will be raised in the second resurrection only to hear their doom and then be cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death. None will escape the judgment; every rebel against God and his Christ must be brought to trial in that day. The sea gives up its dead. The grave disgorges and yields up its dead. Hades, the underworld abode of departed spirits, will no longer be able to retain a single soul; all the dead must come forth in order to face the dreadful sentence of the righteous Judge of the whole earth. "And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire."

**The Plain Teaching of Scripture**

Many and varied have been the attempts to set aside the plain teaching of the Scriptures on the doctrine of the two resurrections. But for those who bow to the authority of these Scriptures there is but one conclusion. There will be two resurrections, literal, bodily resurrections. Dean Alford's remarks on this subject, in connection with his exposition of the passage we have considered in **Rev. 20:4-6**, are very much to the point:

“It will have been long ago anticipated by the readers of this commentary", says he, "that I cannot consent to distort its words from their plain sense and chronological place in the prophecy, on account of any considerations of difficulty, or any risk of abuses which the doctrine of the millennium may bring with it. Those who lived next to the apostles, and the whole church for three hundred years, understood them in the plain literal sense: and it is a strange sight in these day’s to see expositors who are among the first in reverence of antiquity, complacently casting aside the most cogent instance of unanimity which primitive antiquity presents. As regards the text itself, no legitimate treatment of it will extort what is known as the spiritual interpretation now in fashion. If, in a passage where **two resurrections** are mentioned, where certain souls lived at the first, and the rest of the dead lived only at the end of a specified period after that first,-if in such a passage the first resurrection may be understood to mean spiritual rising with Christ, while the second means literal rising from the grave;--then there is an end of all significance in language, and Scripture is wiped out as a definite testimony to anything. If the first resurrection is spiritual, then so is the second, which I suppose none will be hardy enough to maintain: but if the second is literal, then so is the first, which in common with the whole primitive church and many of the best modern expositors, I do maintain, and receive as an article of faith and hope."

**Who is this?**

"And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, 'Who is this?'" (**Matt. 21:10**.)

The most vital question ever framed by human lips was that asked that day in the excited city of Jerusalem as the Son of David entered her gates, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. He was her King, but she knew Him not. She and her rulers, because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which were read every Sabbath day, were about to fulfill them in condemning Him, even to the death of the cross.

"Who is this?" The crowd said, "This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth .of Galilee." And He was that, but only incidentally. In our day the same question is found everywhere. And the crowd always has its answer ready: "This is a great man, a great prophet, a good man, the pattern man, our high example," and so on. He is all that, but only incidentally. The multitude is blinded; the people perish through lack of knowledge; they err, not knowing the Scriptures.

"Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?"

As he asked the question of His disciples nearly two thousand years ago, so He is asking to-day, for this is the question of questions-"Who is this?" Some may say He is John the Baptist risen from the dead; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets, but His ear is straining to catch the words of the one to whom God has revealed the truth that this is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

A Coming One had been promised all through the ages, the Seed of the woman who should crush the serpent's head. In due time He came, as the Child of the virgin-Immanuel, God with us, the Coming One in flesh, Jehovah incarnate. But His identity was denied; He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. And to this day, despite the many infallible proofs extending through nineteen hundred years, the same old question is asked on every hand, "Who is this?"

That our Lord Jesus Christ is identical with the Jehovah of the Old Testament is abundantly proved by the Scriptures. The name itself, Jehovah, or Yahweh, means "the Coming One." Thus it was that when Cain was born, his mother Eve, remembering the promise of the coming Redeemer, named her first-born "Cain" (gotten), for she believed she had **"gotten theman', even Jehovah."** There is no warrant for the English rendering, "I have **gotten a man from Jehovah**." It had not been revealed to her that Jehovah was God. But she looked for Jehovah, the Coming One, and she indulged the hope that her child was He.

Again, in **Gen. 4:26**, the correct rendering is in the margin rather than in the text:

"Then began men to call themselves by the name of Jehovah."

That is, men began to claim that name for themselves, setting themselves up as the promised Deliverer, the woman's Seed, the Coming One.

To Moses, at the burning bush was revealed the wonderful secret that the Coming One was God Himself. According to the Authorized Version, **Ex. 3:14, 15**, says:

"And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and He said, Thus shall ye say unto the children of Israel, I AM has sent me unto you ... This is My name forever, and this is My memorial unto all generations."

The Revisers have not altered the text here, but their marginal note is of great value as shedding light upon this blessed mystery. One of their alternate readings is "I WILL BE THAT I WILL BE"; and an the words, "I AM", they have noted that the Hebrew word thus rendered is ‘“Ehyeh,’ from the same root as Jehovah.”

Jehovah, or Yahweh, is the third-person, singular number, future tense, of the verb **havah**, "he will be," or "he will come." What God told Moses, therefore, was that He, God Himself, was the Corning One. As there is no present tense in the Hebrew language, He could not have said "I am that I am." The meaning of what He did say is, "I will be that Jehovah," that is, "that Coming On."

"And God spoke unto Moses, and said unto him, I am Jehovah: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by My name Jehovah was I not known to them."

That is to say, that although Abraham and Isaac and Jacob had known God, they only knew Him as God Almighty, or El Shaddai. They also knew a heavenly personage when they addressed by the name of Jehovah, but they did not know that God Almighty and Jehovah were the same. They knew that Jehovah was the Corning One, far that was the meaning of the name; but they did not know that this Jehovah, this Coming One, was God Almighty Himself.

Still further proof that the Lord Jesus is identical with the Old Testament Jehovah is shown by the sixth chapter of Isaiah. "In the year that King Uzziah died," writes the prophet, "I saw also the Lord sitting up an a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple ... And one cried to another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of Hosts. The whole earth is full of His glory!" That this Lord, Jehovah of Hosts, whom Isaiah saw, and whose glory he beheld, was our adorable Lord Jesus Christ, is clearly shown in **John 12:37-41**, where **Isaiah 53** and **Isaiah 6** are quoted and applied to Him, and where it is written, "These things said Isaiah, when he saw His glory, and spoke of Him."

An important Scripture bearing upon our question, is found in **Heb.** **10:37**- "For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry."

The Revisers have rendered this passage:

"For yet a very little while, He that comes shall come, and shall not tarry."

The quotation is from **Habakkuk 2:3**, where it is written:

"For the vision is yet for the appointed time, and it hastens toward the end, and shall not lie: though it tarry, wait for it: because it will surely come, it will not delay."

The passage has more for us than is indicated on the surface. The designation of our Lord here, in the words translated, "He that shall come" or "He that comes," is full of meaning. Indeed, it is believed by some students of the Word of God that the Greek words, **Ho** **Erkomenos**, are intended to be read as a proper name, in which case they would not be translated, but placed without change into our English Bible, thus:

"For yet a very little while, **Ho Erkomenos** will come, and will not delay."

This name, or title, occurs in the New Testament twenty-one times in connection with our Lord Jesus, not counting two instances in The Revelation, where the Authorized Version has it wrongly and it is omitted by the Revisers. There can be but little doubt that it is the Greek form of Jehovah. And it will be remembered that this name Jesus was given to Him because He was the Coming Savior; "Jesus" is the Greek form of "Jehoshua," which means "Saving Jehovah," or "the Coming Savior."

**Ho Eromenos!** The Coming One! As we trace this appellation throughout the New Testament, it takes to itself a profound significance.

1. **Matthew 3:11**. Here is John the Baptist's first recorded testimony to the Christ in the New Testament. Hear him:

"I indeed baptize you in water unto repentance, but He that comes (**Ho Erkomenos**) after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire."

2. **Matthew 11:3**. John was languishing in prison, and he was puzzled. Hearing in prison the works of Christ, he sends two of his disciples to ask Him a question. The matter is given more fully in **Luke 7:19**, **20**. "And John calling unto him two of his disciples, sent them to Jesus, saying, Are Thou He that should come (**Ho Erkomenos**)? or look we for another? When the men were come unto Him, they said, John the Baptist has sent us to Thee, saying, Are thou He that should come (**Ho Erkomenos**)**?** or look we for another?"

3. **Matthew 21:9**; **23:39**; **Luke 13:35**; **John 12:31**. In these passages the language is practically identical, so far as the matter now under discussion is concerned. It reads: "Blessed! **Ho Erkomenos!** In the name of the Lord!"

4. **Luke 19:38.** In this passage the shout of the multitude is: "Blessed! **Ho Erkomenos!** King! In the name of the Lord!"

5. **John 3:31**. Twice in this single verse John the Baptist applies this beautiful title to the Lord Jesus:

"**Ho Erkomenos** from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaks of the earth: **Ho Erkomenos** from heaven is above all."

And He is still **Ho Erkomenos** unto us. For although He has come and gone, He is coming again. We have His own word for it, "I will come again."

Three times in The **Revelation, 1:4**, **8** and **4:8**, He is called by this title, but in **11:17** and **16:5** the Revisers have correctly omitted it. It is not found in the authorities, and the Holy Spirit never put it into these texts, for the very good reason that they have to do with scenes following His return as King of kings and Lord of lords. He is not then the Coming One, but the One already come, and the One to whom the four-and-twenty elders are singing: "We give Thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, Who are and Who was; because thou have taken thy great power and have reigned."

**Ho Erkomenos**, therefore, will come. We wait for Him, and our hearts long for His coming, "more than they that watch for the morning." His last word to us was, "Surely I come quickly." And we join with his servant of old in the glad response, "Amen! Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"

In the meantime, while we wait for our coming Lord, He is sorely wounded in the house of His friends. Many there are who deny the Lord that bought them, rejecting His Godhead while professing to worship Him. The old, old question is ever new: "Who is this?" What shall be your answer? Have a care-

"For many deceivers are entered into the world who confess not that Jesus Christ is **Erkomenos** in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." (**2 John 7**.) **Erkomenos** in the flesh! Jehovah incarnate! This is the testimony that god has given concerning His Son. “In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” “This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols.”

**MICAH'S GREAT MESSAGE**

**(From an address by the Author)**

**I**

I am going to begin to read in the third chapter at the ninth verse. I imagine Micah standing on some eminence, perhaps in the temple area, indicating that he wants to speak to the people, and the people gather together to hear him.

"Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel, that abhor judgment, and pervert all equity. They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. "The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money."

Did you suppose that graft was a modern invention? No, it is ancient, and was in full flower twenty-seven hundred years ago in Jerusalem. The political leaders, the teachers, and the preachers were all grafters. The heads thereof judged for reward, the priests taught for hire' the prophets divined for money. And he wasn't the worst of it! These crooks, for that is what they all were, were very religious, "Yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us? none evil can come upon us."

I am sure that if God hates anything more than another He hates religious hypocrisy. It would be bad enough if these men were thieves, and let it go at that, but they were religious thieves. They made God or tried to make Him, a party to their crimes. They tried to make Him seem to approve of their stealing and their sinfulness.

Well, the Lord hearkened and heard it, and now see.

"Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest."

Can you think of yourself standing there listening to that preacher? Suppose you had been there, what would you have thought of this thing he has just said? Would you have thought he intended to be understood literally, or allegorically, or figuratively, or symbolically, or how?

**To Be Taken Literally**

In Jerusalem the two hills called mountains-- Mount Zion and Mount Moriah. Zion was where the legislative buildings were-the seat of government, while Moriah was where the temple stood. Sometimes the whole city is called Jerusalem and sometimes it is called Zion.

Here the prophet is distinguishing between Zion and Moriah, and speaking of the whole city as Jerusalem. He is saying that the time would come when Mount Zion should be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem should become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest. If you had been there when the preacher said that Jerusalem should become heaps and Mount Moriah as the high places of the forest, would you have said he meant itjust that way, or would you have said the young man was enthusiastic and carried away with his theme?

A lot of water has run under the bridge since Micah preached this sermon, and we can learn from history whether what he says here was to be taken literally.

During the reign of Emperor Hadrian of Rome, Mount Zion was actually plowed at his order to hinder the city being rebuilt, and Jerusalem became a heap of rubbish, so overgrown with trash that visitors declared there was no evidence there had ever been a city there at all. That is how it came about!

II

Thus ends chapter three, but thus does not end the sermon, for chapter four begins with "but."

"But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountain, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it."

Now we are looking on a picture of the kingdom that shall one day take the place of all the kingdoms of the world. This kingdom will be universal,

"and many nations shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths."

Not only will He teach of His ways, but we will walk in His paths--the nations of this world assembling before the Lord in Jerusalem. **Zechariah 14** declares they must go up from year to year to worship and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And in **Zechariah 8** we read further:

"Thus says the Lord of hosts; it shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts: I will go also."

Can you imagine that? Co-operation between the mayors of Chicago and New York, Boston and San-Francisco, Los Angeles and New Orleans, organizing an expedition to go to wait upon the Lord in Jerusalem, and the reply coming, "We will go also."

Those who care for such matters have had the privilege once or twice, of listening over the radio to the Pope of Rome. Others have listened to Mr. Hitler. But, think of the time when it will be possible to sit down before a radio anywhere in the world, and listen to the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ, morning by morning, while the law goes forth out of Zion, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem!

**An Absolute Monarchy**

I am looking for the day when this picture will be realized, and when from day to day the law shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord Himself from Jerusalem.

"And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off." **Isaiah 11** says, "He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth."

Wouldn't you like to have a king like that?

In the last analysis I am an absolute monarchist.

Not now! Not with any monarch I know-not with this socialistic dictatorship we seem to be struggling under now. But in the last analysis I am an absolute mon­archist, and I’ve got my absolute Monarch elected and ready one day to be installed. "Yet a little while and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." He will take up His great power and reign.

"And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."

And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name, one" (**Zech. 14:9**) He will be able to execute all righteousness, without the help of armies. This is just the reverse of **Joel 3:10**, where they beat their plowshares into swords, and their pruning hooks into spears; but that has to be fulfilled before this picture can be realized.

Now look at the fifth verse.

"For all people will walk everyone in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever."

That is the way it reads in our common Version. A more literal translation makes it read: "All the peoples do now walk in the name of their god, but shall walk in the name of Jehovah our God forever".

In the sixth and seventh verses we have Israel in the picture:

"In that day, says the Lord, will I assemble her that halts, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted; and I will make her that halts a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even forever."

**Where the Dominion Rests**

In verse 8, we have a picture of Jerusalem:

"And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem."

Do you want to know where the first dominion is finally to rest? There it is Jerusalem will be the seat of the universal empire-- the political and spiritual and commercial center and the capital of the world.

**In the Meantime**

Now comes the ninth verse-something intervenes before all this can be realized.

"Now why do thou cry out aloud? is there no king in thee? is thy counsellor perished? for pangs have taken thee as a woman in travail."

Here Israel is pictured as a woman in labor pains:

"Be in pain, and labor to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail: for now shall thou go forth out of the city, and thou shall dwell in the field, and thou shalt go even to Babylon."

She went to Babylon about a hundred years after this. It was about that time when the Babylonian captivity began.

"And thou shall go even to Babylon; there shall thou be delivered; there the Lord shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies."

And that is not all of the intervening events. In the eleventh verse:

"Now also many nations are gathered against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion."

And also the twelfth and thirteenth:

"But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor. Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass: and thou shall beat in pieces many people: and I will conse­crate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth."

You know the figure of the floor and the threshing. In the olden days they used to bring the grain in from the field to the barn where they had a threshing floor. They would spread the grain in the sheaves over the floor, turn the oxen in there and let them tread around until they had trod the kernels of grain out from the chaff and the straw. Then they would wait for a windy day, when they would open the doors on every side, go in with their winnowing shovels, and toss the masses into the air, letting the wind blow the chaff away, leaving the grain upon the floor.

We are still in the intervening part of this vision.

"Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops: he has laid siege against us: they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek. 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, even from everlasting. "

That is a familiar scripture. When Herod the Great sent for the Bible teachers and asked them where the Messiah was to be born, they laid their fingers upon **Micah 5:2** and said, "Bethlehem."

**The Future of the Jew**

Look at the next verse. "Therefore, will he give them up." Therefore, will who give whom up? This ruler of Israel, born in Bethlehem, whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting. That is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He gives them up. Whom? His people Israel--the subject of this whole passage. And has He done so? He has. Israel is now given up, and Israel is now suffering for her sins of the past.

There is no use, dear friends, of your shutting your eyes to the fact that the Jewish people is a sinful and an apostate people. Whatever we may think of them, however much we may love them, and we ought to love them in the Lord; whatever we think of the glorious future, and they have a glorious future; and whatever we may think of our debt to them, for all we have worth having has come to us through the Jews--yet we must face the fact that the Jew is an apostate people and is living in terrible sin. That is all true enough, and He has given them up. "Therefore, will he give them up."

But has He given them up forever? See:

"Therefore will he give them up **until** the time that she which travails has brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel."

Now that "**until**" I am sure has reminded you of another "until" in **Romans 11:25-27**: "I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits: that blindness in part is happened to Israel **until** the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins."

In **Jeremiah 31:31** and the verses following it is declared that the time is coming when not one in Israel shall say to his neighbor or brother, Know the Lord, for they shall all know Him from the least unto the greatest of them, "for this is my covenant with them."

Meanwhile they are given up - to pride and to hardness - and the time of Jacob's trouble is yet to come. And this is until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.

Micah says, "Until she which travails has brought forth." Who is she that travails? Israel, the woman, in a figure, which is now in travail and labor pain until she has brought forth, and Paul writes that it is until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. What does he mean.?

**The Fullness** **of the Gentiles**

God is now, according to **Acts 15:13-18**, gathering out a people for His name. And this people gathered out from the Gentiles for the name of the Lord is added to another people, a remnant of the election of grace out of Israel, and of the twain, God is making one new man, so making peace. This new man is the Church of the living God. This, then, is the fullness of the Gentiles. It is called the fullness of - Christ in Ephesians - the Church which is His body.

Just as my body needs my head to make it full or complete, so the Church needs Christ. But the head needs the body to make it complete, also, and Christ needs the Church to make Him complete, for we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. The Church is the body of Christ, the fullness spoken of here; and until that fullness be come in and the Church of God is completely born, the woman's travail and labor must continue.

Please look for a moment at the fourth chapter of Ephesians. Here we have the Church of God as the body of Christ. Look at the thirteenth verse. This work of the ministry is going on "until we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God"-unto perfect men and women? No. Unto perfect manhood? No. "Unto a perfect man." God is creating a man, creating a body for Christ Jesus, and this body is coming into being through birth, member by mem­ber, and this work is going on until the body is complete, and "we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

**The Twelfth of Revelation**

I go to the twelfth of Revelation for my last Scripture, beginning at the first verse: "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven (a great sign); a woman (Israel) clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet (the chronological position of the woman. The sun is Christ; the moon is the Church of God reflecting the glory of Christ, and between them historically is Israel), and upon her head a crown of twelve stars (twelve tribes, twelve apostles); and she being with child cried,' travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered." The same woman in the same travail as in Micah. "And there appeared another wonder (sign) in heaven; and a great red dragon (Satan), having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born."

I hope you haven't your minds upon the Virgin Mary. This was not 1900 years ago: that is not the point at all. It is not Christ according to the flesh that we are looking upon here. The woman is not Mary; the woman is Israel in a figure, and the child being born is the man Christ Jesus, including His body.

Now, what will happen as soon as the child is fully born. "he brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron." Look in the Second Psalm where the promise is given to Christ: "Thou are my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me and I shall give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shall break them with a rod of iron; thou shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

But in **Revelation 2:26**, **27**, Christ shares this authority and power with the Church, for He says, "He that overcomes, and keeps my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father."

**The Out Gathering of the Church**

You see God is not now taking out a company of subjects to be ruled over in the millennial kingdom. He is gathering out a company of co-rulers, to be asso­ciated with His Son, to rule over the millennial kingdom.

"And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all the nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne." This catching up may take place at any moment or any day or any night. You and I are appointed to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come. This is our daily inspiration, flooding our path with glory.

"Caught up! caught up! no wing required,

Caught up to Him by love inspired,

To meet Him in the air.

Spurning the earth, with upward bound,

Nor casting a single glance around,

Nor listing a single earth-born sound,

Caught up in the radiant air."

-The End-